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THE TRANSFORMATION OF NIHILISM - A STUDY OF METAPHYSICAL TRUTH IN NIETZSCHE AND WITTGENSTEIN

VOLUME ONE

by

Glen Martin

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy of The City University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1985

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GLEN MARTIN

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE TRANSFORMATION OF NIHILISM - A STUDY OF

METAPHYSICAL TRUTH IN NIETZSCHE AND WITTGENSTEIN

by

Glen Martin

Advisor: Professor Henry Leroy Finch

The most fundamental concern of this study is a concern with the question of value in the modern world. It is this that the phrase "transformation of nihilism" in the title intends to indicate.

In Part One an interpretation of the whole of Nietzsche's philosophy is offered which focuses on the link between his "metaphysical scepticism" (his critique of the very notion of "metaphysical truth") and his assessment of the spiritual condition of the modern world under the rubric "nihilism". The attempt here is made to show in what way Nietzsche's radical scepticism derives from his reading of the Kantian critique of metaphysics and in what way Nietzsche links his scepticism to what he takes to be the central problem of the modern world: the disintegration of a sense of the meaning and value to human life in the face of the rise of science and the "Copernican Revolution".

The final chapter of Part One considers Nietzsche's own suggestions for the overcoming of nihilism (overman, will to power, and eternal recurrence) and attempts to identify the most fundamental direction and meaning of these doctrines through the idea that Nietzsche was focusing on what can be called the "eschatological" dimension of human existence. In its general conclusions Part One finds that while Nietzsche had identified with great insight the related problems of truth and value in the modern world, he ultimately failed, due to his abiding "metaphysical scepticism", to take us beyond nihilism to a genuine transformation of our relation to the everyday world of becoming and to human existence in general.

Part Two offers an interpretation of the whole of Wittgenstein's philosophy centering on his attempt to move beyond metaphysics altogether and engender a new way of looking at the human situation largely without precedent in the Western tradition. It sees in this an "eschatological" impulse somewhat similar to that which animated Nietzsche's philosophical struggle with the phenomenon of nihilism. It examines in this connection Wittgenstein's idea that "a sort of rearrangement of the whole of our language is needed" as well as his serious concern with "the ethical" and "the mystical" in the early philosophy.

In Wittgenstein's later philosophy it finds these concerns transformed into a unique vision of the human situation as being "groundless": it no longer makes sense for Wittgenstein to speak in the traditional Western way of an ontological grounding or substratum for our ways of acting in the world or speaking about the world. This is developed in

contradistinction to the traditional notion of "metaphysical truth" and is formulated in terms of the idea of the "autonomy of ordinary language", of language-games (including those concerning "truth") embodying the variety of overlapping meanings which are found in everyday discourse, none of which can be considered the meaning, nor more ontologically basic than the others.

Part Three concludes the study by drawing out the implications of an encounter between Nietzsche's thought of nihilism and Wittgenstein's way of looking at the human situation as ontologically "groundless": Nietzsche's stated requirements for the overcoming are nihilism are recalled and examined in the light of Wittgenstein's radically non-metaphysical point of view.

Finally, in connection with the need for a transformation of the human relation to existence (taken seriously by both philosophers), suggestions are made that Wittgenstein's notion of the "groundlessness" of the human situation can be used as a pointer beyond philosophy towards a non-cognitive "awareness" of the kind intimated in the writings of some Eastern philosophies, such as Buddhism. It is this, intimately connected with Wittgenstein's non-metaphysical understanding of the human situation, that is suggested as a direction beyond nihilism toward reclaiming an integrity and value for the everyday dimension of human existence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The thinking here is indebted to repeated conversations over the past several years with Roy Finch, Milton Munitz, Richard Perkins, and Joan Stambaugh. Although all responsibility for the ideas contained here is my own, and although I find myself in disagreement with each of them on certain issues, whatever value this thinking does have has been immeasurably enhanced through these conversations. To each of them I owe a real debt.

GM

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement vii

Abbreviations xi

INTRODUCTION 1

PART ONE NIETZSCHE

CHAPTER ONE: NIHILISM 15

i. Nihilism, The Death of God, and The Copernican Revolution 15
ii. Some Issues Regarding Nietzsche's View of History 22
iii. Modern Nihilism and The Logic of Historical Nihilism 32
iv. The Psychology of Historical Nihilism: Resentment and Revenge 44
v. Nihilism and The Dialectical Overcoming of Truth 55

CHAPTER TWO: "A GENIUS FOR TRUTH" AND THE REVALUATION OF VALUES 72

i. Integrity, Scientific Method, and The Philosopher 72
ii. The Psychological Dimension of Truthfulness 85
iii. Nietzsche's Four Paradigmatic Polarizations 92
iv. The Conflict Between Truth and Culture in The Early Writings 110

CHAPTER THREE: METAPHYSICAL SCEPTICISM 127

i. The Problem of The In-Itself 127
ii. Epistemology, Language, and The In-Itself 142
iii. Basic Meanings of The Word "Truth" in Nietzsche's Writings 161
iv. Critical Assessment of Nietzsche's Metaphysical Scepticism 184

CHAPTER FOUR: NIHILISM AND ITS OVERCOMING IN THE FINAL PHILOSOPHY 216

i. Thus Spoke Zarathustra and The Overman 216
ii. The Eternal Recurrence 233
iii. Power and Will to Power 248
iv. Artistic and Dionysian Truth 265
v. Critical Assessment of Nietzsche's Final Philosophy 277

PART TWO WITTGENSTEIN

CHAPTER FIVE: METAPHYSICS, PRESUPPOSITIONALISM, AND MYSTICISM IN THE TRACTATUS 304

i. Overview 304
ii. The Limits of Language 308
iii. Metaphysics in The Tractatus 315
iv. Presuppositionalism Versus Metaphysics 322
v. The Ethical and The Mystical 331
vi. What Is True About Solipsism and Buddhist Anatta 342
vii. The Present Moment and That The World Exists 356
viii. Non-duality 363

CHAPTER SIX: THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER PHILOSOPHY 368

i. Overview 368
ii. The Return to Philosophy 371
iii. The Initial Philosophical Situation 376
iv. Presuppositionalism 381
v. The Basic Change 384
vi. The Groundlessness of Language 390
vii. Another Look at Wittgenstein's Personal Task 396
viii. The Limits of Language 400
ix. The Task of Philosophy 405

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE NATURE OF "TRUTH" IN WITTGENSTEIN'S MATURE PHILOSOPHY 419

i. Overview 419
ii. "Truth" In The Early Philosophy 424
iii. The Issue of "Truth" in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein 428
iv. "Propositions" in The Later Philosophy 434
v. "Meaning" In The Later Philosophy 447

vi. The Concept of "Truth" in The Later Philosophy 461

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LIMITS OF EMPIRICISM AND THE AUTONOMY OF ORDINARY TRUTH 479

i. Overview 479
ii. The Apriori and The Limits of Empiricism 484
iii. Human Liberation and The Problem of Metaphysical Truth 509
iv. The Autonomy of Ordinary Truth and Ordinary Language 521

PART THREE CONCLUSION

CHAPTER NINE: BEYOND METAPHYSICS AND BEYOND NIHILISM 530

i. Overview: The Problem of Nihilism and Its Overcoming 530
ii. Metaphysical Scepticism and The Autonomy of Ordinary Language 538
iii. Epistemological Subjectivism and The Autonomy of Ordinary Language 546
iv. The Groundlessness of The Human Situation 555
v. "Truth" - An Epilogue 575

Appendix A 587

Appendix B 592

Bibliography 596

ABBREVIATIONS

I. NIETZSCHE

References refer to the section number unless "p." is supplied, indicating a page reference. A single capital "P" will abbreviate the word "Preface". Thus, section 5 of the 1886 Preface to The Gay Science is FW P 5. Chapter numbers are given in Roman numerals and section numbers in Arabic numerals. Thus section 6 of Chapter X of Twilight of The Idols is G X 6. See the bibliography for publication information and other writings not referred to by abbreviation.

A. Nietzsche's Works:

Die Geburt der Tragödie	GT
Unzeitgamässe Betrachtungen	U1, U2, etc.
Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I	MA I
Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II	MA II
Die Morgenröte	M
Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft	FW
Also Sprach Zarathustra	Z
Jenseits von Gut und Böse	J
Zur Genealogie der Moral	GM
Der Fall Wagner	W
Die Götzen-Dämmerung	G
Der Antichrist	A
Ecce Homo	EH
Der Wille zur Macht (notes 1886-88)	WM

B: Collected Editions: (References to locations within these additions give volume and page number. For publication information see the Bibliography.)

The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche (English Translations, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy)	OL
Grossoktavausgabe (various editors)	GOA
Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari)	KGW

C: Translator's Names:

Daniel Breazeale:	DB	Thomas Common:	TC
R.J. Hollingdale:	RJH	Walter Kaufmann:	WK
Richard Perkins:	RP		

Where possible the Kaufmann translations have been used (see bibliography). To make reference more exact in long passages, the page number of an edition is sometimes given with the aphorism number. Thus, a reference within the long section 20 of Part Two of Thus Spoke Zarathustra may be "Z II 20, WK p. 139".

II. WITTGENSTEIN

The following list includes published notes on Wittgenstein's lectures. References refer to the section number unless "p." is supplied, indicating a page reference. See the bibliography for publication information and other writings not referred to by abbreviation.

Notebooks 1914-1916	N
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus	TLP
Ludwig Wittenstein and The Vienna Circle	VC
Philosophical Remarks	PR
Wittgenstein's Lectures 1930-1932	L32
Philosophical Grammar	PG

"The Lecture on Ethics"	LE
G.E. Moore, "Wittgenstein's Lectures 1930-33"	MLN
"Notes for Lectures on Private Experience"	LPE
Wittgenstein's Lectures 1932-1935	L35
The Blue and Brown Books:	
"The Blue Book"	BB
"The Brown Book"	BrB
Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief	LC
Culture and Value	CV
Remarks on The Foundations of Mathematics	RFM
Zettel	Z
Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology	
Volume I	RPPI
Volume II	RPPII
"Notes on Frazer's The Golden Bough"	FGB
Philosophical Investigations	PI
Remarks On Colour	ROC
On Certainty	OC

INTRODUCTION

i. The Scope of The Present Work

The study that follows is one that attempts to bridge traditions. It is written in the conviction that the kind of philosophy most needed in our time is not one of a narrow and specialized focus (however important such studies may be in their own right) but rather what our age needs is philosophy that attempts to fill in the gaps, to bring things together, and to see them as part of a whole picture.

This attempt at seeing a large picture operates in at least three main ways. First, as a device for thinking about the question of "truth" in our age (and the related problem of "value" in the modern world) we have allowed Nietzsche's philosophizing to set up the initial philosophical problematic. The problematic, as he defines it, is a very large one: it involves a world-historical context which includes his interpretation of the history of philosophy in the West and his reflective intuition that the course of this history has led not only to a foreclosure of the tradition but to a corresponding "crisis of values" in the modern world. Thinking

through Nietzsche's world view to the point where we deeply comprehend his questioning and his sense of crisis provides perhaps the largest context for this study. It includes, not only a sense of the movement of Western intellectual history but also the attempts of thoughtful people in our age to grapple anew with the traditional questions of "meaning and value" in human life.

The second way in which this study attempts to bridge traditions and see a larger picture is through its bringing together, in reflective confrontation, the thought of philosophers as different in approach and orientation as Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. Nietzsche's thought, as we shall see, is in large measure poetic, intuitive, and symbolical. He is interpreting the "texts" of his own experience and of the Western philosophical tradition as it were "hermeneutically" in a way which brings with it an acute sense of the limitations and the "horizons" of the interpreter. Nietzsche has a strong sense of closure within what is often called "the hermeneutic circle". It is in part this very sense of the fallacy of attempting to interpret ourselves or our past in any way except "in the service of life"[1] which allows his thinking to operate in a symbolic, figurative, and even "mythic" mode which is sometimes anathema to philosophers in other traditions who see such symbolical thinking as unrigorous. However, thought seems to come to human beings in many forms and under many guises, some poetic, mythic, and intuitive, others discursive and highly abstract. Perhaps, like Socrates of The Apology, we should appreciate "the many possible and varied forms in which the Gods may speak to mortal men".

---

1. As he puts it in his second Untimely Meditation: see below Chapter One, section ii.

In contrast to Nietzsche's mode of philosophizing, Wittgenstein seems to be clearly in a very different tradition. His thinking is analytic, concrete, and often focused with great care and force on a specific and clearly defined intellectual problem. The thought of the analytic and concrete thinker and that of the hermeneutical and symbolic thinker are brought together within the parameters of this study. Within this context, however, certain striking commonalities between the two philosophers emerge: both, in a very real sense, take their starting point from Kant. Neither ultimately has a narrow focus but rather each is vitally concerned to heal what Wittgenstein calls "the sickness of a time". (RFM p.57.) And both are ultimately looking for (or hoping for) a transformation of human existence which will lead us out of the many suicidal problems in which the modern world is entangled. As Wittgenstein puts it: "a sort of rearrangement of the whole of language is needed".[2] This very broad commonality of concern between the two philosophers helps to bridge the gap between their differing traditions and their very different modes of philosophizing.

A third way in which the present study attempts to see a very large picture and bridge traditions is that it brings in, as part of its intellectual substratum, a sense of the philosophical insights that have become available to us in this century from what is often called "Eastern Philosophy". We will see that these insights are relevant both to Nietzsche and to Wittgenstein. The ideas and insights of "Eastern thought" are used as a device for explicating both Nietzsche's "final philosophy", in Chapter Four, and for explicating the sections concerning "the ethical" and "the

---

2. Quoted in B.F. McGuinness, ed., Wittgenstein and His Times (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.113.

mystical" in Wittgenstein's Tractatus (Chapter Five). It will become clear in Part Three, however, that the use of these insights as an interpretive device is not incidental to the study as a whole but rather is fundamental. For they are intimately related to the ideas and insights that emerge as a suggested resolution to the problematic of the whole: that problematic posed by Nietzsche which centers around the crisis of value and meaning in the modern world.

In these three ways, then, the present study attempts to bridge traditions, to fill in some gaps, and to see things as a whole. It takes as its largest problematic the concerns of a world-historical picture provided by Nietzsche's hermeneutical philosophizing. It brings together two very different philosophical traditions and modes of philosophizing under a larger and perhaps more fundamental commonality. And, finally, it draws on the insights of "Eastern Philosophy" in a way that is directly relevant to the whole of the investigation: and hopefully in a way that is relevant to the problems of "truth" and "value" in the modern world.

ii. The Problematic

Although the scope of our study is a significantly large one, the primary issues which are addressed are not at all unfamiliar but are part of the mainstream of current philosophical discussion and debate. For example, some of the issues with which we are concerned are expressed in one way by Richard Bernstein in his recent book Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis.[3] Part Four of the book is a

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3. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.

discussion of the ways in which Gadamer, Habermas, Rorty, and Hannah Arendt are all attempting to move beyond the seeming dilemma between an "objectivism", on the one hand, and a rootless "relativism" on the other. "By "objectivism", Bernstein says, "I mean the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness".[4] The relativist denies that there is any such foundation or grounding for either our cognitive or our value activities (and such denial, of course, has been a recurrent theme throughout out the sceptical tradition in the West, including Nietzsche's own philosophy). "Relativism", Bernstein continues, is in its strongest form "the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be the most fundamental - whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms - we are forced to recognize that in the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture".[5] As Bernstein attempts to show, this seeming dilemma is at the heart of much current philosophical discussion and in one way or another the attempt to move beyond its horns is fundamental to the philosophizing of such contemporary thinkers as Gadamer, Habermas, Rorty, and Arendt.

Although the debate surrounding this issue certainly goes at least back to the Platonic struggle with the relativism of certain Sophists, Bernstein points out that the seeming dilemma was clearly formulated for the

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4. Ibid. p.8.

5. Ibid.

modern world in the philosophy of Descartes. Hence, any movement beyond an understanding of the human situation in terms of this "Either/Or" will simultaneously be a movement beyond Descartes:

> With a chilling clarity Descartes leads us with an apparent and ineluctable necessity to a grand and seductive Either/Or. Either there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, or we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelope us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos....
>
> We need to exorcize the Cartesian Anxiety and liberate ourselves from its seductive appeal. Only if we implicitly accept some version of Cartesianism does the exclusive disjunction of objectivism or relativism become intelligible. But if we question, expose, and exorcise Cartesianism, then the very opposition of objectivism and relativism loses its plausibility.[6]

The present work takes the attempt to see through and beyond this "Either/Or" posed by Descartes as a fundamental part of its task. But its terms of operation and its suggested results are very different from those found in Bernstein's book. For rather than overcoming the Cartesian dilemma as a "disjunction", as Bernstein does, and attempting to articulate, so to speak, a third possibility: a kind of "philosophical knowledge" which is neither susceptible to traditional "objective" grounding nor merely relative to some limited frame of reference, what is attempted here is a dissolution of the terms of the dilemma altogether. In Wittgenstein's terms, the dilemma will be seen to involve metaphysical illusions generated by the grammar of our languages. When this is seen clearly - through a concrete and detailed study of Wittgenstein's philosophy in Part Two - then what may also become clear is that the problem itself (of a grounding for "rationality, truth, reality, right, and good") is an illusory problem and that

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6. Ibid. pp.18-19.

there is in reality no problem of finding a grounding for human knowledge or for value. As we will put it Part Three, both knowledge and value are real and genuinely present in a human situation which is ultimately neither grounded, nor groundless. But such suggestions await a detailed and careful development before they become fully intelligible.

In addition to this issue, the problematic of our study takes on perhaps an even larger dimension which is also in the background of much of the philosophical debate of the last two centuries. It asks, with Nietzsche, the question: "What is the meaning and value of human life in the face of the modern world's calling into question the traditional metaphysical and religious groundings for these things?" For it seems that the debate between the "objectivist" and the "relativist" is being decided, in our time, more and more in favor of relativism and scepticism. It is the extreme form of this relativism (the feeling that all the traditional groundings for value and knowledge were an illusion and that now we are faced with the "nothingness" of these values) that Nietzsche calls "nihilism". And he claims that this "nihilism" is the fundamental character of our age. (WM P 2.) Our sense of the meaning and value of human life was traditionally grounded, in one way or another, in a conception of "metaphysical truth", a conception of a "true world" or one ultimate reality which provided the context and the substratum for all meaning and value, whether or not we could penetrate to this reality in any final manner. (G IV.) Nietzsche sees the illusory character of this conception: as well as its tendency to devalue the concrete, everyday world in which we live our lives. His own philosophy (which, as we have said, sets the problematic for the whole of this study) attempts to go beyond, not only a metaphysical orientation to existence, but also beyond the nihilism which had resulted from calling into

question traditional valuations.

In Chapter Four we try to show in what way Nietzsche's suggestions for going beyond nihilism involve a focusing on what we call the "eschatological potentialities" within human existence. This focus on the possibilities of a radical transformation of our being-in-the-world is by no means incidental to our study. For we hope to show in what way the austere and rigorous Wittgensteinian project of becoming clear about the limits and functioning of language can point towards just such a transformation of our being. With the controlling themes of this exposition set, therefore, by Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism, and by his pointing towards the possibility of a radical transformation of human existence, Part Two attempts an exposition of Wittgenstein's philosophizing in general and specifically in connection with his approach to the question of "metaphysics" and the question of the objectivity of "truth". We will attempt to show, in this connection, the role of his radical "presuppositionalist" orientation and ultimately in what way his fundamental thought can be articulated in terms of the metaphor of the "groundlessness" of the human situation. (OC 110, 166.)

Finally, then, in Part Three, using the insights gleaned from our study of Wittgenstein in Part Two, suggestions are made towards fulfilling Nietzsche's requirements for moving beyond nihilism (and its concomitant scepticism and relativism). These requirements are several, and they will emerge in the course of our discussion. They point toward just such a transformation of our being-in-the-world, and involve moving to a new "standpoint", beyond metaphysics. It should be clear, therefore, that the problematic with which we are dealing in this study involves not only the question of "metaphysical truth" (and "objectivism versus relativism") but

also involves the question of value: what are the sources of value in a world which has called into question the traditional metaphysical groundings for value? The word "nihilism" in our title intends to call attention to this aspect of our task: for the problem of "metaphysical truth" is simultaneously the problem of a grounding for value in human life.

iii. On Method

It seems to us that in the twentieth century, a time when philosophy is blessed with a variety of active philosophical traditions and methods, that the philosopher should not only be able to recognize the method or methods being used in any particular text but should be able to use various methods in his or her own work depending on the material and the objectives sought. Hence phenomenology, ordinary language philosophy, logical analysis, hermeneutics, dialectics, presuppositionalism, and even poetic metaphor, may be useful and illuminating at one time or another, in one situation or another. Because the present exposition treats of a "hermeneutical", dialectical, and symbolic thinker as well as an "analytical", non-poetic, and presuppositionalist thinker it attempts to articulate each in methodological terms most congenial to the individual thinker. In its periodic critical analyses of the material, however, and in its intention to draw certain distinctions, it is clearly analytic and attempts to break down the issues or ideas in order to understand them more clearly.

However, with this point made, it should be pointed out that the overall movement among the three parts of our study is probably best called a "hermeneutical" one. If the ultimate purpose of any philosophical

study can be said to be the seeing clearly of the human situation, then our ultimate goal in studying Nietzsche and Wittgenstein is to find out what their texts can reveal toward that self-understanding, the understanding our ourselves and our world in the present moment. The word "hermeneutics" is used here in a broad sense to indicate neither an "objectivist" holding of the texts "at arms length", nor a "psychologistic" empathic identification with the texts. It is closer to what Gadamer calls finding "the right question to ask".[7] Our questioning of the Nietzschean and Wittgensteinian texts involves an attempt to think what might be called, in the language of Heidegger, "the fundamental thought of each philosopher": to ask, with the philosopher, his most fundamental question. With an eye, then, to understanding ourselves and our world in the present moment, we have identified the fundamental thought of Nietzsche as the thought of "nihilism" and the "eschatological potentialities" within human existence that can lead to its overcoming. And in the same spirit we have identified the fundamental thought of Wittgenstein as the absolute "presuppositional status of meaning" and the corresponding idea of a "groundless" human situation.

However, the hermeneutical character of our study goes beyond the attempt to ask the right question of the Nietzschean or Wittgensteinian texts. For we have placed the texts <u>together</u> within the problematic of this whole study and have added Part Three which attempts to go beyond the material of either Part One or Two alone. Our task, then, is not only to "question" each of these thinkers in as fundamental a way possible, it is also to "follow the "arrow" of the sense" generated by joining together

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7. See Roy J. Howard, <u>Three Faces of Hermeneutics</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp.151-53.

their most basic philosophical thinking within the whole of this study. What this points toward, if successful, is a new understanding not only of each of the texts, but of the human situation itself, which is perhaps the ultimate purpose behind any philosophic study. Paul Ricoeur describes something of this hermeneutic process in the following:

> Far from saying that a subject already mastering his own way of being in the world projects the a priori of his self-understanding on the text and reads it into the text, I say that interpretation is the process by which disclosure of new modes of being - or if you prefer Wittgenstein to Heidegger, of new forms of life - gives to the subject a new capacity for knowing himself. If the reference of the text is the project of the world, then it is not the reader who primarily projects himself. The reader rather is enlarged in his capacity of self-projection by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself.
>
> Appropriation, in this way, ceases to appear as a kind of possession, as a way of taking hold of things; instead it implies a moment of dispossession of the egoistic and narcissistic ego. This process of dispossessing is the work of the kind of universality and atemporality emphasized in explanatory procedures. And this universality in its turn is linked to the disclosing power to the text as distinct from any kind of ostensive reference. Only the interpretation that complies with the injunction of the text, that follows the "arrow" of the sense and that tries to think accordingly, initiates a new self-understanding.[8]

In allowing Nietzsche's basic thought to articulate for us the problematic of our study, and in allowing Wittgenstein's basic thinking about language to focus that problematic onto the question of grammar and the nature of language, an interpretative "horizon" is created which contains an "arrow" pointing beyond either philosopher towards a new mode of being or a new form of life. The reader can aid in this creative process by attempting to

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8. Interpretation Theory (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p.94. See also in this connection Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, David E. Linge, tr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp.57-58.

comprehend the overall direction in which the concatenation of lesser themes is moving. And our own text, especially in Part Three, points towards this new mode of being through two differing methodological devices which should be distinguished. On the one hand, it attempts to grapple with the phenomenon of nihilism and the question of value in a negative and limiting way revolving around Wittgenstein's notions of "the limits of language" and "the groundlessness" of the human situation. On the other hand, it attempts to point towards a "breakthrough" into a new mode of being beyond nihilism in a "positive" way using poetic and metaphoric language (derived, as we shall see, from both Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's affirmation of "poetry" as a possible philosophic method). Both of these devices seem essential to us in our attempt to articulate this possibly new way of understanding our human situation, although the second device goes beyond "philosophy" as it is often understood into what Nietzsche (or Plato, or Heidegger) might call "mythic" or "poetic" thinking. In spite of the scope of the problems with which our study is attempting to grapple, it seems to us that their seriousness, and their vital necessity, cannot be doubted, and because of this seriousness perhaps such extreme methods as this kind of "poetic thinking" are justified.

In sum, then, our overall approach is simply the following: Wittgenstein's continual criticism - explicit and implicit - of metaphysics, and his attempt to understand language in a way free of metaphysical assumptions and implications, will serve as a retrospective critique of the fundamental idea behind Nietzsche's notion of nihilism: that there is no metaphysical truth. We will try to show how Wittgenstein's final view of language would handle this idea and what the basic implications of a truly non-metaphysical relation to the world might be. We will try to indicate

in what way such a non-metaphysical orientation might well dissolve the so called "problem of metaphysical truth" as well as the corresponding "problem of value" in human life.

To be even partially successful in throwing light on this tremendous problem of metaphysics, an issue which has engaged the greatest minds of the Western tradition since the Pre-Socratics, would be a blessing, and, indeed, a seemingly divine gift. However, a large measure of any success that we might have we would owe to the fact that both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are philosophic giants, each in his own way. Yet in the face of what David Tracy calls the "global crisis of meaning"[9] which ravages our twentieth century and to which Nietzsche gave the name "nihilism", such difficult tasks cannot be avoided. Whatever the successes of Nietzsche's proposed solutions, his diagnosis of the illness (the breakdown of traditional Western values and meanings) is both profound and alarming, and should not be ignored. We hope to provide, therefore, not only fresh insight into the philosophies of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein in connection with the notion of "metaphysical truth", but to show that Wittgenstein's penetrating understanding of the nature and limits of language can lead to a new view of ourselves and our human situation, and, ultimately, to a new mode of being-in-the-world, beyond nihilism.

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9. Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p.4.

PART ONE

NIETZSCHE

CHAPTER ONE

NIHILISM

> Disintegration characterizes this time, and thus uncertainty: nothing stands firmly on its feet or on hard faith in itself; one lives for tomorrow, as the day after tomorrow is dubious. Everything on our way is slippery and dangerous, and the ice that still supports us has become thin: all of us feel the warm, uncanny breath of the thawing wind, where we still walk, soon no one will be able to walk.
>
> Nietzsche[1]

i. Nihilism, The Death of God, and The Copernican Revolution

The concept of truth in Nietzsche's philosophy and his view of metaphysics in general cannot be understood apart from the question of nihilism. As we shall see, the concept of nihilism was both a result of his lifelong philosophical quest for truth and a profound artist's intuition, similar to that found in Dostoyevski, Kafka, and others of a deep sea-change in the psyche and spirit of Western humanity. This intuition into the "disintegration" and "uncertainty" of our time became a major

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1. WM 57.

impetus behind Nietzsche's philosophical activity and received a great deal of thought from him.[2] But besides being a subject for reflection, nihilism was also Nietzsche's fundamental experience, an existential experience within his own life as well as an experience of the modern world in which he lived. (WM P 3.) As we know today, it is an experience which strikes a resonant chord in our own century but which was largely unknown outside of a few poets and artists in the 19th century.

Nietzsche intimates just this in Gay Science 125 where he has the "death of God" announced by a "madman". The dramatic context of this passage shows the great difference between Nietzsche's experience of nihilism and the whole of traditional atheism, including that of 19th century "free thought". For the atheists standing around the marketplace, in this aphorism, it is the "bright morning hours". As free thinkers they believe they are awakened, standing in the light of reason and science, to the truth about the human situation. Their jokes and laughter at the madman who is carrying a lantern and seeking God betray their shallow understanding of the historical juncture at which they stand. To them traditional religion and the idea of God are outmoded superstitions: no longer needed and no longer wanted in a world that has discovered science, technology, and the belief in progress. It is precisely to these people that

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2. WM Preface 3. This was also Nietzsche's feeling in his earliest philosophical reflections, although at that time he had not yet given his insight the name of "nihilism". See, for example, Nietzsche's statement of this in his earliest notebooks of 1873: in Daniel Breazeale, Philosophy and Truth (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), p.102, (quoted below with other such material in Chapter Two, section iv). For a study of this intuition or sensibility in the work of Lessing, Nietzsche, Mann, and Kafka, see Peter Heller, Dialectics and Nihilism (n.p.:The University of Massachusetts Press, 1966). For a study of this sensibility in modern literature and philosophy in general (including Dostoyevski) see Erich Kahler, The Tower and The Abyss - An Inquiry into the Transformation of Man (New York: Viking Press, 1957).

Nietzsche announces the death of God and the threat of nihilism, for to Nietzsche the implications of this called forth the most momentous questions of our age (WM P 2). This is clearly underlined in the madman's subsequent speech to these atheists where he refers to all of us as God's "murderers" who have performed (through our science and free thought) the most dreadful deed of human history: "Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon?... What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us?"

The series of metaphors that crowd between these two sentences give the reader a sense of the significance of the Copernican Revolution for Nietzsche. The earth has become "unchained from its sun." We no longer have a source which lends meaning and value to human existence:

> Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning?

The great danger for mankind, in Nietzsche's thinking, is not necessarily from those who cling to a faith that has become empty and has begun to ring hollow. Perhaps, as for Kierkegaard, the great danger is in the detached, scientific, progressive, "aesthetic" man who does not perceive what might be called the "metaphysical crisis" towards which the Copernican Revolution has led us. As Radhakrishnan has written in a slightly different context:

> The issue for religion in our day is not in regard to doctrinal differences..., but it concerns the very existence of religion. The state of coldness or indifference which ignores religion is more deadly than open rejection.... Our modern intellectuals sum up the situation thus: some think God exists,

> some think not, it is impossible to tell, but it does not matter.[3]

Nietzsche's madman is perceived as mad by such free thinkers precisely because they do not see the implications of their modern thought. They do not realize that the most fundamental question of our time is the question of value: the very value and meaning of human existence has been called into question;[4] the spiritual consequences of this will be momentous, Nietzsche says, unless we urgently undertake a deep examination of the foundations of value and meaning in human life:

> My task of preparing a moment of the highest self-examination for humanity, a great noon when it looks back and far forward, when it emerges from the dominion of accidents...and for the first time poses, as a whole, the question of Why? and for What? -- this task follows of necessity from the insight that humanity is not all by itself on the right way.... The question concerning the origin of moral values is for me a question of the very first rank because it is crucial for the future of humanity. (EH M 2.)

The issue at stake between the madman and the freethinkers, as the madman's metaphors indicate, is the significance of the Copernican Revolution. Nietzsche rejects both the facile acceptance of scientism with its belief in secular progress, on the one hand, and Kant's attempt to effect a counter-Copernican Revolution which preserves traditional religious values on the other.[5] In a note written four or five years after the publication of the Gay Science, Nietzsche again uses a metaphor

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3. "The Religion of The Spirit and The World's Need" in Adrienne Koch, Philosophy For A Time Of Crisis (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1959), p.235.

4. As Nietzsche says, for example, in WM 1, 11, & 12.

5. See G pp.40-41, GM III 25.

reminiscent of the madman's feeling that we are now straying unchained into empty space:

> The nihilistic consequences of contemporary natural science.... Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the center toward X. (WM 1.)

Before Copernicus, our experience was one of being centered and central in the universe, not only spiritually, through being made in the image of God and at the heart of the cosmic drama of revelation and redemption, but physically, through our perception of the heavenly bodies (themselves sharing with us a part in the great chain of being) moving in perfect circles about our centered and unique position. From this center, with every step in the advance of modern science and astronomy, we have been moving farther into an unknown situation, into a situation in which all the old values connected with that central position are called increasingly into question, a situation which Nietzsche symbolizes by an unknown quantity, an X.

Our movement away from the center has been gathering momentum (as if were were rolling down a Galilean inclined plane) and is leading us toward a gigantic spiritual catastrophe of which Nietzsche is the prophet and spokesman:

> For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect. (WM P 2.)

The realization that human existence is without meaning and value (if the old pre-Copernican religious orientation is indeed dead) will break into Western consciousness at some point in a kind of nightmare of

self-realization. This loss of meaning and value is the greatest deed of human history, according to Nietzsche's madman, and it may be greater than we are capable of handling:

> What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us?

The hyperbolic metaphors used by Nietzsche in his description of nihilism are not exaggerations for those, like Nietzsche himself, who experienced the crisis of meaning at the heart of Western civilization in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is important to underline this because it is this crisis which determines the seriousness of the examination of the notion of metaphysical truth which was Nietzsche's life-long philosophical concern and which constitutes the focus of this volume. If we deeply comprehend this point, according to Heidegger's first volume on Nietzsche, we might consider Nietzsche's "manner of speech almost placid":

> Nietzsche's fundamental experience is his growing insight into the basic development of our history. In his view it is nihilism. Nietzsche expresses incessantly and passionately the fundamental experience of his existence as a thinker. To the blind, to those who cannot see and above all do not want to see, his words easily sound overwrought, as though he were raving. And yet when we plumb the depths of his insight and consider how very closely the basic historical development of nihilism crowds and oppresses him, then we may be inclined to call his manner of speech almost placid. One of the essential formulations that designate the event of nihilism says, "God is dead".... The phrase "God is dead" is not an atheistic proclamation: it is a formula for the fundamental experience of an event in Occidental history.[6]

At the heart of Nietzsche's thought, therefore, is an interpretation of

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6. Nietzsche - Volume I: The Will to Power as Art, Trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p.156.

the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science which sees, in its seeming displacement of the traditional pre-Copernican religious symbolism, tremendous spiritual implications, implications unrecognized by so-called "free thinkers", advocates of astronomy, Darwin, and the "modern world view". It is to these people that his hyperbolical language and the sense of a crisis in Western history is often directed. The marvelous dignity bestowed on man by the Bible, a dignity which gave meaning even to suffering and death (GM III 28), has been slipping away from him since Copernicus, until, during Nietzsche's own life-time, Darwin seemed to put the finishing touches on man's sense of being something more than "merely" an animal, and Nietzsche is able to write in his notebook: "The most universal sign of the modern age: man has lost dignity in his own eyes to an incredible extent." (WM 18.) Nietzsche published these thoughts in the all important third essay of the Genealogy of Morals. We no longer see ourselves as connected with what is divine. The source of meaning and value disappears further and further over the horizon, and what is left to modern man with his many advances and his exalted science is only "a penetrating sense" of his own "nothingness":

> Alas, the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being, is a thing of the past - he has become an animal, literally and without reservation or qualification, he who was, according to his old faith, almost God ("child of God," "Godman").
>
> Since Copernicus, man seems to have got himself on an inclined plane - now he is slipping faster and faster away from the center into - what? into nothingness? into a "penetrating sense of his nothingness"?...
>
> All science (and by no means only astronomy, on the humiliating and degrading effect of which Kant made the noteworthy confession: "it destroys my importance"...), all science...has at present the object of dissuading man from his former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit. (GM III 25.)

With this statement we are at the heart of Nietzsche's thought and the central place of nihilism within that thought. Heidegger too posits nihilism as one of "the five main rubrics of Nietzsche's thought".[7] Nietzsche's attack on traditional values, in the light of an historical need for a revaluation of those values, cannot be understood without comprehending that traditional values (whatever their limitations) gave man what is most important according to Nietzsche's thinking: they gave him dignity in his own eyes and meaning even in the face of suffering. The Copernican Revolution and rise of science have called into question what is most important on both of these counts. It is for this reason that understanding Nietzsche's conception of nihilism first and foremost requires understanding the role which the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science had in his thinking.

ii. Some Issues Regarding Nietzsche's View of History

Nietzsche had a deep insight into the spiritual emptiness of the modern world which he articulated metaphorically and symbolically, we have seen, rather than exclusively within the framework of discursive thought. He saw that the greatness of man, the greatness of the human project itself, was in danger of being extinguished, an insight which, one is sorry to say, we owe primarily to poets, artists, and religious thinkers rather than to the modern philosophers. In this respect Nietzsche (and Wittgenstein, we shall see) is fairly unique among philosophers and is

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7. Nietzsche - Volume IV: Nihilism (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p.9. The other four are "revaluation of all values", "will to power", "eternal recurrence of the same", and "overman".

perhaps better linked with such intuitive geniuses as Blake, Dostoyevski, or Berdyaev. And, indeed, one must often turn to these basically religious thinkers to find not only this insight into the nihilism of our age but a response to it through the attempt to generate a new "redeeming vision". Berdyaev, for example, speaks for this insight:

> The socialization of knowledge in aiming at the establishment of general-validity for the average normal mind of the majority of men has a limiting effect upon both knowledge and reality itself. It is bent upon crowding out everything which demands a great spiritual effort and a sense of the spiritual community. The average man, and human society especially, is always exercizing violent pressure upon men. They find shelter from danger, they find self-preservation, in concepts and laws of logic in the field of cognition, in the laws of the state, in the fossilized formulae of family life, of class, of the external life of the Church as a social institution. In these defensive measures, intuition, inspirition, love, humanity and living faith are crushed and stifled, the flame of the spirit is extinguished.[8]

In his own way Nietzsche set his philosophy against the danger of such an extinction of the spirit. He attacked not only the emptiness of traditional values to sustain any longer the human project but also, we shall see, the unreflective and unphilosophical way in which the modern world pushed ahead without facing up to the tremendous historical need for a re-examination of all our values.

His own philosophical project was dedicated to this two-fold reflection: the critque of traditional values, on the one hand, and the attempt to find new values and a new way of thinking that would genuinely sustain and enhance the human spirit on the other. His thinking in both these areas was not only discursive and analytic but also intuitive, symbolic, and metaphorical. This is one reason why we cannot expect discursive and

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8. The Beginning and The End (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p.80.

systematic philosophy from him.[9] Nor will we understand his "history of philosophy" if we try to read him with these expectations. Rather, one must engage in a sort of hermeneutical reflection on the wealth of historical insights which illuminate the pages of the Nietzschean corpus from beginning to end. From this reflection arises no systematic history of philosophy but a series of themes and distinctive formulations most of which are related to one another as a sort of constellation of responses revolving around Nietzsche's "basic experience as a thinker", his insight into the nihilism of our age.

The second general point to be made regarding Nietzsche's view of history is that, for him, history is an intellectual tool which can be used in various ways by a thinker or by a culture. There is no set of historical facts which is not an interpretation (whether consciously or unconsciously) and hence which does not foster some purpose in the present. Indeed, in his final period, we shall see, Nietzsche held that all our so called sciences are merely interpretations of one sort or another: "There are no facts, only interpretations". (WM 481.) We will see in our examination of his concept of "truth" that a form of this view exists even in the earliest philosophical writings of the 1870s. It exists implicitly, for example, with regard to history, in his 1873 essay Von Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie fur das Leben.[10]

This essay revolves around what was to become a major motif of Nietzsche's philosophy, the distinction between life, its fullness in the

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9. See in this regard the early Nietzsche's reflections on the differences between discursive "scientific" thinking and imaginative "philosophical" thinking in Breazeale, Op.Cit., pp.17 & 22-24.

10. The Untimely Meditations, second essay.

present and its hopes for the future, and those things which would limit, contract, or destroy life. Unless history is made to serve life and the present it can become a dangerous and destructive activity. Therefore history, Nietzsche says, must be made to serve life by "turning the past to the uses of the present". (U2 p.8.) The essay revolves around the three ways in which the study of history should be used in the service of life, rather than as a detached science of "pure knowledge" which would ultimately be destructive of life:

> History regarded as pure knowledge and allowed to sway the intellect would mean for men the final balancing of the ledger of life. Historical study is only fruitful for the future if it follows a powerful life-giving influence.... The fact that life does need the service of history must be as clearly grasped as that an excess of history hurts it.... History is necessary to the living man in three ways: in relation to his action and struggle, his conservatism and reverence, his suffering and his desire for deliverance.[11]

The bearing of this on the question of Nietzsche's interpretation of the history of philosophy should be clear. His subsequent writings are nothing if not true to the spirit of this essay: none of his views concerning the Homeric Greeks, Socrates and Plato, the origins of Christianity, Copernicus and the rise of science, or Kant and modern idealism are to be taken as attempts at "objective" formulations of these phenomena.[12] Rather, they

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11. U2 p.12, cf. the 1886 Preface to GT, sec.2. In his Nietzsche - Volume IV Heidegger cites this essay in defense of Nietzsche's claim that the history of metaphysics is ultimately the history of valuations (Op.Cit. pp.71-72).

12. See WM 70: "The very same milieus can be interpreted and exploited in opposite ways: there are no facts." See also GM P 5: his hypothesis regarding morality concerns him "only for the sake of the goal to which it was only one means among many". And see GM III 26 where objective historiography is called "nihilistic" and he calls such historians "historical nihilists".

are all in the service of his "fundamental experience as a thinker": the demands of the human spirit in our present age in its life and death struggle with nihilism which involves the threat of its very extinction. Hence the thought of nihilism and the possibilities of its overcoming governs Nietzsche's interpretations of history.

These points are important to keep in mind as they bear directly on Nietzsche's view of the role of myth in human life (and hence our understanding of his conceptions of "will to power" and "eternal recurrence") as well as his view of the history of philosophy in connection with truth, both of which will be examined in subsequent chapters. It is also important to point out that the one place where Nietzsche seems to give an outline and summary of his history of philosophy, in the fourth section of Twilight of The Idols entitled "How the 'Real World' at last Became a Myth",[13] must be cited with caution and used with the above provisos in mind. Professor Stambaugh quotes this passage and calls it "Nietzsche's history of philosophy in one page",[14] and indeed, as she points out, it does illuminate a central motif of Nietzsche's philosophizing in which Plato's doctrine of Being, in opposition to the apparent world of becoming, is slowly altered in the history of thought to the point of Nietzsche's own philosophy where the distinction between being and becoming is ostensibly abolished. However, notably absent from this passage is any reference either to the Homeric Greeks or the Pre-Socratic philosophers such as Heraclitus, both of whom performed a vital function

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13. Hollingdale's translation of Wie die "wahre Welt" endlich zur Fabel wurde.

14. Joan Stambaugh, Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p.3.

in the dialectic of Nietzsche's historical thought. Nor is there reference to the negative spiritual effects of the Copernican Revolution, outlined above, and their connection with the nihilistic crisis of our age which formed the genesis and core of Nietzsche's thought. One might infer from this outline in Twilight that a smooth progress has taken place in the gradual refutation of Plato's world view, the greatest crisis of which was merely that "Plato blushes for shame", an inference which would certainly miss the decidedly dialectical character of Nietzche's historical thinking. The fact of the matter is that Nietzsche's views on the history of philosophy can be found in no one place, neither here nor in the famous first essay of the Genealogy of Morals (so often exclusively focused on by British and American professors), but must be drawn from its many focal points within the whole of his corpus.

This idea of the dialectical character of Nietzsche's historical thinking can serve as the third and final point which must be made here in regard to Nietzsche's interpretation of history. In what is perhaps one of his most general formulations of this, Nietzsche articulates (in the form of a mythic-metaphysical principle) what he calls the basic "law of life":

> All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming: thus the law of life will have it, the law of the necessity of "self-overcoming" in the nature of life - the lawgiver himself eventually receives the call: "patere legem, quam ipse tulisti". (GM III 27.)

Although Nietzsche's basic application of this principle is historical, the principle itself can be seen as an articulation of the pattern of Nietzsche's own style of thinking which continually moves between the poles of opposing perspectives. This dialectical character of his thinking, familiar to any reader, will be discussed further in the following chapter. It

revolves around the basic Nietzschean themes of being versus becoming, reality versus appearance, knowledge versus life, sickness versus health, strength versus weakness, truth versus lie, cowardice versus courage, etc. Peter Heller describes this larger dialectic of Nietzsche's thought and its application to historical movements:

> In Nietzsche in particular, dialectic appears as impressively dynamic. For this author, who never offered neutralized processes of thought, always represented the dialectical movement in full affective orchestration and consequently also as a dramatic movement of emotions.
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> The term dialectic is thus used here in a sense in which it is quite commonly understood. It designates a movement of thought in which a position - frequently defined at first in a polemical fashion - is developed in the direction of its own counter-position or opposite, to be seized, disintegrated, consumed and annihilated by the latter, but in such a fashion that a third position emerges - or is supposed to emerge - in which both position and counter-position are suspended, preserved, contained and superseded; hence a movement of thought including embrace and agon, consumption and assimilation, suspension and transformation. Nietzsche typically, represents such movements of thought. The transcending perspective always presupposes the perspective that is to be transcended and points at the same time beyond itself toward future turns. From a distance one often sees only antithetical reversals: Thus the Enlightenment and Socratism appear to turn against themselves; likewise the striving for truth which is considered as a derivative of Christianity; and Christianity itself; and consequently its last or penultimate offshoots: Romanticism, Romantic Pessimism. But if one looks more closely, one discovers larger overlapping and encroaching interconnections, phases, and phases of phases; the opposites seem to engender one another, to develop out of each other.[15]

Very much as the Hegelian notion of aufgehoben does not conceive of the complete elimination of past epochs in the dialectical movement into the present, but sees the past as simultaneously cancelled, preserved, and lifted up to a higher level in the present, so with Nietzsche "both position

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15. Studies on Nietzsche (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1980), pp.192-93.

and counter-position are suspended, preserved, contained, and superseded".[16]

Let us take the first essay of On the Genealogy of Morals as a particular example. This relation between the past and present is especially important to note in the light of those shallow interpretations, usually focusing on the first essay of the Genealogy, which see Nietzsche as advocating some form of a return to the "Blond Beast" mentality of the Homeric Greeks. (GM I 11.) That this cannot be the case is underlined by two of the points just made. First, that Nietzsche (trained by Ritschl in the highest standards of classical scholarship)[17] is not even beginning to attempt an historically accurate picture of the ancient situation. Rather, he is doing history "in the service of life", in the service of the present, by creating what we will call, following Dr. Richard Perkins, "mythic-paradigms" designed to hermeneutically illuminate our understanding

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16. The concept of "self-overcoming", a fundamental motif of Nietzsche's Third Period, is sometimes a translation of selbstuberwindung and other times a translation of Selbstaufhebung, both of which occur frequently in Nietzsche's writings. For example, in the passage quoted above referring to Nietzsche's dialectical view of history ("All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self overcoming: Thus the law of life will have it, the law of the necessity of "self-overcoming" in the nature of life....") the first use of "self-overcoming" is selbstaufhebung, the second use is selbstuberwindung. Kaufmann also translates sich selbst aufhebend as "overcoming itself" and aufzuheben and aufgehoben as "overcome" (see Kaufmann's note 1, p.73). Aufheben, of course, is one of the central terms in Hegel's dialectical view of history.

17. For a brief account of Nietzsche's education see Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1968), pp.21-30.

18. See for example Perkin's paper "Analogistic Strategies in Zarathustra" in David Goicoechea, ed., The Great Year of Zarathustra (1881-1981) (Lanham, N.Y.: University Press of America, 1983), pp.316-338. Hence, it should be clear that the idea of "the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science", presented in section i above, is itself a "mythic paradigm" useful in illuminating our present situation.

of the present.[18] Secondly, these mythic paradigms are related to one another in the dialectical fashion just described. Therefore the gigantic possibilities of the present (nihilism and the will to nothingness on the one hand and the overcoming of nihilism and superhuman greatness on the other) are understood in terms of a dialectical evolution in which each successive phase contributes a key element to present possibilities. The ancients form a symbol and mythic paradigm of great health, spontaneous self-affirmation, and the rule of life-loving instincts.[19] The Christian "slave revolt in morals" (and, alternatively, the Socratic revolt of reason against the instincts) form paradigms illuminating the present struggle within us of ressentiment,[20] revenge, and life-negating forces with our own possibilities of affirmation and spiritual transformation beyond nihilism. The millennial attempt to flee from life into the ideal which began with Christianity and Socrates was necessary, for Nietzsche, to create the spiritual possibilities of our own situation. As he says in the Genealogy, it is only with the psychological turning inward of ressentiment that mankind for the first time acquired depth and became spiritual.[21] It is our spiritual depth, with its roots in opposing aspects of the dialectic of

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19. E.g., GM I: 5,6 & 11.

20. GM I describes the former (see e.g., section 10) and G, Chapter II, is an example of the latter. Nietzsche's use of the French word ressentiment is discussed in a note to section iv below.

21. GM I 6,; see WM 115, & WM 69n (WK p.45). See also, in Twilight of the Idols: the spiritualization of passion (G VI), the spiritualization of love and emnity (G V 3), the spiritualization of nobility in the forms of thought, speaking, and writing (G VIII 6), the spiritualization of power in the form of the grand style (G IX 11), and the spiritualization of the psyche in the form of a new wholeness as in the case of Goethe (G IX 49). Also, see G IX 48: "Progress in my sense. - I too speak of a 'return to nature', although it is not really a going-back but a going-up...." (RJH, p.101).

history, which provides the possibilities of the present. And Nietzsche's philosophy, if nothing else, is a philosophy of affirmation of the present, of history in the service of life.

There would be no possibility, therefore, for Nietzsche to advocate a return to the values or the consciousness of any historical epoch. Not only do the possibilities of the present epoch prohibit this, but his own philosophy of the affirmation of the present also forbids such a move. Nietzsche's thought in regard to affirmation (to be discussed later under the heading "eternal recurrence") is that any desire to leave the present in favor of some better epoch, whether past or future, would be a manifestation of resentment and a failure of authentic affirmation. Everything in the past, the suffering and weakness as well as the joy and strength, must be affirmed without reservation:

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it' - that alone should I call redemption. (Z II 20.)

Again we see that the entire force of Nietzsche's thinking is focused on our relation to and attitude towards the present.

This example of the first essay of the Genealogy, then, and the preceding discussion, serve to illustrate in what way the character of Nietzsche's historical thinking involves a dialectical philosophy of history. But this is a philosophy of history, we have seen, which insists on the interpretive character of any philosophy of history,[22] hence (in our

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22. For a contemporary survey of the immense problems that face anyone who would wish to defend the idea that a non-interpretive history can be written see W.H. Walsh's fifth chapter, "Can History Be Objective?", in An Introduction To Philosophy of History (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1967). Walsh calls this "at once the most important and the most baffling topic in critical philosophy of history" (p.93).

language) on its "mythic" character.

In sum, it should be clear in what ways the three points we have made concerning Nietzsche's interpretation of history might help to illuminate his conception of our historical epoch of nihilism and the significance of the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science within that epoch. For these historical insights are not systematic but require a hermeneutic-like reflection always in terms of the present, which means, for Nietzsche, in terms of the danger of nihilism. Second, history is basically interpretation, and as interpretation it can and should only be used in the service of present life. Finally, as with his thought in general, Nietzsche's historical thinking follows a pattern (analogous to Hegel's) in which elements of past epochs are preserved and lifted up in the present and therefore are necessary to the present.[23] But, unlike Hegel, this dialectical pattern for Nietzsche is itself interpretation, that is, his philosophy of history is itself a mythic principle for use in the service of present life. Let us turn, then, to Nietzsche's ideas concerning the relation between history and nihilism.

iii. Modern Nihilism and The Logic of Historical Nihilism

"The philosophical nihilist", writes Nietzsche in 1887-8, "is convinced that all that happens is meaningless and in vain...." (WM 36.) We have examined the way in which Nietzsche connects this modern point of view with the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science. It is important to

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23. Rose Pfeffer also recognizes this pattern in Nietzsche's thought: see her Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), p.91.

see, in this connection, that the foundational claim of Nietzsche's later philosophy, that "God is dead", is not a statement of his atheistic position but a rubric under which he comprehends "the uncanny guest at the door", the historical phenomenon of modern nihilism. "What does nihilism mean?" Nietzsche asks in 1887; he immediately answers: "That the highest values devaluate themselves." (WM 2.) Where we once thought there was meaning and purpose to human life, we now believe that life is "meaningless and in vain". Because of this it is possible to say that Christianity historically was "the great antidote against practical and theoretical nihilism":

> What were the advantages of the Christian moral hypothesis?
>
> 1. It granted man an absolute value, as opposed to his smallness and accidental occurrence in the flux of becoming and passing away.
>
> 2. ...It conceded to the world, in spite of suffering and evil, the character of perfection - including "freedom": evil appeared full of meaning.
>
> 3. It posited that man had a knowledge of absolute values and thus adequate knowledge precisely regarding what is most important.
>
> 4. It prevented man from despising himself as man, from taking sides against life....
>
> In sum: morality was the great antidote against practical and theoretical nihilism. (WM 4.)

In calling Christianity an "antidote against nihilism" Nietzsche is speaking in terms of what we are calling "modern nihilism", that "the highest values devalue themselves". For as long as those highest values held sway, primarily in the form of Christianity and its synthesis with Greek philosophy, modern nihilism had not yet appeared. However, in another sense the ultimate roots of nihilism go much farther back than Copernicus. They reach back to the Greeks and to the Hebrew-Christian Bible of which the Copernican Revolution is only one of the last steps in

this even larger and more encompassing historical dialectic. Even though Christianity can be seen as an antidote to the ever present possibility of nihilism, it must also be seen as the historical presupposition of modern nihilism, since, we shall see, it is the inner logic of its own values that has led to their devaluation, their own dialectical reversal. There is, therefore, another kind of nihilism, which can be called "historical nihilism".

Let us here step back a moment to underline one of the differences between these two forms of nihilism. Nietzsche's starting point and fundamental experience as a thinker, we have seen, was nihilism: all the highest values of the tradition had devalued themselves (or were in the process of devaluing themselves) in the modern world. As a thinker he then asks the question "why?". By what logic and through what process has this devaluation taken place? It is this second step which led him to the concept of historical nihilism, a conception which was no longer an experience but rather derived from reflection on the character of these highest values and the reasons why they had become devalued.

This reflection on the question "why?" occupies a large portion of Nietzsche's philosophizing in all the books and notes after Zarathustra. Indeed, in the Genealogy of Morals Nietzsche states that he is working on a "History of European Nihilism" which will be part of a book in progress called "The Will To Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values".[24] In his book on Nietzsche and nihilism,[25] Heidegger focuses on historical

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24. GM III 27. The book, of course, was never completed and what we now possess under this title is an arbitrary collection of Nietzsche's posthumously published notes.

25. Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism.

nihilism as one of the central themes of Nietzsche's philosophizing and as the key to Nietzsche's understanding of Western history and the need for a revaluation. It is correct to do this, although in the present writer's view Heidegger ultimately uses Nietzsche's understanding of historical nihilism for his own purposes and ultimately forces him into the Procrustean bed of his own philosophy of history. Still Heidegger does recognize the significance of historical nihilism as a critique of traditional Western values: "Nihilism is not only the process of devaluing the highest values, nor simply the withdrawal of these values. The very positing of these values in the world is already nihilism."[26] Speaking for Nietzsche, Heidegger calls nihilism "the essence of Western history" and again "the law" of history: "For Nietzsche, nihilism is the covert, basic law of Western history".[27]

In what ways, then, does nihilism operate as "the covert, basic law of Western history"? In the second essay of the Genealogy Nietzsche speaks in terms of the same general dynamic that we have seen operating in the madman's speech in The Gay Science. However here, rather than speaking of the need to "redeem" ourselves from nihilism (having "killed God"), he speaks of the need to "redeem reality". Some "creative spirit" of the future must bring about

> ...the redemption of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism.... (GM II 24.)

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26. Ibid. p.44.

27. Ibid. pp.53 & 27 resp.

One sense in which covert nihilism is the basic law of Western history is that modern nihilism was "bound" to grow out of it. There seems to be a logical connection between the traditional ideal and the present feeling that life is meaningless and in vain. Nietzsche intimates this logical connection by stating that the traditional ideal was a "curse" upon this reality, and that "this reality" now requires "redemption". Insofar as the basic values of Western history were connected with belief in another reality, whether philosophical or religious, which was perfect and whose predicates contradicted the characteristics of the phenomenal world, then the traditional values can be said to be a "curse" on this reality.

This is consistent with his most general understanding of nihilism which was fundamentally any weltanschauung that included a negative valuation of "this reality" or "this life". To say with modern nihilism that life is meaningless and in vain is to make a judgment on life: it is to devalue and defame this life in the direction of the judgment "meaningless". Similarly, the hitherto reigning ideal has made a negative judgment on life: it has found this life meaningful but only by denying the fundamental reality and perfection of this world in favor of another reality which was more real and more perfect. Both modern nihilism and traditional Western values, therefore, have the same logical relation to this world: they judge it negatively and hence devalue it. Even though modern nihilism is a result of the devaluation of the highest values, like those values it devalues the world.

In addition, Nietzsche takes the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science to have given us methods which allow, for the first time, careful examination of the traditional belief in another reality, whether it be the

philosopher's conception of absolute being or the Christian conception of God. These careful methods (which include advances in psychology) have seriously called into question these traditional beliefs until people (like Nietzsche himself) began to declare that there is no such other reality. This was "bound" to happen because, we shall see, one of the highest traditional values was "truth": "God is Truth" it was believed. Hence these values led to their own internal examination in the form of that love of truth found in scientific methods, and this examination led to disbelief in precisely this "God of truth" and hence to nihilism.

Covert nihilism is thus the basic law of Western history in the two senses just outlined. First, traditional values were nihilistic in that they included a negative judgment on this reality. Secondly, the faith in truth which was basic to these values led to their inevitable demise - and a reaction against the "meaning of life" which they supplied toward the view that life is meaningless. The second of these senses will be explored in section five of this chapter. The first of these senses, that the traditional ideals were a "curse" on this reality, we must explore more fully here and in section four.

For purposes of clarification it is possible to divide Nietzsche's analysis of historical nihilism into three classifications, classifications which are often closely intertwined in his writings. In Twilight of The Idols he presents a series of "propositions" which roughly parallel the classifications we have in mind. Although he does not mention "nihilism" in this place, he does present these as reasons why belief in God (and hence traditional values) is no longer tenable:

> First proposition. The grounds upon which 'this' world has been designated as apparent establish rather its reality -

> another kind of reality is absolutely undemonstrable.
>
> Second proposition. The characteristics which have been assigned to the 'real being' of things are the characteristics of non-being, of nothingness - the 'real world' has been constructed out of the contradiction to the actual world....
>
> Third proposition. To talk about 'another' world than this is quite pointless, provided that an instinct for slandering, disparaging and accusing life is not strong within us: in the latter case we revenge ourselves on life by means of the phantasmagoria of 'another', a 'better' life.
>
> Fourth proposition. To divide the world into a 'real' and an 'apparent' world, whether in the manner of Christianity or in the manner of Kant...is only a suggestion of decadence - a symptom of declining life. (G III 6.)

The first proposition only indirectly deals with the logic of nihilism by referring to the methodological untenability of the nihilistic denial of this world in favor of another reality. Nietzsche probably has in mind traditional metaphysics with its frequent claim to demonstrate the existence of God (as, for example, in Aquinas or Descartes). For Nietzsche, as we shall see further in the next chapter, scientific methodology shows the untenability of these claims.

The second, third, and fourth propositions each point directly to a different aspect of Nietzsche's analysis of historical nihilism. We will call these the logic of nihilism, the psychology of nihilism, and the physiology of nihilism. To understand Nietzsche's method of philosophizing here it is important to see that, in a certain sense, he is dealing with three kinds of logic (as these names imply): the logic of concepts, the logic of the psyche, and the logic of the body. This is more than a mere play on words; for Nietzsche was a philosopher, concerned with the logic of concepts (also often with the logic of symbols (symbology)), and never engaged in empirical psychology, nor in empirical physiology. In both of the latter domains he is concerned with the logic of these concepts, concepts which, to a certain extent, he himself has invented and which

include what we have already called "mythic paradigms".

In order to understand in what way Nietzsche is using the logic of concepts in his analysis of historical nihilism it is necessary to look briefly once more at his method of doing philosophy. Just as we have seen Nietzsche study history not for "objective" information about the past but for use in the service of present life so his philosophizing as a whole, including his uses of "psychology" and "physiology", is not directed toward objective knowledge in these areas but involves a kind of hermeneutical elucidation of the logic of the mythic paradigms which grew out of his thinking. By the time of Ecce Homo he realized that something like this had been his method ever since, and perhaps before, his early Untimely Meditations. In those Meditations he had been diagnosing "types":

> What I was fundamentally trying to do in these essays was something altogether different from psychology: an unequaled problem of education, a new concept of self-discipline, self-defense to the point of hardness, a way to greatness and world-historical tasks was seeking its first expression. Broadly speaking, I caught hold of two famous and as yet altogether undiagnosed types, as one catches hold of an opportunity, in order to say something, in order to have at hand a few more formulas, signs, means of language. This is really suggested with a perfectly uncanny sagacity near the end of section 7 in the third Untimely One. Plato employed Socrates in this fashion.... (EH U 3.)

Nietzsche was not doing psychology, he says, but was creating for himself a language, a language for his own education and his own coming world-historical tasks. Just as Plato used the concept of Socrates (a concept perhaps at great variation from the historical reality) as a "sign", a "formula", or a "type" in terms of which to develop his own reflections and his own thinking, so Nietzsche uses psychological concepts as a sign or symbol language for similar purposes. By implication, the same reasoning

applies to his uses of physiological concepts. We have labeled these methodologic tools of Nietzsche's thinking "mythic paradigms".[28]

Nietzsche's thinking concerning historical nihilism involves, therefore, the logic, the psychology, and the physiology of this phenomena, three conceptual-symbolic paradigms often closely intertwined with one another. The first, the logic of nihilism, is implied, for example, in statements like the following: "Nihilism is the necessary consequence of our valuations so far". (WM 69n.) The "necessity" of nihilism involves not only the historical dialectic which we will discuss in section five but also the logic of the traditional values themselves: that they are negations of this reality. This same dual necessity seems to be implicit wherever Nietzsche speaks of the necessity of nihilism:

> ...Why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical consequence of our great values and ideals.... (WM P 4.)

The philosophical thinking of Western man tended to focus on another reality behind or above the phenomenal world just as the religious faith of Western man soared beyond this world to God. As the early Nietzsche

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28. Following the published suggestion of Richard Perkins, as noted above. This style of thinking is also evident in the writings before the Untimely Meditations, for example in GT where Nietzsche increases our understanding of the ancients through the polar conceptions "Apollonian" and "Dionysian". These ideas function as paradigms through which insightful thinking concerning the Greeks can function. As Cornford said in a now famous statement, this book "left the scholarship of a generation toiling in the rear"; yet these are not empirical concepts, nor is the book an empirical study of the Greeks. The words "paradigm" and "hermeneutics", we have suggested, are more appropriate. See Tracy Strong's Nietzsche and The Politics of Transfiguration (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) for a somewhat similar, and much longer, elucidation of Nietzsche's method. Strong compares Nietzsche's conceptual categories to Max Weber's use of "ideal types".

wrote in The Birth of Tragedy, "Men of philosophical disposition are known for their constant premonition that our everyday reality...is an illusion, hiding another, totally different kind of reality."[29] But any positing of a being behind becoming, or a timeless perfection behind temporality and imperfection necessarily, that is logically, devalues the phenomena. And such devaluation, for Nietzsche, is precisely the essence of nihilism:

> In Christianity neither morality nor religion come into contact with reality at any point.... This purely fictitious world is distinguished from the world of dreams, very much to its disadvantage, by the fact that the latter mirrors actuality. Once the concept 'nature' had been devised as the concept antithetical to 'God', 'natural' had to be the word for 'reprehensible'.... (A 15.)
>
> The concept "God" invented as a counterconcept to life.... The concept of the "beyond", the "true world" invented in order to devaluate the only world there is - in order to retain no goal, no reason, no task for our earthly reality! The concept of the "soul", the "spirit", finally even "immortal soul", invented in order to despise the body.... (EH IV 8.)[30]

Although Nietzsche's psychological logic is implicit in both of these quotations, it is clear that he is dealing as well with the logical relationship of the concepts "another reality", "God", etc., to the concepts "this reality", "nature", etc. As he says in the first quotation, the concept "God" stands over and against that of "nature" (in Christianity as he understands it) and necessarily devalues the latter. Professor Stambaugh makes a similar point in connection with her exposition of Nietzsche's "innocence of becoming":

> The Innocence of Becoming is a becoming free of guilt,

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29. GT 1, Golffing, tr. p.20.

30. See also EH P 2, G V 5, G IX 34, A 18, WM 11, and WM 411.

> free of its opposite, Being. When Becoming is judged by the standard of Being, it is devalued and judged as imperfect, as something which should not be.[31] It can never reach the static standard of perfect Being.

Logically, if Being is perfection, then becoming must be associated with imperfection. However, in the area in which Nietzsche's most essential thinking revolves - centering on the nihilistic spiritual crisis of modern man, its roots and causes, and the possibilities of moving beyond it to a new affirmation - in this area the logic of concepts is perhaps ultimately inseparable from human psychology, for we are dealing, after all, with man's reflection on, and attitude towards, his own destiny. This implicit psychology (dealing with the logic of certain psychological paradigms) can be seen in the language Nietzsche finds necessary to use in his exposition of the logic implicit in the two world picture. In view of this picture, the natural becomes "reprehensible", actually is "denied", the body is "despised". These are all clearly psychological terms, just as Professor Stambaugh above uses the term "judged" in its psychological connotation and Heidegger, in the following description of the logical relations between the "sensuous" and the "supersensuous" in Nietzsche's philosophy, is forced to use the psychological terms "calumniation", "denigration", and "defamation":

> Why is the basic force that is needed in order to attain a creative stance in the midst of beings missing? Answer: because it has been in a state of advanced atrophy for a long time, and because it has been perverted into its opposite. The major debility of the basic force of Dasein consists in the calumniation and denigration of the fundamental orienting force of "life" itself. Such defamation of creative life, however, has its grounds in the fact that things are posited above life which make its negation desirable. The desirable,

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31. Nietzsche's Thought of The Eternal Return, Op. Cit., p.87.

> the ideal, is the supersensuous, interpreted as genuine being. This interpretation of being is accomplished in the Platonic philosophy. The theory of ideas founds the ideal, and that means the definitive preeminence of the supersensuous, in determining and dominating the sensuous.[32]

The logical relation between the concepts "another reality" and "this reality", one might say, implies a psychological relation as well. But Nietzsche's thinking in this connection goes farther than developing the psychological implications of this logical relation; rather, he is looking for the psychology behind the positing of this metaphysical dualism in the first place. What psychological relation to the world, he asks, would move men to invent and take seriously the idea of a perfect supersensuous reality? His answer to this question, centering on the notion of ressentiment, will be the focus of the following section.

He asks a similar question in relation to physiology (the third aspect of his analysis of historical nihilism). What bodily condition and what state of health, he asks, would lead men in the first place to focus on a supersensuous reality which is the logical negation of this reality? His answer to this question concerns the concept of decadence, and his reflections within these two areas, the psychological and the physiological, parallel each other to a certain extent. However, since the conceptual dynamic of the latter implies a materialism and a determinism which he himself held primarily for polemical reasons and which is not significant to the deepest themes of his philosophizing, we will focus in the following section exclusively on the former.[33] We will not explicate, therefore, the

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32. Vol. 1, Op.Cit., p.159.

33. This notion of "decadence" is, however, discussed briefly in Chapter Two, section iii.

fourth proposition of the classificatory scheme quoted above from Twilight of The Idols which focuses on Nietzsche's key physiological concept of "decadence". Rather, we will direct our efforts toward comprehending the meaning of the third proposition in Nietzsche's scheme which focuses on his key psychological concepts of "ressentiment" and "revenge".

iv. The Psychology of Historical Nihilism: Ressentiment and Revenge

In order to understand in what way Nietzsche's psychology goes to the heart of his philosophizing it is necessary to jump ahead momentarily to his "final" philosophy and his own attempt to overcome nihilism. For a deep understanding of the paradigms which arose from Nietzsche's thinking in response to nihilism - overman, eternal recurrence, and will to power - is inseparable from the psychology of "redemption" within which these paradigms operate.

Nietzsche says in Ecce Homo that it is only with the conception of Zarathustra that his "great seriousness" really begins (EH Z 2), and the chapter on the book Thus Spoke Zarathustra (as well as the endless references in Ecce Homo and throughout the other works postdating Zarathustra) attaches utmost importance to this work. What is significant for Nietzsche is the ideal or "type" of the figure Zarathustra who symbolizes the concept "overman" or the "Dionysian" (EH Z 6), and Ecce Homo makes it clear that Nietzsche felt Zarathustra to be his most significant contribution to philosophy. In addition, this symbol or ideal "type" of being cannot be separated from what Nietzsche calls the

"fundamental conception of this work, the idea of eternal recurrence...." (EH Z 1.).

Zarathustra, of all Nietzsche's writings, contains his attempt to respond to the nihilism of our age. In its Prologue, the character Zarathustra teaches the doctrine of the "overman" and the book makes it clear that Zarathustra himself is growing toward this state of being. Intimately connected with this process is a concomitant dramatization of Zarathustra's spiritual growth to the point where he achieves "redemption".[34] It is at this point that he also becomes "the teacher of the eternal recurrence" (III 13), for this is what constitutes his "redemption".

The eternal recurrence, Nietzsche says in Ecce Homo, is "the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable". (EH Z 1.) The doctrine, therefore, has at least this one aspect that is clearly psychological, for it is a "formula of affirmation". It is opposed in Zarathustra to that from which Zarathustra needed redemption: resentment and the spirit of revenge. For the highest hope of mankind, symbolized in the idea of "overman" and his doctrine of eternal recurrence, is inseparable from the total elimination of, the redemption from, resentment and revenge:[35] "That man be delivered from revenge, that is for me the bridge to the highest

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34. Part III, section 13, cf., III 20, III 2, and III 12.

35. Z II 7. In the passage under discussion only "the spirit of revenge", der Geist der Rache, is specifically named, but the connection with "ressentiment" is consistent in the later philosophy and is explicit in the following places: GM I 10, GM II 11, GM III 24, GM II 7, EH I 6, A 20, 40, 45, WM 351, 373, 748, 765, 864. Nietzsche consistently uses the French word ressentiment as a technical term in his philosophy (although sometimes substituting the German word Groll or "rancor") for which we will translate, where applicable, the English word "resentment". Ressentiment, in Nietzsche, is a psychological response which fosters the desire for revenge, whether physical or spiritual.

hope...."

Here we have the fundamental dynamic of Nietzsche's philosophy between nihilism and the overcoming of nihilism presented in psychological paradigms: the eternal recurrence as the highest formula of affirmation, on the one hand, and the spirit of revenge and resentment on the other. Historical nihilism is connected with resentment and revenge. It is a subtle, often unconscious, response to life which resents the conditions of existence, of existing itself, and takes revenge on these conditions through positing a perfect supersensuous reality which is the negation of this reality. The traditional religious drive for redemption, therefore, was at least in part a drive to escape from and negate the conditions of earthly existence. Zarathustra states Nietzsche's interpretation of the traditional drive in the following question: "'Alas, where is redemption from the flux of things and from the punishment called existence?' Thus preached madness." (Z II 20.)

The eternal recurrence, Nietzsche's own "formula of affirmation" (we shall see in the fourth chapter), was a consciously temporal conception directed at affirmation of the conditions of earthly existence: becoming and change, creating and destroying, giving birth and passing away. Nietzsche's psychological analysis of nihilism, therefore, looked at traditional values and their connection with the positing of a perfect, supersensuous reality in terms of the concept of resentment of the conditions of existence and an act of spiritual revenge on these conditions through positing that which functioned as a logical negation of existence, a timeless, non-physical, "perfect" world of Being.

It is particularly important to stress the function of the concepts of resentment and revenge at the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy as denials of

the conditions of earthly existence and a "no-saying" to earthly existence since the first essay of the Genealogy can again be misleading in this connection. Unlike what we find in the Genealogy, Nietzsche's concept of resentment functions in large part as an analysis of nihilism itself: modern nihilism, with its view that life is meaningless and in vain, gives a "weary 'no'" to the conditions of existence while historical nihilism, with its belief in a supersensuous reality, gives a spiritual 'no' to those same conditions.

The first essay of the Genealogy does indeed focus on resentment and the spirit of revenge as the genesis of Christianity with its belief in another reality, in its judgment upon this reality, etc. But resentment there is resentment of the "Aristocratic-knightly" ruling classes with their "noble morality" which was basically a life-loving and life-affirming orientation. (GM I 7.) To derive from this the idea that resentment in Nietzsche's philosophy functions only as the psychological reaction of oppressed classes to upper classes that enslave them is to miss the entire thrust of his philosophic hermeneutic. The first essay of the Genealogy can better be seen as creating mythic paradigms with groups of symbols revolving around the opposing ideas of "base morality" and "noble morality". The base morality can then be understood as resenting and taking spiritual revenge of that which symbolizes a love and affirmation of this life, noble morality. As Nietzsche writes in the Antichrist:

> In my Genealogy of Morals I introduced for the first time the psychology of the antithetical concepts of a noble morality and a ressentiment morality, the latter deriving from a denial of the former.... The instinct of ressentiment here become genius had to invent another world from which that life-affirmation would appear evil, reprehensible as such. (A 24.)

Nietzsche here explicitly articulates the heart of his doctrine of

resentment: Christianity invented "another world" in order to negate "life-affirmation", not merely the enslaving classes.[36]

It is again worthwhile to remind ourselves that Nietzsche was trained in the scholarship of classical philology and was professor at Basel, giving lectures on the ancients, for ten years before his health forced him to retire. For it is clear that there is nothing in the first essay of the Genealogy which even remotely fulfills the canons of objective historical scholarship: there is almost no historical evidence presented, no chronological sequence of events ever even remotely occurred as Nietzsche imagines them, and finally, Nietzsche's concept of "noble morality" seems more closely connected with the classical Greeks of five or six centuries before Christianity than it does with the brutal and epigonal Romans whom Nietzsche uses as a symbol of the classical ideal. What we have here is a work which follows in the pattern established in the Birth of Tragedy already mentioned. What is going on is not objective historical scholarship but the creation of paradigms which hopefully serve to illuminate the phenomena in question: in the Birth of Tragedy the paradigms of Apollonian and Dionysian illuminate the tragedy and religious life of the classical Greeks (which is in turn in the service of illuminating our present life) and in the Genealogy the paradigms centering around "noble morality" and "base morality" illuminate the phenomenon of Christianity (and in turn our present life) through the idea of resentment of the conditions of life and an act of revenge in the creation of a supersensuous reality which judges and condemns those who love and affirm this life. Although the concept

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36. The same dynamic is described in WM 172 where "the ressentiment of the lowly" is manifested in "a counterdoctrine in opposition to the wisdom of this world".

of resentment also functions in other ways in Nietzsche's writings, as for example in class hatred and in rebellions and revolutions of all sorts, to take these as its fundamental role is to miss the central core of his thinking.

Hence the concept of resentment functions as part of the collection of symbols elucidating nihilism. It is a possibility of response to life which is present in every age and at every time. In fact, in Nietzsche's view it has been the most fundamental response to life in most historical epochs of Western culture.[37] As Rose Pfeffer says in her discussion of Nietzsche's notion of nihilism, for Nietzsche "nihilism becomes the basic law of history, present in all ages and all civilizations."[38] Thus the psychological analysis of historical nihilism in terms of the concepts of resentment and revenge sees these as ever present possibilities of human response to life. The analysis creates paradigms which serve to illuminate present experience, and hopefully helps us to overcome nihilism as we move into the future.

Nietzsche's experience of the modern world included not only its nihilism, it included an insight into the phenomenon of resentment as well and a concomitant vision (implicit in all the writings from the time of his great inspiration of 1881) of the possibility of an entirely transformed mode of human existence.[39] He has his Zarathustra praise whoever "writes in blood". (Z I 7.) His own life was nothing if not "existential" in this sense. All his essential ideas, he believed, had been worked out or

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37. For example, see GM I 16 (which also discusses (relative) exceptions to this rule).

38. Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus, Op.Cit., p.91.

39. The character of this vision is discussed in Chapter Four.

were being worked out in terms of the spiritual processes which characterized his own life. His basic experience, we have seen, was nihilism, but his ideas for overcoming nihilism were also developed in terms of his personal spiritual struggles with this relation to existence. Even the more abstract ideas, the mythic paradigms, had their roots in his own existence. In his spiritual autobiography Nietzsche underlines that this is also true of his concept of ressentiment. As is well known, there are few in the history of great literature whose lives contained as much physical pain and illness as Nietzsche's. Yet in the section of Ecce Homo devoted to the concept of ressentiment, Nietzsche makes a point of showing gratitude to his life of terrible pain and illness for enlightening him about this concept:

> Freedom from ressentiment, enlightenment about ressentiment - who knows how much I am ultimately indebted, in this respect also, to my protracted sickness! (EH I 6.)

A study of the many passages dealing with resentment or revenge in Nietzsche's writings convinces of the pervasiveness of this psychological response in human life and the variety of human ideas and actions which can be connected with it. Indeed, Nietzsche states in this same section of Ecce Homo that his entire philosophy has "pursued the fight against vengefulness and rancor". To understand this most important idea in his philosophy, therefore, it is important to begin with one's own existential experience. Nietzsche does not offer empirical proof. As with that other great 19th psychologist Dostoyevski, there must be a certain resonance with our own lives if we are to acquire a deep appreciation of his insights. Nihilism is an eternal possibility in human life because the human animal as he has so far existed has been largely poisoned by

resentment and rancor. This is true of each of us and is implicit throughout our lives, including our philosophies and religions.

Anyone who pays the slightest attention to his or her own inner life, that is, anyone with the slightest self-awareness, realizes the tendency of this subtle feeling to arise. From the strangers who continually impose upon us, our relations with our neighbors and even within our families, to the gigantic impersonal forces that control our lives and destinies: the stupid politicians, the never ending wars, giant economic concerns, inefficient and unfeeling bureaucracies, the trash and filth of popular culture, to the pain, illness, and aging process towards death that is inseparable from life - all this tends to generate almost imperceptibly but irresistibly in most people resentment and the secret repressed desire for revenge. As Max Scheler says in his book Ressentiment (which is at once a development of and a response to Nietzsche) one can notice this phenomenon repeatedly in everyday discourse,[40] not so much in the content of what is said, but in the tone, the direction, the timing, in short, in the undercurrents of our speech. Nietzsche's analysis of historical nihilism applied this existential insight to historical phenomena, producing, decades before Freud, one of the first psychohistories of Western man.[41]

It is this pervasive character of resentment (which functions in Nietzsche's thinking very much akin to the Biblical idea that there is a

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40. Ressentiment, Trans. William W. Holdheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp.70-1.

41. Two contemporary books which develop the idea that our philosophy and religion has been in large measure a denial and resentment of that ultimate condition of our existence called "death" are Becker, The Denial of Death and Choron, Time and Western man (see bibliography). Neither book seems to be aware of the pioneering work done by Nietzsche in this regard. However, like Scheler's book, both go a long way toward developing and substantiating Nietzsche's insights.

basic flaw in our human nature) - and our need to overcome it if we are to realize the full potential of our humanity - which is the first point of Nietzsche's philosophizing in this regard. All his specific applications of this idea, to socialism, anarchism, democracy, the French revolution, the ideal of "justice", the belief in equal rights, etc., are only specific cases of this tendency toward spiritual impurity and inner poison which characterizes the species "man". As Nietzsche says in Twilight: "There is a small dose of revenge in every complaint". (G IX 34.) This is also true of his application of this idea to Christianity: "The fight against Christianity", he says, "is merely a special case of this ". (EH I 6.) And, we have seen, his own vision of the overcoming of nihilism requires the transformation of ourselves into a "superhuman" being who is, for the first time, entirely free of the poison of resentment.

Taking Western history as a whole, then, we can see that Christianity and philosophy seem to be the twin poles in terms of which historical nihilism is discerned: both have largely negated this world in favor of another. We have seen how the logical aspect of historical nihilism involves the positing of a perfect supersensuous reality which logically devalues this imperfect world of becoming. Now we see further that the psychological dimension of this is hatred and resentment of the conditions of life itself. "The priest alters the direction of ressentiment", Nietzsche says, "back against ourselves, and hence against life itself". (GM III 15.) He calls the psychological presupposition of Christianity an "instinctive hatred of reality" (A 30) and finds the role of the priest to be a devaluation of nature itself: "The priest disvalues, dissanctifies nature;[42] it is

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42. "Der Priester entwerthet, entheiligt die Natur".

only at the price of this that he exists at all". (A 26.)

Similarly philosophy, in so far as its predominant trend has not been scepticism but rather metaphysics,[43] has, in various historical forms, regularly posited "Being" as reality over and against becoming. This is implicit in the brief history of philosophy which makes up chapter four of Twilight ("How the True World at last became a Fable") and is made explicit in two long notes in the Will to Power. In the latter Nietzsche discusses the resentment of philosophers "against the conditions of life", giving us a psychology of philosophers which sees them as "slanderers" of the senses, and "the entire evolution of philosophy" as "as sort of revenge on reality":

> The history of philosophy is a secret raging against the preconditions of life, against the value feelings of life, against partisanship in favor of life. Philosophers have never hesitated to affirm a world provided it contradicted this world and furnished them with a pretext for speaking ill of this world. It has been hitherto the grand school of slander...." (WM 461.)

The logical and psychological analyses of historical nihilism are combined together and explicitly related to ressentiment in WM 579:

> Psychology of metaphysics. - This world is apparent: consequently there is a true world; - this world is full of contradiction: consequently there is a world free of contradiction; - this world is a world of becoming: consequently there is a world of being: all false conclusions.... It is suffering that inspires these conclusions: fundamentally they are desires that such a world should exist; in the same way, to imagine another, more valuable world is an expression of hatred for a world that makes one suffer: the ressentiment of metaphysicians against actuality is here creative.

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43. Historical scepticism has, for other reasons, also been a form of life-negation: see, e.g., WM 437 & 442.

In sum, it should be clear that resentment is the key not only to the psychological analysis of the historical origins of nihilism but to the phenomenon of nihilism understood as a pervasive and perpetual possibility of response to existence. Modern nihilism is also a phenomenon of resentment. It arises, Nietzsche says, through the collapse of the traditional interpretation of existence: for now it seems as if there were "no meaning at all in existence". (WM 55.) It is a reaction to the loss of belief in another world which disparages this world through the feeling that human life is "meaningless and in vain".[44] Finally, we have seen that the key to the overcoming of nihilism lies in a spiritual transformation of ourselves into "superhuman" beings who are, for the first time, entirely free of the spiritual poison of resentment.

Nietzsche posed for future philosophers this world-historical task: to find a philosophy which restores the dignity of man and the sanctity of nature which at the same time is absolutely faithful to this world of becoming, flux, creation, suffering, and death. And this philosophy was not to be a mere intellectual construction, for it would be meaningless unless it arose from a transformed mode of our being-in-the-world, a mode of being free of resentment and involving great creative affirmation of every aspect of life. What Nietzsche calls the "revaluation of all values" which will take us beyond nihilism, therefore, involves most fundamentally two revaluations: (1) a logical one of finding philosophical or religious ideas which do not logically devalue and negate this world, (2) a spiritual one which transforms our being-in-the-world beyond resentment into

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44. Nietzsche might well have called Sartre's famous statement in Being and Nothingness that "man is a useless passion vainly striving in a meaningless universe" a nihilistic statement par excellence.

affirmation. Nietzsche's philosophy cannot be understood without seeing the connections between these two revaluations, between the logical and the spiritual in his thinking. Nor can it be understood without comprehending the fundamental role of the concept of resentment, not only in historical nihilism, but as his conception of the way in which we are, so to speak, "fallen beings", as the basic flaw in our humanity without "redemption" from which nihilism cannot be overcome.

v. Nihilism and The Dialectical Overcoming of Truth

Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God in The Gay Science, we have seen, involved an interpretation of the spiritual consequences of the Copernican Revolution. What was most precious in all the world - for it gave meaning and significance to human existence - has bled to death from our prying and investigating, our relentless searching and seeking after truth. The result is not a state of enlightenment and truth but a spiritual condition in which human life is seen as "meaningless and in vain". The problem of nihilism, then, is the problem of meaning: the meaning and dignity of human existence has been lost and the task of philosophers is to create new values which restore the meaning and dignity to existence. This task is not merely an interpretative one since there is within man a tendency to a certain spiritual poison, comparable to the fallenness attributed to him by the Bible, which precludes a true affirmation and delight in existence through a tendency to deride, resent, and denigrate the conditions of that existence. Hence future philosophers must be the vanguard of new values through the spiritual transformation of themselves into beings capable of creating genuinely life-affirming values

which restore meaning to human existence without devaluing the natural world in the process. For we are, for Nietzsche as for Heidegger, inseparable from this world; we are being-in-the-world.

But just as nihilism perhaps cannot be understood without, at some point in our lives, an experience of the meaninglessness which Nietzsche describes, and just as the need for a spiritual transformation as integral to the process of transcending nihilism perhaps cannot be understood without, at some point, an experience of the pervasiveness of the spiritual poison of resentment in human life, so there is a third experience which is fundamental to Nietzsche's thought and which is inseparable from nihilism. This is the experience that "there is no truth". Philosophers have the task of restoring the meaning and dignity to human existence not simply in the face of the realization that the traditional idea of a supersensuous reality is an illusion, but in the face of the realization that every weltanschauung is merely an interpretation, that there is no single true interpretation. The problem of nihilism is the problem of restoring meaning and value to human existence in the face of what we have called "metaphysical scepticism". How can meaning and value be restored when there is no truth?

We shall see in the following chapters in what way metaphysical scepticism was a fundamental experience of Nietzsche's philosophical life, just as the passion for truth was his fundamental drive as a philosopher. Our concern here, however, is to delineate the connection between what Nietzsche calls "the problem of truth" (J 1 & 5) and nihilism, and in doing so set the stage for our investigation of Nietzsche's understanding of the notion of "truth" itself. "What does nihilism mean?" Nietzsche asks, "That the highest values devaluate themselves". Just as this definition is

the clue to the historical dialectic that has resulted in the feeling of meaninglessness which characterizes the modern world so it is also the clue to the dialectic which has resulted in the claim of metaphysical scepticism: there is no truth. For "truth", above all else for Nietzsche, is a value, one of the highest traditional values. This dialectical devaluation of truth forms part of the core of his understanding of nihilism.

The place in the published writings that brings out this dialectic most clearly is the third essay of the Genealogy of Morals, sections 23-28.[45] The third essay as a whole, entitled "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?", treats of three general aspects of ascetic ideals.[46] Sections 1-10 treat of the philosopher and ascetic ideals, sections 11-22 constitute an attack on those whom Nietzsche considers to be the life-denying proponents of this ideal, the priests, and finally, sections 23-28 treat of science and the will to truth as part of the historical dialectic involving the ascetic ideal. What Nietzsche claims of the Genealogy in Ecce Homo is perhaps especially true of this third essay: "Every time a beginning that is calculated to mislead: cool, scientific, even ironic, deliberately foreground, deliberately holding off." (EH III GM.) For only with the last six sections of this essay do we move to one of the most important passages in Nietzsche's philosophy. These closing sections of the book deal

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45. See also J "Preface" and sections 1-5, and the 1886 preface to Dawn.

46. Nietzsche nowhere explicitly defines what is meant by "ascetic ideals". The intent may be that the essay itself establishes his meaning. Asceticism, of course, is any form of self-denial, but Nietzsche tends to use the word in a more general sense to mean any denial of the conditions of life itself. Hence the drive for knowledge, the drive to penetrate behind the veils of the phenomena in the service of this ideal, tends to deny the conditions of life which are the "illusions", the veils themselves. Webster's New World Dictionary (1962) defines "asceticism" as "systematic self-denial for some ideal".

with an entirely new relation to the question of truth, which he believes to be one of his special contributions to philosophy. Let us examine some of the points Nietzsche makes here in order to elucidate this contribution and its connection with nihilism.[47]

1. The first point Nietzsche makes is connected with that self-misunderstanding of modern atheism and scientism which is implied by the madman when he told the atheists and free thinkers that they had not understood the implications of the "death of God". Nietzsche's praise for such people in the Genealogy is genuine, for it is their love of truth, their "intellectual cleanliness" or "intellectual conscience" which drives them to disbelieve in traditional religion and hence become atheists. (148-9.) But these atheists and sceptics misunderstand their relation to the traditional ideals; they misunderstand that they themselves are "idealists of knowledge" (149) and hence not quite the "free spirits" that they suppose: "for they still have faith in truth" (150). Where does the unconditional intellectual honesty and will to truth of these people have its grounding? On what basis does one sacrifice everything for truth and intellectual integrity? Nietzsche answers that there is still a religious faith that is operating here, "faith in a metaphysical value, the absolute value of truth". (151.) Similarly, the tremendous energy that drives the natural sciences forward involves this same traditional value, an implicit religious faith in truth. Hence, even our faith in science involves what Nietzsche calls a "metaphysical faith" (152).

2. The realization of this would involve a realization of the madman's point that we have not yet explored the implications of the "death of

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47. Page number references are here included within parentheses in the text.

God". If philosophy can be said to investigate the presuppositions of our activities in the world, then a new step must be taken in philosophy which has not previously been taken: we must ask about the presuppositions of the traditional belief in the will to truth, for even the passion for truth behind modern science and free thought would seem to involve only "the latest and noblest form" (147), a highly spiritualized form, of traditional religious faith and metaphysical beliefs.

> At this point it is necessary to pause and take careful stock. Science itself henceforth requires justification (which is not to say that there is any such justification). Consider on this question both the earliest and most recent philosophers: they are all oblivious of how much the will to truth itself first requires justification; here the ascetic ideal has hitherto dominated all philosophy, because truth was posited as being, as God, as the highest court of appeal - because truth was not permitted to be a problem at all. Is this "permitted" understood? - From the moment faith in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied, a new problem arises: that of the value of truth.
>
> The will to truth requires a critique - let us thus define our own task - the value of truth must for once be experimentally called into question. (152-3.)

As with Heidegger, Nietzsche seems to realize that with the collapse of traditional metaphysics and traditional religion in the modern world we are living on borrowed time. For the values that animate our most significant activities are hollow at the core; they are an "unconscious" (151) perpetuation of traditional values whose metaphysical justification has been called into question. This is another reason why these modern sceptics and atheists are also "nihilists" (149); they continue to devalue this world through holding those values connected with its traditional metaphysical devaluation. It may be, Nietzsche suggests, that we will find no grounding or justifiction for science and perhaps none for any new values we might propose. But there is no hope for overcoming the

historical juncture of modern nihilism without a complete examination of all our traditional values. Hence we must call the value of truth itself "experimentally into question". We must ask ourselves what truth is, what justifications can be given for valuing it, what its connection is with traditional metaphysics, whether science requires metaphysical presuppositions, etc. It is this examination that was fundamental to Nietzsche's philosophical project, animated as always by the desperate historical need to overcome the nihilism of the modern world.

It was a project touched on and referred to in one way or another in all the published writings from The Gay Science until the end of Nietzsche's philosophical career with the onset of the devastating illness of January 1889. But it becomes clear in the Genealogy, we have seen, that the real examination of the question of truth was never accomplished, since it was to be part of the magnum opus which was never written. Hence Nietzsche left us with his questions concerning truth and with his task of overcoming nihilism. He also left us with some suggestions, which we will examine below, as to the general direction by which we might grapple with these tasks. However, as Heidegger says in his first volume on Nietzsche, we have not yet begun to examine these questions but rather push ahead with our "progress", blindly, unreflectively, unphilosophically.[48] Whereas Nietzsche, of course, during his productive life, did "nothing but

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48. See WM P 3. Albert Schweitzer in Civilization and Ethics (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1949) agrees in general with the assessments of Heidegger and Nietzsche: "The task before our generation is to strive with deepened thought to reach a truer and more valuable world-view, and thus bring an end to our living on and on without any philosophy of life at all. Our age is striking out unmeaningly in every direction.... It is trying with external measures and new organization to solve the difficult problems with which it has to deal, but all in vain.... Our world will not get upon its feet again until it lets the truth come home to it that salvation is not to be found in active measures but in new ways of thinking." (p.202).

reflect" on these problems. Heidegger writes:

> But there must be culture, because man must progress - wither, no one knows, and no one is seriously asking anymore. Besides, one still has his "Christianity" at the ready, and his Church; these are already becoming more political than religious institutions....
>
> The aesthetic man believes that he is protected and vindicated by the whole of a culture.... Nevertheless, it remains the mere foreground of that occurrence which Nietzsche is the first to recognize and proclaim with full clarity: nihilism....
>
> What Hegel asserted concerning art - that it had lost its power to be the definite fashioner and preserver of the absolute - Nietzsche recognized to be the case with the "highest values", religion, morality, and philosophy: the lack of creative force and cohesion in grounding man's historical existence upon beings as a whole.[49]

When Heidegger says that for Nietzsche the highest values that lack the force to ground man's historical existence are "religion, morality, and philosophy", he is correct in his assessment. For the word "philosophy" in Nietzsche's thought is most often associated with the will to truth. As he says in an unpublished note of this period: "The entire developmental history of philosophy up to now as the developmental history of the will to truth."[50] And an earlier note connects the results of this history of philosophy with nihilism:

> On the history of European nihilism. As necessary consequence of previous ideals: absolute nothingness.... This entire development of philosophy as developmental history of the will to truth. Its calling itself into question.[51]

Hence, if philosophy historically can be connected with the passion for

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49. The Will to Power as Art, Op.Cit., p.90.

50. KGW VIII 2, 439, R. Perkins, tr.

51. Selbst In Fragestellung, KGW VIII, 2, 3, R. Perkins, tr.

truth on the part of Western man, then the attempt to grapple with nihilism through the self-examination of the will to truth is simultaneously a self-examination on the part of philosophy, not only in terms of its nature and limits, but also in terms of its role in the overcoming of nihilism and the justification (or creation) of new values.

3. The next main point which Nietzsche makes here raises the problem more specifically in connection with science (153). If science is a manifestation of the will to truth in the modern world then we must ask what is the meaning of science? It is here (section 25) that Nietzsche underlines the paradoxical nature of science insofar as it is connected with the Copernican Revolution and Western man's revaluation of his place in the universe. For even though science seems to have destroyed the dignity and uniqueness of man, science itself, insofar as it involves the will to truth, is only the highest and most spiritual consequence of the ascetic ideal (155). An historical dialectic is taking place in which the innermost logic of traditional values, their highest refinement in intellectual conscience and the will to truth, is in the process of destroying those ideals themselves.

4. But nihilism is not only manifest in the atheists and free thinkers whose intellectual conscience betrays their faith in the ideal of truth, there are other responses to modernity which are also possible. Nietzsche next looks at two of these responses with an eye to showing nihilism at work here as well. The first possibility is to accept the Kantian critique of human knowledge in the spirit with which Kant intended it: "to make room for faith".[52] Here nihilism is also operative in that this solution is

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52. Critique of Pure Reason, Norman Kemp Smith, tr. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p.29.

hollow at the core. Rather than worshiping the living God who is "attainable" for the virtuous and wise (G IV) religious people now worship the nothingness that is beyond knowledge: "they now worship the question mark itself as God". Here traditional nihilism is still operative. By worshiping the question mark beyond knowledge, modern man is still devaluing this reality in favor of another, an unknowable one; they still remain in ascetic ideals which are nihilistic at the core:

> There is no knowledge: consequently - there is a God": what a new elegantia syllogismi! what a triumph for the ascetic ideal! - (156)[53]

The second response to modernity that Nietzsche looks at here is modern "objective" historiography which no longer uses teleology to explain the events in human life but purports merely to "describe" these events. This also, he says, is highly nihilistic, for these people have retreated into an aesthetic detachment from existence which no longer even thinks in terms of the meaning of existence but lives in a kind of vacuum of meaning (157-8). The comparison immediately arises with Kierkegaard's "aesthetic" stage of life,[54] a mode of existence which includes the

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53. We will find in our examination of Wittgenstein's philosophy that there is a third possibility, connected with Kant's argument - or at least with the logical consequences of Kant's argument in a delineation, not of knowledge, but of the limits of language - which Nietzsche did not seem to take into account: the possibility of a new awareness, beyond the limits of language, arising in connection with a certain critique of language. But these ideas belong to a later, and more specifically 20th century, chapter.

54. The differences between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are, of course, great. One way of characterizing the basic difference is to say that, if Kierkegaard opted for "subjective truth" over objective truth (See Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Book Two, Part Two, Chapter Two), Nietzsche's final philosophy insists on remaining in an irreconcilable dynamic tension between these which can only be resolved, for him, through a spiritual transformation of our nature.

detached point of view of the intellectual and inevitably moves toward despair.

5. In section 27 Nietzsche summarizes and culminates his discussion of the connection between nihilism and the will to truth. The will to truth is the animating force of much of the modern world, including the "unconditional honest atheism" of this age. And this will to truth is not simply the remnant of the ascetic ideal, he says, but is "this ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, with all external additions abolished, and thus not so much its remnant as its kernel" (160). Nietzsche has suggested (what we shall examine more fully in the following chapters) that the belief in truth requires in some way metaphysical presuppositions. If we withdraw the concepts of "aim", "unity", and "being" which characterized traditional metaphysics (WM 12), are we not simultaneously calling into question the traditional understanding of "truth" which was connected with the idea that there was one reality, one ultimate true way in which the world was, which we called "being"? If we question traditional metaphysics perhaps we must also question the very notion of a thing-in-itself (WM 3) and hence perhaps the idea that it is possible for human "knowledge" to go beyond mere interpretation, beyond "perspectival illusions". (WM 518, 636.) If these are legitimate questions, and Nietzsche as well as many modern philosophers believe they are, then we are committed to reassessing the very notion of truth and with it our faith and belief in truth. Hence, with these reassessments, we can say that the traditional value of truth, the traditional metaphysical ideal of truth, is "calling itself into question".

6. Nietzsche articulates this in the form of an historical dialectic. Christianity, and with it traditional metaphysics, was overcome by its own

morality (160-61). For God was truth, was ultimate reality, was "being", and it is this very faith in the holiness and sanctity of truth which led to a more and more refined intellectual conscience, a more methodical and systematic scientific spirit, and more refined methods of criticism and justification.[55] And just as this faith in truth resulted in the disbelief in traditional religion since Copernicus, with Nietzsche's philosophy we are becoming conscious for the first time that our faith in truth itself involves metaphysical assumptions, that the belief in truth itself is the innermost kernel of the traditional metaphysical values. We now stand at a new world-historical juncture: "God is dead" the madman says, and "there has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us...will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto". For with the Selbst In Fragestellung of the will to truth we are at the beginning of the end of all our traditional values, of "what was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned". But God's shadow still hangs over Europe, the abyss that yawns with the calling into question of traditional values was not apparent in the 19th century, for that century still had its faith in truth. "This tremendous event is still on its way", the madman says, "it has not yet reached the ears of men....yet they have done it themselves":

> What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism. This history can be related even now; for necessity itself is at work here. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere.... (WM P 2.)

For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary?

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55. This unique historical development, which defines our spiritual character and the spiritual possibilities of the present situation, is another reason why any notion that Nietzsche wished to return to the warlike nobility of the ancient Greeks is sheer nonsense.

> Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequences; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals - because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had. - We require, sometime, new values. (WM P 4.)

With the calling into question of the value of truth, the historical dialectic involving the overcoming of traditional values reaches its conclusion. Morality, in the form of the value of truth, overcame traditional religion; now this morality becomes conscious of itself as depending on traditional religion and calls itself into question. Complete nihilism, the devaluation of all the highest values, does not appear until the last of these values, the will to truth itself, is seen also to depend on traditional metaphysical faith.

As the above six points imply, Nietzsche does not dictate that we throw out truth. On the contrary, as we shall see, Nietzsche (and even his ideal of the overman) remained passionately concerned with truth and truthfulness right to the end. But the historical juncture at which we stand, he believed, dictated that we call the value of truth "experimentally" into question. For without doing so we might never find our way beyond nihilism, beyond the nightmare of relativity and valuelessness that he predicted for the 20th century.

Here Nietzsche's philosophy and philosophizing are anything but dogmatic. It is a philosophizing which centers around the spiritual crisis of modern man, which realizes that this crisis must be faced and lived through before it can be transcended. It is experimental in that we are feeling our way into the future: toward new values, or at least toward a new understanding of our human situation, for nihilism will mean the end of man unless we can find a way to a new affirmation:

> Such an experimental philosophy as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of the most fundamental nihilism; but this does not mean that it must halt at a negation, a No, a will to negation. It wants rather to cross over to the opposite of this - to Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection.... (WM 1041.)

Secondly, Nietzsche's philosophy is experimental and anti-dogmatic in that the historical situation requires that he challenge and question even the most sacred traditional values. It is therefore a philosophy of great courage because it requires that he examine critically "what was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned". The very internal logic of traditional values has led to modern nihilism and there is no way beyond nihilism without examining those values to "find out what value these "values" really had". What is needed above all else from philosophers is that they be concerned with values as part of the attempt to restore meaning and justification to human life. But this requires an experimental courageousness which is willing to say "no" even to the values, like the will to truth, that still support and sustain us:

> I understand by "freedom of spirit" something quite definite: being a hundred times superior to philosophers and other disciples of "truth" in severity towards oneself, in cleanliness and courage, in the unconditional will to say No were it is dangerous to say No.... (WM 465.)

Finally, and most importantly, Nietzsche's philosophy is an experimental philosophy because of its subject matter as an examination and critique of the value of truth. Even scepticism, from the ancient sceptics on, seemed to be making claims in this regard: leading to the famous "dilemma of scepticism", their seeming claim that "it is true that there is no truth". Nietzsche's philosophy sees that the doing of philosophy is a life and death matter for modern man, yet its historical imperative is

to undertake this while calling into question the very grounds of traditional intelligibility. It pushes forward into the abyss of nihilism, into what seems like a complete groundlessness, while challenging all traditional groundings: value, purpose, meaning, truth. It pushes forward, tentatively, probingly, experimenting with the concept of the "necessity of lies" (WM 853) or with the possibility of doing away with such dualisms as "truth versus lie" altogether. (J 1-5.) For when truth is no longer the grounding for philosophical activity, we find ourselves in a no man's land of questions and question marks:

> The problem of the value of truth came before us - or was it we who came before the problem? Who of us is Oedipus here? Who the Sphinx? It is a rendezvous, it seems, of questions and question marks.
>
> And though it scarcely seems credible, it finally almost seems to us as if the problem had never even been put so far - as if we were the first to see it, fix it with our eyes, and risk it. For it does involve a risk, and perhaps there is none that is greater. (J 1.)

Nietzsche is sure of himself - is polemical - mainly when he is attacking those things which he believes degrade and demean human beings, things usually connected with a lack of intellectual conscience or with the spiritual poison of resentment. But when he tries to move into the future, to grope his way beyond nihilism, he has only the material of his own (very general) experience of inspiration and his (equally general) understanding that we must find new values which reflect "affirmation of the world as it is, without exception, subtraction, or selection". Other than this there is no ground on which to stand as we move into the future. We can no longer move forward on the basis of past knowledge or truth, nor in terms of our desire to find new truth: for there is no truth.

What, then, have we seen nihilism to be in this chapter? Modern

nihilism, the spiritual crisis of our modern world, is a result of the calling into question of traditional religion and metaphysics brought about by the Copernican Revolution and the rise of science, understood as an increase in intellectual conscience, a sharpening of methods of criticism and epistemological scepticism. Modern nihilism involves a plunging into the opposite valuations once we find the traditional ones fundamentally questionable: human life now seems meaningless and in vain. But traditional metaphysics and religion were also nihilistic, for they denied and devalued this world in favor of belief in a supersensuous reality beyond this world. Nietzsche's analysis of this, we saw, involves three aspects (logical, psychological, and physiological) the first two of which were discussed. Logically speaking, positing another reality always carries with it predicates which devalue and deny the characteristics of this transitory and sensuous world of suffering and pain, birth and death, and psychologically it can be seen that this other-worldliness involves resentment and the desire for revenge on the conditions of worldly existence.

Finally, nihilism is connected with "truth" in the same way as it is connected with traditional religion and metaphysics, for "truth" is simply the kernel, as well as the latest and most enduring child of these traditional valuations, valuations which identified "truth" with what is holy, with God. Hence, the traditional valuation of truth involves historical nihilism since it was connected with God and a supersensuous metaphysical world. But when Nietzsche, in terms of his own philosophizing, believes he has seen the emptiness of our modern value of truth, since it too is inseparable from traditional metaphysical assumptions, then we move into modern nihilism: we plunge into the opposite valuation, we conclude that

"there is no truth":

> ...Among the forces cultivated by morality was truthfulness: this eventually turned against morality, discovered its teleology, its partial perspective - and now the recognition of this inveterate mendaciousness that one despairs of shedding becomes a stimulant. Now we discover in ourselves needs implanted by centuries of moral interpretation - needs that now appear to us as needs for untruth; on the other hand, the value for which we endure life seems to hinge on these needs. This antagonism - not to esteem what we know, and not to be allowed any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves - results in a process of dissolution. (WM 5.)
>
> Nihilism represents a pathological transitional stage (what is pathological is the tremendous generalization, the inference that there is no meaning at all).... Presupposition of this hypothesis: that there is no truth, that there is no absolute nature of things nor a "thing-in-itself". (WM 13.)

It is in terms of this world-historical context that Nietzsche believes philosophizing must be done, beginning with himself, and for perhaps the next two centuries. It must be done in this groping and searching fashion, for all traditional value foundations have been removed:

> The deeper one looks, the more our valuations disappear - meaninglessness approaches! We have created the world that possesses values! Knowing this, we know, too, that reverence for truth is already the consequence of an illusion.... (WM 602.)

Yet philosophy must be done, for it is a life and death matter. We must in some way find values which restore the meaning and dignity to human existence, yet which do not deny or devalue this sensuous reality.

It is within this context that the problem of "truth" involves the very heart of Nietzsche's philosophy and philosophizing. And it is within this context, the context of what we have been calling "metaphysical scepticism", that we must begin grappling not only with Nietzsche's philosophizing concerning truth, but with the problem of nihilism itself and

the spiritual crisis which permeates our modern world. It is within this context that the seriousness and meaning of the present study must be understood.

CHAPTER TWO

"A GENIUS FOR TRUTH" AND THE REVALUATION OF VALUES

> No writer in world literature has ever laid bare as effectively as Nietzsche the moral inadequacy of mediocrity.
>
> Sterling Lamprecht[1]

i. Integrity, Scientific Method, And The Philosopher

In Chapter One we developed the connection, in Nietzsche's thinking, between the phenomenon of nihilism in the modern world and his belief that the traditional Western metaphysical value of "truth" had been called into question. We saw that, in order to move beyond nihilism, Nietzsche felt that it was vitally necessary to engage in a reexamination and revaluation of our thinking concerning "truth". For with the challenges to the very possibility of metaphysical knowledge by such figures as Kant and Hume, there was now a tremendous disparity between our belief in truth as a value and the sceptical historical situation in which we find ourselves.

We will examine Nietzsche's thinking regarding this "problem of truth" in the modern world in Chapter Three. However, in order to fully

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1. Our Philosophical Traditions, p.401.

comprehend his thinking in this connection, it is necessary to document in what way Nietzsche himself continued to believe in the traditional values connected with truth. As an "existentialist" thinker, the crisis of value which he identified in the modern world (which included the value of "truth") was manifested in his own thinking and writing. Hence, in this chapter we will see Nietzsche begin groping toward a philosophical revaluation of the concept of truth while, at the same time, resolutely holding on to the value of "truth" in a traditional sense. In addition, an understanding of this passionate commitment to the traditional value of truth and truthfulness will provide a context without which his later doctrines such as "the will to power" are unintelligible.

The second theme which will emerge in this chapter is Nietzsche's emphasis on the need to restore the integrity of the phenomena by leaving them, in a certain sense, uninterpreted. In Chapter One we saw that the interpretations of the world offered by traditional philosophy and religion were understood, by Nietzsche, as manifestations of resentment attempting to deny the natural world and the flux of the phenomena. However, if that truthfulness animating science and the 18th century critiques of metaphysics forces us to call into question all such world interpretations, what interpretations are we left with? Nietzsche's answer, we will see, is that in some fundamental way all interpretations of the world are now called into question. To restore the integrity of the phenomena, we must now recognize that all our interpretations are interpretations, that every interpretation is a new metaphysics of one sort or another.

Finally, this chapter will also serve to provide a context for our examination of Nietzsche's philosophy in Chapters Three and Four by introducing his earliest reflections concerning the problem of truth in its

relation to cultural communities in general. We will see that the conceptual dialectic which animated his earliest thinking, the struggle between the traditional value of truth and the need of each culture to generate "myths" which interpret the meaning of that culture, forms a background for the dialectic which animated his later philosophy: the struggle between the traditional value of truth and the perspectival claims of "life" itself. Hence, on all counts, our description in this chapter of the ways in which the notion of truth was fundamental to Nietzsche's philosophy from beginning to end, provides a context without which his philosophy as a whole cannot be understood. Let us look, then, in this first section, at the way in which the traditional value of truth animated Nietzsche's philosophy throughout all periods of his thinking.

When Nietzsche was a college student of 20, he had not yet defined himself as a philosopher. Yet it is interesting to see the comments he makes concerning the nature of truth in his reply to his sister who had been defending her Christianity to him:

> As for your principle, that the truth is always on the more difficult side, I concede this to you in part. Nonetheless, it is difficult to understand that two times two does not equal four; but does make it any the more true?
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> On the other hand, is it really so difficult simply to accept everything in which one has been brought up, which has gradually become deeply rooted in oneself, which holds true among relatives and among many good people, which does moreover really comfort and elevate man? Is that more difficult than to take new paths, struggling against habituation, uncertain of one's independent course, amid frequent vacillations of the heart, and even of the conscience, often comfortless, but always pursuing the eternal goal of the true, the beautiful, the good?
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> Is it then a matter of acquiring the view of God, world, and atonement in which one can feel most comfortable? Is it not, rather, true that for the true researcher the result of his research is of no account at all? Do we, in our investigations, search for tranquillity, peace, happiness? No - only for truth, even if it were to be frightening and ugly.
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> One last remaining question. If we had believed from

> youth that all salvation came not from Jesus but from another - say, Mohammed - is it not certain that we would have enjoyed the same blessings? To be sure, faith alone gives blessing, not the objective which stands behind the faith. I write this to you, dear Lisbeth, only in order to counter the most usual proofs of believing people, who invoke the evidence of their inner experiences and deduce from it the infallibility of their faith. Every true faith is indeed infallible; it performs what the believing person hopes to find in it, but it does not offer the least support for the establishing of an objective truth.
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> Here the ways of men divide. If you want to achieve peace of mind and happiness, then have faith; if you want to be a disciple of truth, then search.[2]

We shall see the basic ideas of this letter become the focus of Nietzsche's philosophical career, most basically in terms of three themes. First, he focuses throughout his career on the need to take an "independent course" in order to discover truth, a course which is often comfortless and bitter because it violates the habitual, the comfortable, and those ideas which foster psychological "blessings". Secondly, Nietzsche's career was to be characterized by a concern for the pursuit of "objective truth", an unwillingness ever to give up this quest - even if his findings should turn out to be "frightening and ugly". Indeed, this would be exactly the result for him when, after many years of deep devotion to the pursuit of objective truth, he could discover the frightening and ugly truth that "there is no truth". Finally, there is Nietzsche's life-long theme of the dangers of belief, and the seeds of his radical critique of all faith that dares to call its object "the truth", as if one's "inner experiences" had anything to do with the truth. Unknown to him at the time, Nietzsche's entire life was to become a passionate embodiment of this concern for truth.

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2. Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, Christopher Middleton, tr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p.7.

We find in the writings of all three periods of his philosophy this stress on the need for tremendous integrity and courage in the pursuit of truth and a concomitant enumeration of the many dangers and seductions confronting the philosopher. A collection of these aphorisms might constitute the subject matter of an excellent course in philosophy since they cover much of the range of the problems connected with "objectivity" from the fairly simple Platonic distinction between knowledge and belief, to the very complex and difficult problems connected with Kantian notions of an apriori structure to consciousness, and finally to modern psychological concepts of the unconscious needs, desires, and drives which condition our consciousness and hence our "truths".

It is essential to understand Nietzsche's insistence on the need for tremendous intellectual integrity and on his life-long guard against the many things which mendaciously pose as "the truth" to beings such as ourselves in order to throw light on the great difficulties which surround the notion of "truth" in his later philosophy. The very first thing Nietzsche insists on, which is implicit in the letter to his sister above, is that truth is never likely to be the same as what the majority believe, nor is it necessarily the same as one's convictions regarding what is true. We find in the final pages of Human All-Too-Human, the book with which Nietzsche launched his independent philosophical career after having broken with his Schopenhauerian and Wagnerian beginnings, an extended consideration of these themes.

Here he examines the requirement that a person remain true to his convictions, finding this inimical to the pursuit of truth and that the importance of convictions is greatly over estimated, for all human growth and development depend on being able to abandon one's ideals again and

again, on being able to intellectually "shed one's skin". (M 573.) He finds that convictions of all sorts carry with them, by their dogmatic and absolute nature, the presumption that the believer is in possession of "absolute truth" and points out that history would be much less bloody and would have produced a good deal more knowledge if people had concerned themselves with methods of knowledge, with how beliefs are verified, rather than with persecuting those who held different beliefs. Therefore, "the man of convictions is not the man of scientific thought"; he is practically a child, Nietzsche says, in his belief in the truth of his convictions. (MA I 630, cf. M 89.) Due to this long history of convictions, people are still trapped in a pre-scientific attitude: they "dislike all skeptical and relative attitudes". They even feel remorse of conscience, Nietzsche says, when they are inclined to scepticism and cannot believe. It is only lately that the "virtue of courteous forbearance" and "wise moderation" with regard to beliefs has developed. (MA I 631.) In a seeming reversal of the traditional maxim which calls for the "courage of one's convictions", "courage" for Nietzsche becomes, we shall see, associated with this "wise moderation" and with "scepticism". Although it must have taken more independence of thought to publish such views in 1878 than in the middle of the 20th century, we find an echo of this theme of the moral inadequacy of clinging to convictions while ignoring that scepticism necessary for a real pursuit of truth in the writings of Bertrand Russell. Russell writes that:

> There is to my mind something pusillanimous and sniveling about this point of view, which makes me scarcely able to consider it with patience. To refuse to face facts merely because they are unpleasant is considered the mark of a weak character, except in the sphere of religion. I do not see how it can be ignoble to yield to the tyranny of fear in all ordinary terrestrial matters, but noble and virtuous to do

> exactly the same thing when God and the future life are concerned.[3]

These ideas are important for understanding Nietzsche's view of history, discussed in Chapter One, for he sees "the scientific spirit" as part of the development and maturing of man to the point where all dogmatism and conviction now appear to be naive and "atavistic". (MA I 632.) No one can justly make a claim of absolute truth as was so often done in the past since science[4] has taught us the difficulties involved in all such claims. Moreover, we are no longer advocates, violently pushing our opinions on others; we have a new, quieter, more sceptical relation to even our own beliefs.

> The Inquisition was rational at that time; for it represented nothing else than the universal application of martial law, which had to be proclaimed throughout the entire domain of the Church, and which, like all martial law, gave a right to the extremest methods, under the presupposition, of course, (which we now no longer share with those people), that the Church possessed truth and had to preserve it at all costs, and at any sacrifice, for the salvation of mankind. Now, however, one does not so readily concede to any one that he possesses the truth; strict methods of investigation have diffused enough of distrust and precaution, so that every one who violently advocates opinions in word and deed is looked upon as an enemy of our modern culture, or at least, as an atavist. As a matter of fact the pathos that man possesses truth is now of very little consequence in comparison with the certainly milder and less noisy pathos of the search for truth, which is never weary of learning afresh and examining anew. (MA I 633.)

It is careful and exacting Wissenschaft, the cautious search for truth

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3. Quoted by Marvin Gardiner in New York Review of Books, 8 Dec. 83, Vol. XXX, p.42.

4. Wissenschaft, a word which, of course, has much larger connotations than "natural science" and refers to disciplined, systematic inquiry as such, including such fields as historical scholarship, mathematics, and philosophy.

that is ever willing to "examine anew", with which Nietzsche takes his stand at the outset of his own independent philosophical career. Truth does not lie with convictions, and neither does it lie with any form of "party" or organization: it "seldom dwells", Nietzsche says, "where people have built temples for it and have ordained priests".[5] Nietzsche's views here are clearly crucial as background for an examination of his later "positive" doctrines such as the will to power. Indeed, the problem of his relation to these doctrines and their "truth" status is insoluble without the background of these middle works with their striking repudiation of all forms of dogmatism. We shall see in the fourth section of this chapter that this is also true of Nietzsche's earliest philosophical writings from his first period which also shed significant light on what is going on in the doctrines of Nietzsche's final period. Indeed, in the 1887 Preface to the Genealogy of Morals he says that his ideas may be unintelligible without a careful study of his earlier writings,[6] but this advice all too often seems to be ignored by Nietzsche's interpreters.

Historically, then, for Nietzsche, continuing progress for human beings, in relation to the notion of truth, will mean a continued instilling and imbibing of the scientific spirit into even "educated" people. The most important thing about science is not its results but its cautious attitude and its method, for this alone can keep mankind from regressing into its former condition of "superstition and absurdity":

> On the whole, scientific methods are at least as important results of investigation as any other results, for the scientific spirit is based upon a knowledge of method, and if

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5. 1887 letter to Gersdorff, in Middleton, Op.Cit., p.23.

6. GM P 8; WK p.22.

> the methods were lost, all the results of science could not prevent the renewed prevalence of superstition and absurdity. Clever people may learn as much as they like of the results of science, but one still notices in their conversation, and especially in the hypotheses they make, that they lack the scientific spirit; they have not the instinctive distrust of the devious courses of thinking which, in consequence of long training, has taken root in the soul of every scientific man.... On that account everybody should nowadays have become thoroughly acquainted with at least one science, for then surely he knows what is meant by method, and how necessary is the extremest carefulness.[7]

In the 20th century we have become so accustomed to the requirements of wissenschaft that it may be difficult to imagine in what way Nietzsche could find his commitment to this revolutionary. In an 1888 note he writes: "It is not the victory of science which distinguishes our nineteenth century, but the victory of scientific method over science." (WM 466.) And in another 1888 note he puts this 19th century victory in a wide historical perspective:

> The most valuable insights are arrived at last; but the most valuable insights are methods.
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> All the methods, all the presuppositions of our contemporary science were for millennia regarded with the profoundest contempt; on their account one was excluded from the society of respectable people - one was considered as an "enemy of God", as a reviler of the highest ideal, as "possessed."
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> We have had the whole pathos of mankind against us - our conception of what "truth" should be, what service of truth should be, our objectivity, our method, our silent, cautious, mistrustful ways were considered perfectly contemptible - . (WM 469.)

We can see in these quotations from Nietzsche's late notebooks, that he carries his advocacy of cautious, sceptical scientific methods right into his final period: when he is simultaneously propounding the doctrines of will to

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7. MA I 635, cf. FW 110. For some of Nietzsche's early reading in science and scientific method which influenced his views in this regard, see, e.g. Breazeale, Op.Cit. p.107, note 21.

power and eternal recurrence. It will be important to keep this in mind for our investigation of these doctrines in Chapter Four. Even in the published writings, such as the Antichrist, this view is maintained. In Antichrist 13, he repeats the idea quoted above that "the most valuable insights are methods", and in section 59 he affirms regarding "truth" that "methods are essential". Nietzsche's philosophizing regarding "truth" takes as its starting point cautious scepticism, careful methodology, and everything rigorous connoted by the word "wissenschaft".

The well known relativism regarding "truth" of Nietzsche's final philosophy, in conjunction with certain of his comments such as the often quoted line from his notebooks of 1885 ("Truth is that kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live." (WM 493)) has led to the misconception that he held some form of "pragmatic" theory of truth.[8] But attention to the whole of his writings shows that this cannot be the case. The way he uses the word in the above quotation from Human All-Too-Human 635 applies as well to his theory of the genesis of language, common human agreements and conventions, and useful beliefs and opinions. This must be distinguished from "truth" as he uses the word regarding the scientist, the philosopher, and the lover of knowledge. For a "progress" has taken place in the human spirit, as we have seen. What was originally called "truth" is now called opinion and superstition by the philosopher and the scientist. The notion of "truth", we shall see, did indeed first arise because it was useful to the survival of the species. But in the wake of science and the new sceptical human maturity, it has taken on a meaning independent of what is useful, beneficial, or even beautiful.

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8. E.g. Arthur Danto, Nietzsche as Philosopher (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p.80.

The pursuit of truth now requires a new "integrity", a detached awareness of our own needs and wants, and, as late as 1888, we find it carefully opposed to those beliefs or ideas which produce in us either pleasure or a feeling of "blessedness". (A 50.) This is Nietzsche's consistent point of view. In the early critique of Schopenhauer (1868), we already find this severe and conscientious attitude regarding the pursuit of truth:

> The "general welfare" is not the sphere of truth; for truth demands to be declared even if it is ugly and unethical.[9]

And in the late (1888) Preface to The Antichrist Nietzsche says, when speaking of the philosopher's difficult but important task of seeing beneath traditional myths:

> One must have become indifferent; one must never ask if the truth is useful or if it may prove our undoing.... New eyes for what is most distant. A new conscience for truths that have so far remained mute.[10]

As will become clear in Chapter Four, this honesty in the face of reality is the bottom line and the context for the creation of new values and a higher state of being beyond nihilism. Heidegger also underlines this and presents brief quotations from Nietzsche to illustrate his meaning:

> Nietzsche's decisive consideration runs as follows: if we are to establish what properly should be, and what must come to be in consequence of that, it can be determined only if truth and clarity surround whatever is and whatever constitutes Being. How else could we determine what is to be?
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> In the sense of this most universal consideration, whose

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9. Walter Kaufmann, ed. The Portable Nietzsche (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p.31.

10. Ibid. p.568.

> ultimate tenability we must still leave open, Nietzsche says, "Task: to see things as they are!..." "My philosophy - to draw men away from semblance, no matter what the danger!... Finally, "Because you lie concerning what is, the thirst for what should come to be does not grow in you"....[11]

The "extremest carefulness" which Nietzsche thought was necessary, therefore, would be violated for him by anyone accepting a re-definition of "truth" in terms of what is useful or beneficial for human beings. The first three sections of the Genealogy of Morals are a decisive consideration and repudiation of the "English psychologists", forerunners of the pragmatists, who attempted to equate "the good" with the useful. For the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche goes on to say here, the genesis of the concept "good" has nothing to do with what is useful. It was associated with a feeling of higher spiritual rank in turn connected with a "typical character trait": that of truthfulness; "truthfulness", like "goodness", became associated with "nobility" as opposed to "the lying common man". (GM I 5.)

This expresses one important aspect of Nietzsche's own conception of truth and truthfulness. Real truthfulness, courage and strength to penetrate behind what our weaker and all-too-human nature clings to (the useful, the comfortable, the beneficial, the traditional), requires a nobility of character far above the ordinary. Utility and pragma are the stopping points of the cowardice inherent in our all-too-human nature. The most noble type, however, which Nietzsche symbolizes in his figure of Zarathustra, "the supreme type of all beings" (EH Z 6), like the ancient Greeks, finds his truthfulness borne of courage and strength as opposed to the cowardice and lying associated with weaker natures:

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11. Nietzsche, Vol. I, pp.31-32.

> ...Zarathustra is more truthful than any other thinker. His doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness as the highest virtue; this means the opposite of the cowardice of the "idealist" who flees from reality; Zarathustra has more intestinal fortitude than all the other thinkers taken together.[12]

Nietzsche's ideal type of being would probably repudiate what is meant today by "pragmatism", perhaps even in the sense of what "works" in our scientific interactions with the world.

The philosopher, then, insists on only the highest integrity regarding "truth". This means that he is extremely suspicious of all beliefs, including his own, and of any "truths" that might satisfy his own wants, desires, or hopes. He is suspicious as well of anything that is "useful", for "truth demands to be told, even if it is frightening and ugly". (cf. M 550 & 196.) This holds even in Nietzsche's final period, although we shall see the picture become more complicated due to statements which seem to challenge the moral requirement of truthfulness. Nietzsche says in Ecce Homo: "But my truth is terrible; so far one has called lies truth". (EH IV 1.) What should be apparent here is the identification of the philosopher, and ultimately of Zarathustra, as one who holds truthfulness as one of the highest virtues. In whatever senses Nietzsche uses the word "truth" itself, a dominant theme in his philosophy is the requirement of truthfulness and intellectual integrity. In a Gay Science passage entitled "The Intellectual Conscience", he writes:

> ...The great majority of people lack an intellectual conscience.... The great majority of people do not consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly,

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12. EH IV 3. This statement seems intended to apply both to the figure Zarathustra and to his namesake, the ancient sage Zoroaster.

> without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterward: the most gifted men and the noblest women still belong to this "great majority". (FW 2, cf. WM 445.)

This emphasis on intellectual integrity is connected in turn with the emphasis, discussed above, of Nietzsche's middle period: that awareness of method, of the cautious methods and procedures of science and the scholarly disciplines, shifts one's orientation from the "pathos" of possession of truth to that of the "search for truth". The wissenschaft of the modern world makes us more detached, more sceptical concerning "truth". It shifts the emphasis, in one fundamental way, from possession of truth to truthfulness. It should be clear, and kept in mind as a background to our discussion of his "metaphysical scepticism" in Chapter Three, that Nietzsche takes this shift of emphasis as the groundwork for his philosophizing concerning the notion of "truth".

ii. The Psychological Dimension of Truthfulness

Anyone familiar with The Antichrist knows that, in spite of the polemical tone of the work, the background of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity is his belief in intellectual "cleanliness", intellectual integrity, or, as he expresses it in aphorism 53, in "conscientiousness in matters of spirit". This is certainly basic to the psychology of truthfulness in the Antichrist and the other late writings. However, the dialectical context of Nietzsche's thinking, which we intitially laid out in section five of our chapter on nihilism, must be kept in mind as a background to our discussion of the psychology of truthfulness. As many of Nietzsche's outlines for his projected magnum opus show, The Antichrist was to be the

first book in the revaluation of all values. As such, the conception of truth in it would itself ultimately be revalued. A typical outline, for example, reads as follows:

> I. Redemption from Christianity (Antichrist).
> II. Redemption from Morality (Immoralist).
> III. Redemption from "Truth" (Free Spirit).
> IV. Redemption from Nihilism (Overman).[13]

Hence, "Truth" will ultimately be overcome. But the primary meaning of this, as our discussions in Chapters Three and Four will show, is "metaphysical truth" as a fundamental human value. While there may ultimately also be such a thing as a revalued intellectual integrity, intellectual integrity remains the sine qua non for the overcoming of nihilism in the first place. Hence, its fundamental role in the Antichrist.

The evolution of man out of the age of beliefs and convictions to the age of science, method, and intellectual scepticism has led to the development of this type of being: the lover of truth, the lover of knowledge for its own sake. Yet Nietzsche affirms over and over that this is not an easy vocation, even for a natural thinker such as a philosopher, for his love of truth puts him at odds with his own loved ones as well as many other good human beings (FW 311), and often even with his own inner feelings and desires. It is a lonely, difficult existence. In a letter to Overbeck of 2 July 1985, Nietzsche writes: "My life now consists in the wish that it might be otherwise with all things that I comprehend, and that somebody might make my truths appear incredible to me...."[14] And in a letter to Gast of 20 August 1880:

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13. KGW VIII 3, 402 (RP, tr.)

14. Portable Nietzsche, p.441.

> ...To this day, my whole philosophy totters after an hour's sympathetic conversation with total strangers: It seems so foolish to me to wish to be right at the price of love, and not be able to communicate what one considers most valuable lest one destroy the sympathy. Hinc meae lacrimae.[15]

Thus, in Gay Science 309 he uses the image of a wanderer to symbolize the perpetual seeker after truth whose "penchant and passion for what is true, real, non apparent" will not let him rest - although he longs to rest - but keeps forever driving him onward, and in section 324 this is portrayed existentially as the very meaning of life: "...the great liberator came to me: the idea that life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge.... Life as a means to knowledge....".

We would all like to rest, Nietzsche believes, in comfortable convictions, in beliefs, in a final understanding of the meaning and purpose of existence and man's place in nature. Nietzsche was one of those great thinkers to go against what Herbert Schneidau, in his book Sacred Discontent, calls our "superficial complacency".[16] He was one of those to experience that "sacred discontent" that Schneidau attributes to the Biblical and prophetic backgrounds of our Western civilization.[17] For Nietzsche, the history of philosophy itself all too often reveals systems constructed out of either a philosophers' inner need or in conformity to his social milieu. As one of the first "discoverers" and explorers of the so called "unconscious", Nietzsche sees more clearly in what way each philosophy has been the "unconscious memoir" of its author:

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15. Quoted in WK's Gay Science, p.249, f.39; cf. Middleton, p282, f.131.

16. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976, p.xi.

17. Ibid. pp.1-5.

> Every great philosophy so far has been...the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir".... In the philosopher...there is nothing whatever that is impersonal; and above all his morality bears decided and decisive witness to who he is.... (J 6.)

The relentless seeker after knowledge penetrates into the recesses of his own soul and that of others revealing the inner drives and needs that dictate to a philosopher's world view. But this takes a tremendous "courage of conscience" to admit. This is why:

> ...Philosophers....all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic....
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> They are all advocates who resent the name, and for the most part even wily spokesmen for their prejudices which they baptize "truths" - and very far from having the courage of conscience to admit this.... (J 5.)

Nietzsche makes it clear that this philosophical vocation, requiring such courage and discipline, is not itself a new form of belief, a "stageacting" in the roll of "philosopher":

> The philosopher....does not like to be disturbed by emnities, nor by friendships; he easily forgets and easily despises. He thinks it in bad taste to play the martyr; "to suffer for truth" - he leaves that to the ambitious and the stage heroes of the spirit and to anyone else who has the time for it (the philosophers themselves have something to do for the truth). They use big words sparingly; it is said that they dislike the very word "truth": It sounds too grandiloquent. (GM III 8.)

It is the destiny of some not to be content to rest before appearance in a comfortable condition of delusion and self-deception. But having taken seriously the highest fruit of modern culture, the scientific and sceptical method, is not enough. One must also be strong enough and honest enough

for severity against oneself - those unconscious or semiconscious drives, needs, and longings which again and again want to seduce us away from truth into some form of psychological wish fulfillment.

> This will to mere appearance, to simplification, to masks, to cloaks, in short, to the surface - for every surface is a cloak - is countered by that sublime inclination of the seeker after knowledge who insists on profoundity, multiplicity, and thoroughness, with a will which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste. Every courageous thinker will recognize this in himself, assuming only that, as fit, he has hardened and sharpened his eye for himself long enough and that he is used to severe discipline, as well as severe words. (J 230.)

What we have seen thus far in this chapter, without having explicitly raised a host of metaphysical difficulties, nor brought up Nietzsche's insights into the labyrinthine nature of the attempt to gain a "true" view of reality, nor touched on the many difficulties connected with the nature of language itself, is a survey of what Nietzsche took to be the host of problems involved in the very attempt to be objective or honest in one's answer to the question "What is truth?". Nietzsche was one of the first, not only to discover the depth of complexities within the human psyche, but also the vitiating and paralyzing conceptual reduction that occurs every time we adopt that perspective. For all our ideas, our theories, concepts and beliefs are now no longer prima facie credible, for Nietzsche, but are translated back into, and reduced down to, the psychological ego and the trivia of our unconscious needs and desires. Not only does this involve the personal philosophy of the thinker, it applies, of course, to entire social groups and their beliefs as well as to history itself. Indeed, we saw Nietzsche as one of the first to write a psychohistory of mankind, a genre which has become popular in the twentieth century since it was

popularized by Freud and his associates.[18]

One of the main intellectual tributaries of Nietzsche's late philosophy of strength or "power" comes from his extensive observation of the way human beings dissemble before "reality": the way they tailor their beliefs to make things comfortable and to make the world livable for themselves. Nietzsche never tired of pointing out how our languages, beliefs, metaphysical systems, and religions thoroughly "anthropomorphize" the world.[19] Why this pervasive tendency?, he asks, Why so little honesty in the face of reality? Without going into detail concerning this aspect of his psychohistory, his basic answer was that this was due to a mechanism of survival.[20] Beings such as ourselves needed to falsify reality. Nietzsche's insight into the dangers that unconscious desires and needs throw in the way of the pursuit of truth only reinforced this. Thus, he came to develop a view that only the strongest (those capable of great courage and honesty) spirits could ever face the truth about things. Nietzsche says in The Antichrist: "Truth has to be fought for every step of the way...." (A 50), and in Beyond Good and Evil he writes:

> Something might be true while being harmful and dangerous in the highest degree. Indeed, it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of a

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18. An interesting development and elucidation of Nietzsche's idea that every philosophy is "the personal confession of its author" is Ben-Ami Scharfstein's recent book The Philosophers - Their Lives and the Nature of their Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Although Scharfstein is not a Freudian, he argues in his first chapter that an essential component of philosophical writing is "persuasion".

19. This is true even in science, see FW 112 and 121.

20. See, e.g., FW 110, 111, 265, 307, 354. We examined one facet of his psychohistory (concerning resentment and nihilism) in Chapter One, section iv.

> spirit should be measured according to how much of the "truth" one could still barely endure - or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified.... (J 39.)

Nietzsche took the rise of the scientific method and the scientific spirit perhaps more seriously than most modern philosophers since Descartes. (MA 1, FW 109.) Although he challenged the idea that the results of science give us "reality" (e.g. FW 112, 373), the spirit of science had opened up strong and honest people to a new naturalness, a new non-anthropomorphic, non-idealized nature where man was to be understood in terms of the natural world (Darwin's book, The Origin of Species, having been published in 1859) as another species among the animals, whose morality, institutions, religion, and self-consciousness were now to be understood genealogically, in terms of their natural origins and developments.

One basic part of Nietzsche's lifetime philosophical task required that he understand the psychological and historical dynamics of why men consistently avoided facing themselves as part of the natural world: the seemingly evident facts that we are one species among others, competing with them for survival, that we are born, suffer, and die in the same way as every other species. Human beings, rather, Nietzsche felt, come up with all sorts of beliefs about gods, redemptions, heavenly other worlds, a moral world order, perfect eternal forms, a teleological plan for history, etc.: things that are far from evident and to which they cling in spite of repeated immediate evidence and experience to the contrary.

His answer, we saw here and in Chapter One, was forthcoming from his own repeated experience that it requires courage and strength to search out the truth: that discovering truth is connected with suffering, for one must go against the tremendous forces of social suggestion, one's

unconscious hopes and desires, and perhaps even the instinct for survival itself. We saw that the key term for Nietzsche is resentment: men are part of a generally sick and weak but clever species which resents the circumstances of its own existence. They resent the impersonal and unfeeling regularity of their world, their parity with the other animals, the facts of suffering and death, the seeming meaninglessness of natural existence. And they are clever enough to take revenge on life, revenge on their bodies which grow old and die, revenge on change, chance, and transitoriness, revenge on the amoral struggle for existence among themselves and with the animals by sublimating their resentment into metaphysical, religious and moral doctrines which negate every one of these immediate experiences and which relegate the natural world to the realm of appearance and illusion.

Whatever might be the results of a revalued conception of "truth" once we have called into question the traditional faith in metaphysical "truth" and moved beyond nihilism, this existential commitment to truthfulness, and the great courage and honesty required to examine even our highest traditional values, is the very condition, for Nietzsche, of the overcoming of nihilism and the creation of new values. The suffering, the uncertainty, and the often dangerous experimentalism which this entails, are part and parcel of the nihilism of our age, an age caught in a scepticism no longer believing in the traditional metaphysically grounded values: suspended in an abyss where new values have yet to appear.

iii. Nietzsche's Four Paradigmatic Polarizations

This psychological insight into the pervasive phenomenon of resentment in Western culture is the basis of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity in The Antichrist, of Socrates and Plato (and the rationalistic and dialectical traditions stemming from them) in Twilight, as well as of Kant and every form of philosophical idealism in, for example, the Genealogy of Morals (III 2). Each of these traditions in one way or another, for Nietzsche, negates what, on a phenomenal level, is real: the body and its instincts, the cyclical and purposeless flux of physical nature, the facts of suffering and death, or the domination of the strong and vigorous over the weak in what seems to be a clearly amoral world order. Nietzsche's thought most basically expresses the difference between those who affirm life and "reality", and those who negate and deny life and "reality", through four dialectical polarizations, which might be called, in the langauge of Chapter One, "mythic paradigms". These four are interrelated with one another and take basically parallel forms, each of which could be developed as an aspect of his philosophy. These are: (1) sickness versus health, (2) weakness versus strength, (3) mendaciousness and lie versus honesty and truthfulness, and (4) cowardice versus courage. They are some of the basic paradigms around which Nietzsche organizes his thinking, and our discussion of them will bring us closer to the heart of his philosophizing.

In terms of our discussion thus far in this chapter, it should be clear in what way each of these paradigms can be related to the problem of truth and truthfulness. In each case, the second term of the pair is necessary for being able to face and come into full contact with the phenomenal reality as we live it everyday: health, strength, courage, and honesty. On the other hand, the resentful negation of phenomenal reality which has characterized most of the religious and philosophical ideas of

Western humanity is connected by Nietzsche with the first term in each paradigmatic opposition: sickness, weakness, mendaciousness, and cowardice. Let us examine each pair in turn with an eye to the fundamental point of Nietzsche's philosophizing which runs through all of them.

The first pair, sickness versus health, is well known in connection with Nietzsche's label "decadence" for the psychophysical condition of most of European and Western humanity. We have become sick animals, and a manifestation, as well as a condition, of our sickness is the negation of reality in all our concepts and beliefs.

> At the bottom of Christianity is the rancor of the sick, instinct directed against the healthy, against health itself. Everything that has turned out well, everything that is proud and prankish, beauty above all, hurts its ears and eyes. Once more I recall the inestimable words of Paul: "The weak things of the world, the foolish things of this world, the base and depised things of this world hath God chosen." This was the formula; in hoc signo decadence triumphed. (A 51.)

> In Christianity neither morality nor religion has even a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary causes ("God", "soul", "ego", "spirit", "free will" - for that matter, "unfree will"), nothing but imaginary effects ("sin", "redemption", "grace", "punishment", "forgiveness of sins"). Intercourse between imaginary beings ("God", "spirits", "souls"); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric; no trace of any concept of natural sciences)....
>
> This world of pure fiction is vastly inferior to the world of dreams insofar as the latter mirrors reality, whereas the former falsifies, devalues, and negates reality. Once the concept of "nature" had been invented as the opposite of "God", "natural" had to become a synonym of "reprehensible": this whole world of fiction is rooted in hatred of the natural (of reality!); it is the expression of a profound vexation at the sight of reality.
>
> But this explains everything. Who alone has good reason to lie his way out of reality? He who suffers from it. (A 15.)

The sick person, the decadent, suffers from reality. Similar considerations apply to rationalists like Socrates (G II), and idealists of all

kinds (EH IV 3). It is the need of a faith to sustain one over and against phenomenal reality, that is, against "truth" in one of the basic senses in which Nietzsche uses the word: denoting our lived, immediate, phenomenal existence. Since all metaphysics is a denial in one form or another of lived, immediate experience (by relegating it to the status of "appearance"), even the metaphysics of positivism and its faith in science betrays our decadence for Nietzsche:

> Believers and their need to believe. - How much one needs a faith in order to flourish, how much that is "firm" and that one does not wish to be shaken because one clings to it, that is a measure of the degree of one's strength (or, to put the point more clearly, of one's weakness). Christianity, it seems to me, is still needed by most people in old Europe even today; therefore it still finds believers....
>
> Metaphysics is still needed by some; but so is that impetuous demand for certainty that today discharges itself among large numbers of people in a scientific-positivistic form. The demand that one wants by all means that something should be firm (while on account of the ardor of this demand one is easier and more negligent about the demonstration of this certainty) - this, too, is still the demand for a support, a prop, in short, that instinct of weakness which, to be sure, does not create religious, metaphysical systems, and convictions of all kinds but - conserves them.[21]

The creation of religions and metaphysical systems can happen in various ways. Buddhism, for example, is more realistic than Christianity and is basically a prescription for sick and weak creatures. (A 20.) Christianity, on the other hand, was created, as we have seen here, by people who were taking a spiritual revenge on reality or, as he puts it in the Genealogy, by people who were taking a spiritual revenge on those strong and healthy natures that did not suffer from reality. (GM I 7 & 10.) However, Buddhism and Christianity are both religions of the sick, for

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21. FW 347. The word here translated as "faith" is Glaube.

Nietzsche, both religions of people who suffer from reality because of their sickness: "they belong together as nihilistic religions - they are decadence religions". (A 20.)

It was Nietzsche's belief that "the decadent needs the lie", that he is constitutionally determined, so to speak, to falsify reality in his beliefs and concepts. This same idea applies to the "strength versus weakness" dichotomy, the pair of terms which can be most closely associated with "sickness versus health" because of the association of sickness with weakness and health with strength. In the Genealogy Nietzsche makes the point that strength has no choice but to express itself as such, and weakness has no choice but to express weakness. (GM I 13.) This is implicit in the quotation immediately above where Nietzsche calls the condition of those who "need" a faith the "instinct of weakness", a sort of physiological condition that instinctually requires certain conditions (such as faith) for its preservation. These themes are summed up by Nietzsche in his spiritual autobiography Ecce Homo, and their discovery expressed as one of his philosophical accomplishments:

> I was the first to see the real opposition: the degenerating instinct that turns against life with subterranean vengefulness (Christianity, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, in a certain sense already the philosophy of Plato, and all of idealism are typical forms) versus a formula for the highest affirmation, born of fullness, a Yes-saying without reservation, even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything that is questionable and strange in existence....
>
> They are not free to know: the decadents need the lie - it is one of the conditions of their preservation. (EH GT 2.)

On the other hand, strength too expresses itself as such, and it is only the strong spirit who is capable of being truthful:

> One should not be deceived: great spirits are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. Strength, freedom which is born of

> the strength and overstrength of the spirit, proves itself by skepticism. Men of conviction are not worthy of the least consideration in fundamental questions of value and disvalue. Convictions are prisons....
>
> A spirit who wants great things, who also wants the means to them, is necessarily a skeptic. Freedom from all kinds of convictions, to be able to see freely, is part of strength....
>
> The believer is not free to have any conscience at all for questions of "true" and "untrue": to have integrity on this point would at once destroy him. (A 54.)

A truly strong spirit, one capable of questioning each of its beliefs, comes to see that all beliefs can be challenged in one way or another. If attention then turns on why one needed each of these beliefs that have now been discarded, one comes to see that it was not the will to truth which generated each belief but some need, weakness, or unconscious wish for a final psychological resting place, and that it may be, on the contrary, precisely one's will to truth, one's strength to face "reality", which destroyed each belief and in the end destroys all belief.

It is this kind of strength, simply strength to face phenomenal reality truthfully in the realization that all our beliefs are merely interpretations, and that as "strong spirits" we must remain sceptics, that became quite fundamental to Nietzsche's later philosophy. It is fundamental to his later philosophy of "power" as well as his conception of the "overman" as an "ideal type" of human being: the "ideal type" that is expounded by Nietzshe's Zarathustra:

> When mendaciousness at any price monopolizes the word "truth" for its perspective, the really truthful man is bound to be branded with the worst names....
>
> It is here and nowhere else that one must make a start to comprehend what Zarathustra wants: this type of man that he conceives, conceives of reality as it is, being strong enough to do so; this type is not estranged or removed from reality but is reality itself and exemplifies all that is terrible and questionable in it - only in that way can man attain greatness. (EH IV 5.)

This can also give us an important insight into the meaning of the phrase "revaluation of all values". It does not at all mean, in a certain sense, the antithesis of traditional values. Rather, Nietzsche re-evaluates the traditional self-estimation of traditional values in such a way that, although these values had a metaphysical faith in "truth", in practice they involved mendaciousness in the face of phenomenal reality. Hence, in an important sense, Nietzsche's revaluation means complete honesty, complete truthfulness, for the first time:

> Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of supreme self-examination on the part of humanity, become flesh and genius in me. It is my fate that I have to be the first decent human being; that I know myself to stand in opposition to the mendaciousness of millennia. - I was the first to discover the truth by being the first to experience lies as lies.... (EH IV 1.)

Since all values (dogmas, beliefs: evaluations of life and the world) hitherto have been falsifications of reality, the revaluation in part simply means that one now sees all these lies as lies. Total honesty requires scepticism. The revaluation does not entail affirmation of the opposite valuations and beliefs from traditional values if one means by this dishonesty, crime, political tyranny, etc. The opposite that Nietzsche affirms here is "truthfulness" (as a verb: an existential commitment or way of life) as opposed to "lie" in the sense of an insistence on interpreting and "making firm" the phenomenal flux of existence. In this regard, truthfulness dictates that we remain sceptics. This understanding is quite essential as a groundwork for understanding the other point of Nietzsche's final philosophy, the creation of values, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. Here we have seen that just as the opposite of traditional values for Nietzsche is honesty and truthfulness in the face of reality, so the

opposite of weakness is the power and strength to face reality with all its vagueness and uncertainty.

The third pair of terms which serve as a paradigm in Nietzsche's later philosophy, "lie versus truthfulness", are, we have seen, the way that sickness or health express themselves in individuals or cultures. Yet Nietzsche sometimes speaks as if the lie involved in beliefs and religions were voluntarily professed, especially by the leaders of the beliefs: the priests and prophets. Buddhism and Christianity, for example, are seen in this way, as self-conscious prescriptions for the weak and sick in the face of reality:

> At the bottom of Christianity there are some subtleties that belong to the Orient. Above all, it knows that it is a matter of complete indifference whether something is true, while it is of the utmost importance whether it is believed to be true. Truth and the faith that something is true: two completely separate realms of interest - almost diametrically opposite realms - they are reached by utterly different paths. Having knowledge of this - that is almost the definition of the wise man in the Orient: the Brahmins understand this; Plato understands this; and so does every student of esoteric wisdom. If, for example, it makes men happy to believe that they have been redeemed from sin, it is not necessary, as a condition of this, that man is, in fact, sinful, but merely that he feels sinful. And if faith is quite generally needed above all, then reason, knowledge, and inquiry must be discredited: the way to truth becomes the forbidden way.[22]

Nietzsche says in this passage that Christianity has not attained the same degree of self-honesty and self-consciousness as has Buddhism. Yet it is by no means wholly physiologically or instinctually determined, for his polemic

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22. A 23. The themes discussed this far in this chapter, as well as the many references to Nietzsche's writings which document these themes, constitute a refutation of those interpreters who label Nietzsche an "irrationalist", thereby not only ignoring the complexity of his thought but his decisive, lifelong, emphasis on reason, method, and careful inquiry.

carries clear connotations of moral recrimination at the deceit and lies perpetuated by the priests. (A 55ff.) However, lying is often basically self-deceit, in Nietzsche's view, and this carries with it many degrees of self-deceitfulness - from the most extreme self-delusion on the one hand to the fanaticism of conviction on the other where one's entire nervous energy is mobilized around the belief and the possibility of a semi-conscious self-deceit much more remote.

> Every conviction has its history, its preliminary forms, its trials and errors: it becomes a conviction after not having been one for a long time, and after scarcely having been one for an even longer time. How? Could not the lie be among these embryonic forms of conviction? Sometimes a mere change of person suffices: in the son that becomes conviction which in the father was still a lie. (A 55.)

What does Nietzsche mean by "lie"? The meaning has been implicit in his entire discussion but here he makes it explicit:

> By lie I mean: wishing not to see something that one does see; wishing not to see something as one sees it. Whether the lie takes place before witnesses or without witnesses does not matter. The most common lie is that with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is, relatively, an exception. (A 55.)

And any belonging to a group or a movement necessarily involves a lie for Nietzsche. This points up the radical nature of his revaluation of the meaning of the word "truth":

> Now this wishing-not-to-see what one does see, this wishing-not-to-see as one sees, is almost the first condition of all who are party in any sense: of necessity, the party man becomes a liar. (A 55.)

What the priest means by "truth", and what the party man means by the "truth" of his ideology, is something closer to "conviction". What Nietzsche

means by "truthfulness" is the recognition of all convictions as convictions, including the convictions of the positivist and our everyday interpretations of the world.

Hence, one aspect of Nietzsche's revaluation of all values is the attempt to revaluate the traditional meaning of the word "truth". "Truth" now becomes a "truthfulness" that realizes the interpretive nature of all former "truths". This truthfulness has nothing to do with beliefs or convictions, nor with anything that would involve a "party" with a group doctrine. It is much closer to a sustained and self-conscious scepticism:

> ...Skeptics - the decent type in the history of philosophy: the rest are simply unaware of the most basic requirements of intellectual honesty....
>
> Let us not underestimate this: we ourselves, we free spirits, are nothing less than a "revaluation of all values", an incarnate declaration of war and triumph over all the ancient conceptions of "true" and "untrue". The most valuable insights are discovered last; but the most valuable insights are methods. All the methods, all the presuppositions of our current scientific outlook, were opposed for thousands of years with profound contempt. (A 12-13.)

That Nietzsche wishes to give us a revaluated meaning for the word "truth" should be clear from the following:

> For truth has been stood on its head when the conscious advocate of nothingness and negation is accepted as the representative of "truth". (A 8.)

> Wherever the theologian's instinct extends, value judgments have been stood on their heads and the concepts "true" and "false" are of necessity reversed: whatever is most harmful to life is called "true"; whatever elevates it, enhances, affirms, justifies it, and makes it triumphant, is called "false". (A 9.)

In a certain sense, The Antichrist, from which these quotations are drawn, is an extended attempt to underline the concept of "truth" as an intellectual integrity and scepticism not allowing itself to be deceived by

its own innermost needs and desires, a scepticism which realizes that every belief is a "making firm" of the flux of appearances: the very act of which denies their pristine, vague, and uncertain character. "Truth" becomes a truthfulness which will not let itself settle down in any single view of "reality". It dictates that we remain "free spirits" and "sceptics".

Yet the historical need for the "lie" and its concomitant special meaning for the word "truth" has existed side by side in the tradition with the meaning of the word "truth" as Nietzsche wishes it to be used here. Otherwise, it would not be possible to accuse those who lie of lying. Indeed, Nietzsche's use of the word is nearly the same as that involved in the traditional philosphical distinction between appearance and reality: as in Plato's Sophist, truth is a seeing clearly of reality as opposed to appearance; it is the object of truthfulness.[23] However, not only did the tradition, for Nietzsche, nearly always use this very distinction to negate reality by calling the immediate phenomenal world "appearance" and finding "reality" in some metaphysical construction, but the tradition equated "truth" with a knowledge of "reality", of "being", whereas Nietzsche's revaluation asserts that there is no "reality" other than the vague, uncertain and ultimately uninterpretable flux of the phenomena. Therefore, even though the Antichrist, we have seen, was only the first book in the revaluation of all values, and there was yet to be a revaluation and an overcoming of the traditional value of "truth", the revaluation would ultimately only require that we drop our metaphysical faith in "truth", with its concomitant belief in "being". But its very condition, in part, was to be that truthfulness which realized that there was no metaphysical truth, and

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23. See, for example, in the Sophist, sections 233-5 and 266.

no corresponding "being", a truthfulness which required that we remain "sceptics", leaving the phenomena, in a certain sense, uninterpreted.

From what we have seen so far it should be clear that Nietzsche gives us no metaphysics of his own, neither of "common sense" (as in G.E. Moore) nor of positivism (as, for example, in the early A.J. Ayer). Such philosophies still manifest the need for certainty and the unwillingness to face the flux of the phenomena, in a certain sense, uninterpreted. The great need, for Nietzsche, is to restore the integrity of the phenomena: the flux of sense experience and our immediate awareness which is what he calls "reality" (in many of his uses of this term). He refuses to give a more exact definition of what he means by the word because this would mean necessarily to give an interpretation of the phenomena, in other words, another metaphysics. Therefore, those commentators are mistaken who believe that Nietzsche was "a materialist" or that he held some form of "naturalism". Although he often speaks in these languages because of his opposition to all philosophies and religions which deny the "reality" of the natural world, his ultimate position is that no metaphysics is valid including those of materialism, "common sense", or positivism. His deepest intention is to restore the integrity of the phenomenal reality and of our "life" as we actually live it. Although he recognized, we shall see, that one cannot live or operate in the world without continually interpreting that world, without continually adopting perspectives towards the phenomena, their integrity, he insisted, could only be restored and maintained if we recognized all our interpretations as interpretations and our perspectives as perspectives. We must, that is, remain "sceptics". The traditional concept of "truth", of one ultimate way the world is, is revaluated and abolished in favor of a truthfulness which recognizes that

there is no such "truth". In the notes for The Will To Power, Nietzsche writes:

> Against positivism, which halts at phenomena - "There are only facts" - I would say: No, facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing.... (WM 481.)

But here we are jumping ahead of ourselves in a story which, in the light of the plethora of interpretations and misinterpretations of Nietzsche's philosophy, requires a careful and systematic unfolding and documentation. As far as Nietzsche's attempt at a "revaluation" of the meaning of the word "truth" is concerned, he insists that the rise of the modern scientific and philosophical spirit has not in itself effected this revaluation. For scientific scepticism can be interpreted in the manner of Kant who relegated "reality" to an unknowable "thing-in-itself":

> Why was Kant's appearance greeted with jubilation among German scholars - of whom three-fourths are the sons of parsons and teachers...?
>
> A path had been found on which one could sneak back to the old ideal. The conception of a "true world", the conception of morality as the essence of the world....
>
> Reality had been reduced to mere "appearance", and a mendaciously fabricated world, the world of being, was honored as reality. Kant's success is merely a theologian's success: like Luther, like Leibniz, Kant was one more clog for German honesty, which was none too steady in the first place. (A 10.)

When one considers the final paradigmatic opposition which can be closely related to "truth" in Nietzsche's philosophy, "cowardice versus courage", one finds once more that the decadent "liar" in the face of reality is not entirely determined to be so (as Nietzsche often seems to claim when speaking in terms of sickness and health or weakness and strength). And the reason is much the same as with the dichotomy

between mendaciousness and honesty: "courage" is a moral term in the European tradition, and moral terms presuppose the possibility of attaining or not attaining to them. Recalling the formulation of Genealogy I, 13 where strength (the "eagle") must express itself as strength and weakness (the "lamb") cannot be blamed, Nietzsche says, for being weakness - that neither can be held "accountable"[24] - one wonders whether the terms "honesty versus lie" or "courage versus cowardice" are appropriate at all. Yet these moral terms are certainly emphasized by Nietzsche and are made, we have seen, part of his revaluation since the tradition, in large measure, meant something else by them. Thus, Germans are accused of having "great crimes against culture...on their conscience" as if they were being held responsible for their beliefs. Nietzsche continues:

> And the reason is always the same: their innermost cowardice before reality, which is also cowardice before the truth; their untruthfulness which has become instinctive with them; their "idealism". (EH W 2.)

This is true not only of German Idealism but of all the philosophers in the Western tradition; Nietzsche holds them responsible for their "cowardice":

> ...The hidden history of the philosophers, the psychology of the great names, came to light for me.
> How much truth does a spirit endure, how much truth does it dare? More and more that became for me the real measure of value. Error (faith in the ideal) is not blindness, error is cowardice....
> Nitimur in vetitum, in this sign my philosophy will triumph one day, for what one has forbidden so far as a matter of principle has always been - truth alone.[25]

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24. Cf. G V 6 and VI 8.

25. EH P 3. "Truth" here would seem to refer to the sceptical result of an orientation of great honesty and truthfulness: that there is no truth.

As with the concept of "truthfulness" above, the moral idea of "courage in the face of reality" becomes integral to Nietzsche's final philosophy and is embodied in the "type of Zarathustra" and in "the overman". Nietzsche says of this ideal:

> Nothing in existence may be subtracted, nothing is dispensible - those aspects of existence which Christians and other nihilists repudiate are actually on an infinitely higher level in order of rank among values than that which the instinct of decadence could approve and call good. To comprehend this requires courage and, as a condition of that, an excess of strength: for precisely as far as courage may venture forward, precisely according to that measure of strength one approaches the truth. Knowledge, saying Yes to reality, is just as necessary for the strong as cowardice and the flight from reality - as the "ideal" - is for the weak, who are inspired by weakness. (EH GT 2.)

Here courage (which tends to be a voluntary moral term) is linked with strength (a more or less involuntary condition) and both are made integral to the capacity for truthfulness. This tension (between fatalism and voluntarism) permeates Nietzsche's entire philosophy and calls upon the reader to question and examine his usage of such key terms. However, this tension does not vitiate the basic thrust of his philosophizing, delineated here, concerning the problem of the traditional value of "truth" and the need to restore the integrity of the phenomena through putting an end to all metaphysical interpretations of them.

The term "courage" is also part of the revaluation that we have seen connected with the traditional notion of "truth". What was formerly called courage often involved the "courage of one's convictions" which, in terms of Nietzsche's revaluation, is a form of cowardice before reality. Nietzsche is involved in a project of thinking out traditional values and looking for a revaluation beyond the nihilism implicit in them. Hence he affirms what he takes to be the opposite values. As he says in the

Genealogy (I, 17), "beyond good and evil" does not mean going beyond good and bad.

It should be remembered, however, that these revaluative reflections regarding such values as "truth" and "courage" are part of a project and process of revaluation which engaged Nietzsche in his final period. But the ultimate revaluation and new mode of being beyond nihilism lay in the future and was never fully completed by Nietzsche. In Chapter Four we will examine his highest thoughts and final "visionary" philosophy in connection with the attempt to overcome nihilism. Here, as we have said, we are laying the groundwork without which those final thoughts cannot be understood.

Regarding the fatalistic element in Nietzsche's philosophy, perhaps he intimated the subtle connection between the seemingly voluntary in human life and things usually thought to be involuntary, such as health and physiology. Indeed, the total transformation that he thought was necessary to move us beyond nihilism would perhaps have to include both aspects of our being. Since Nietzsche was primarily a value philosopher (whose impetus for doing philosophy was taken from metaphysics and epistemology), his reflections are always going, in some sense, against the fatalistic element in his own philosophy, a fatalistic element due, in part, to his opposition to the traditional metaphysical notion of a "free will". As a value philosopher Nietzsche wishes to hold us responsible for our lies, our cowardice, our lack of integrity which continually makes us intellectually easy on ourselves. But the love of truth, even a revalued truth, like all the other elements of a revalued morality, makes severe demands and is not an easy vocation for anyone. Nietzsche's own writings, as well as his personal letters, reveal that the fatalistic element in his

philosophy did not preclude tremendous "moral" effort and discipline:

> The experience of all severe, of all profoundly inclined, spirits teaches the opposite. At every step one has to wrestle for truth; one has had to surrender for it almost everything to which the heart, to which our love, our trust in life, cling otherwise. That requires greatness of soul: the service of truth is the hardest service. What does it mean, after all, to have integrity in matters of the spirit? That one is severe against one's heart, that one despises "beautiful sentiments", that one makes of every Yes and No a matter of conscience. Faith makes blessed: consequently it lies.[26]

In sum, then, we can see that the first paradigmatic opposition discussed (health versus sickness) is definitely connected with this last, clearly moralistic pair. Nietzsche speaks, in the section following the one just quoted, of "we others who have the courage to be healthy...." Moral actions, then, honesty and courage, can influence the condition of health or strength.[27] And Nietzsche's philosophy, in this respect, becomes a sustained attempt to bring mankind back to "health", to overcome the sickness, resentment, pettiness, and distaste for life which permeates much of our daily lives and which is connected, we have seen, with the meaning of the word "sickness" in Nietzsche's philosophy. It is an attempt to bring

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26. A 50. Compare this 1888 statement with the 1865 letter to his sister quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

27. In the light of 20th century studies on the relation of the consciousness to the "subconscious" this is not at all far fetched. Nietzsche knew the "power" of the subconscious. Adam Smith, in Powers of Mind (New York: Random House, 1975, p.119) writes of a psychologist who was doing experiments with people who have the power to control bodily functions, such as pain, normally considered beyond our control:

"Green was impressed by the possibilities for education: "If every young student knew, by the time he finished his first biology class, that the body...responds to self-generated inputs...it would change prevailing ideas about both physical and mental health. We are individually responsible to a large extent for our state of health or disease. ...It is not life that kills us but rather it is our reaction to it, and this reaction can be to a significant extent self-chosen.""

mankind back to the immediate phenomenal world, to the reality of the physical body and the immediate flux of experience - things which are not the least sacred for most of us, things which often cause us suffering and hence are resented in favor of otherworlds or metaphysical abstractions which offer an escape from that suffering. As Nietzsche says in the notes of The Will To Power (1052): "The "tragic meaning" of suffering...existence is considered sacred enough to justify even a tremendous amount of suffering". Which of us could say this?

Nietzsche was "a genius for truth" in that his entire philosophy involved a passionate commitment to truthfulness, a truthfulness which itself challenged the traditional metaphysical faith in truth. But he was also concerned with restoring the integrity of the phenomena and the sanctity of lived experience. In this chapter we have been laying out and documenting in what way Nietzsche's philosophy attempts to shift the meaning of the word "truth" from a metaphysical conception (correlated with "being") to an existential way of life, a "truthfulness" which recognizes that no final interpretation of the phenomena is possible. This understanding is essential for an understanding of his "metaphysical scepticism" (Chapter Three) as well as his final "visionary" philosophy (Chapter Four). In order to complete this background examination of the central thrust of Nietzsche's philosophizing, let us return to his earliest writings concerning "truth" and examine the relationship between his scepticism concerning metaphysics and the cultural need of each society or people for a conceptual framework within which to interpret the meaning of its existence. As with the basic ideas discussed so far in this chapter, Nietzsche's final philosophy cannot be understood without the background of these early writings.

iv. The Conflict Between Truth and Culture in The Early Writings[28]

The themes discussed in this chapter are vitally important for comprehending Nietzsche's final philosophy, including his doctrines of Overman, Eternal Recurrence, and Will to Power. As we have seen, his passion for truth and his critique of metaphysics were in no way mitigated during the third period in which these doctrines emerged. Similarly, the third period in no way altered what we have seen to be a major orientation of his philosophizing: what we have called his drive to "restore the integrity of the phenomena." However, the more we reflect on Nietzsche's thinking concerning "truth" the more complex, even paradoxical, the picture becomes. The relationship between "truth" and "lie" becomes more and more difficult to understand, a fact that will become apparent in our discussion of these early writings. It is perhaps the case here that the

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28. Nietzsche's early writings include his published works (The Birth of Tragedy and four Untimely Meditations, public addresses given by him (such as the five lectures entitled "On The Future of Our Educational Institutions" and the inaugural lecture entitled "Homer and Classical Philology"), and rather extensive drafts, essays, and notes (comprising two volumes in translation) of material Nietzsche was preparing for publication but never did publish. What is most essential of this latter material (which includes the famous essays "Philosophy In The Tragic Age of The Greeks" and "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense") is retranslated and collected into a single volume by Daniel Breazeale (Philosophy and Truth, Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979). Much of the material in this volume deals with the early Nietzsche's writings about "truth" (as the title indicates). It is part of the material Nietzsche was working on for a publication (that never took place) which has come to be known as his "Philosophenbuch". The history and composition of this book are discussed by Breazeale at pages xxi-xxvii.

complexities and difficulties of Nietzsche's thinking (as he himself claimed) parallel the spiritual condition of the modern world itself.

This point about the increased complexity of the picture applies as well to the four "paradigmatic oppositions" discussed in the last section. Even though these oppositions are basic to Nietzsche's mature philosophy, our discussion may have made it seem as if Nietzsche were solely a proponent of one pole of each opposition and an opponent of the other. Hence, it seems as if Nietzsche favored health, strength, truthfulness, and courage and opposed sickness, weakness, mendaciousness, and cowardice. Indeed! However, the situation is complicated in at least two ways, the first of which we will simply mention in the next paragraph (without developing) and the second of which will involve the discussion for the rest of this section.

This increased complexity of Nietzsche's thinking can be recognized, first, if we ask ourselves how health, strength, and courage are <u>defined</u> in the final period. One can see immediately that, in order to answer this question, it would be necessary to take into account Nietzsche's dialectical view of history as sketched in Chapter One. Nietzsche's understanding of these values in his final philosophy, as with all values, sees them as the result of an historical sublimation and spiritualization process which dialectically <u>includes</u> and transforms the sickness, weakness, and cowardice which characterized much of Western history. The result would be highly spiritualized conceptions of these phenomena much at variance, perhaps, from many traditional ideas, conceptions which, in some way, would include and transcend these seeming opposites of sickness, weakness, and cowardice. This dialectical relation would have to apply to truth and lie as well: as we saw Nietzsche explicitly maintain in the final section of

Chapter One.

Secondly, we saw that Nietzsche's dialectical thinking functions not only historically, but also as a pattern for grappling with conceptual problems in the present. Hence, we will find even in these early writings that his thinking is animated by a tension between "truth" and "lie", a tension which does not exclude the latter in favor of the former but holds, in a certain sense, the "need" for both. In Nietzsche's dialectical language, we will see that truthfulness itself dictates that we must "lie".

The great problem with which Nietzsche grappled in these early writings may be called the problem of "truth versus culture". The basic structure of this remained with him and became, in the later philosophy, the problem of "truth versus life". And just as the later Nietzsche struggled with the great spiritual crisis of the modern world under the heading of "nihilism", so the early philosophy struggles with a similar crisis of the modern world. But here Nietzsche sees the crisis as that of the disintegration of genuine culture. Modern states have no unifying goals, he believed, nothing that would result in the improving of mankind. He describes his sense of this crisis in the following words:

> ...Symptoms of a decay of education are everywhere, a complete extirpation: haste, the subsiding waters of religion, national conflicts, science fragmenting and disintegrating, the contemptible cash and pleasure economy of the educated classes, their lack of love and grandeur. It is clearer and clearer to me that the learned classes are in every respect a part of this movement. They become more thoughtless and loveless every day. Everything, art as well as science, serves the approaching barbarity. Where should we turn? The great deluge of barbarity is at the door: Since we really have nothing whatsoever with which to defend ourselves and are all a part of this movement. What is to be done?
>
> The attempt to warn the actually present powers, to join with them, and to subdue those strata from which the danger of barbarism threatens while there is still time. But every alliance with the "educated" is to be rejected. That is the greatest enemy, for it hinders the physician and would

disavow the disease.

> We must seriously consider whether or not there still exist any foundations at all for the development of a culture. Is philosophy of any use as such a foundation? But it has never served this purpose?
>
> My confidence in religion is boundlessly slight: after an enormous inundation one can see the waters subsiding. (DB p.102.)

The educated classes do not provide hope for the development and restoration of genuine culture. For (to sketch briefly Nietzsche's early ideal) they can provide no unifying vision for the people, a vision which can only come from the productions of true geniuses. Such geniuses (who were produced in the genuine culture of ancient Greece (DB p.142)) would be found in the form of artists, saints, or philosophers. (UB c 5.) Hence, a culture made cohesive and unified by a single artistic style in all the expressions of its life (UB a 1) would produce geniuses in the form of artists, saints, and philosophers, and these in turn would provide the unity of style necessary for a continuation of the process. This is not a self-contained circle, however, for (like everything human) it is fraught with danger. For the goal is not simply continuation of the process, but is, rather, the improvement of mankind, the production of "a nobler humanity". Fragmented and disintegrated cultures, like those of modern Europe, portend an approaching "barbarity" because it is possible for human beings to regress (as well as progress) spiritually. As Nietzsche was later to suggest in his symbolic designation of historical mankind as crossing a dangerous "bridge" or "tightrope wire" (Z Prologue 4), if we do not continue to become "nobler" we may well fall into the pit of barbarity and regression.

It is important to note in this passage that Nietzsche questions whether philosophy would be of any use as a foundation for culture, and

also says that he has little confidence in religion. By the former, we shall see, Nietzsche means "philosophy" as connected with the knowledge drive, the drive for truth at any cost, an orientation inappropriate for fostering genuine culture. Religion, however, during certain periods, did provide such a unity, but its disintegration in the modern world (since Copernicus and the rise of science) does not make it a good candidate for cultural renewal. So the problem becomes one of the character of the modern world in general. Conditions are not favorable for the development of great human beings and hence are not favorable for making a "nobler humanity":

> In the state the individual's happiness is subordinated to the general welfare: what does this mean? Not that the minorities are utilized for the welfare of the majorities, but rather that individuals are subordinated to the welfare of the highest individuals, to the welfare of the highest specimens. The highest individuals are the creative persons - be they morally the best, or else useful in some larger sense. Thus they are the purest models and are the improvers of mankind. The goal of the commonwealth is not the existence of a state at any price, but rather its goal is for the highest specimens to be able to live and create within it. This is also the goal that underlies the foundation of states, except that they often had a false opinion concerning who the highest specimens were: often conquerors, dynasties, etc. If the state's existence is no longer to be preserved in such a way that great individuals can live within it, what will then arise is the terrifying state filled with misery, the pirate state in which the strongest individuals take the place of the best. ...The state's task....is to furnish the basis of a culture. In short, a nobler humanity is the goal of the state. Its goal lies outside of itself. The state is a means.
>
> What is lacking today is anything which can unite all the onesided forces: and so we observe that everything is hostile to everything else and that all the noble forces are engaged in a mutually destructive war of annihilation. Philosophy is an example of this: it destroys, because there is nothing to keep it within boundaries. The philosopher has become a being who is harmful to the community. He annihilates happiness, virtue, culture, and finally himself.
>
> Formerly, in the role of cultural physician, philosophy had to be in alliance with the cohesive forces. (DB pp.120-21.)

For purposes of our discussion of Nietzsche's notion of power in the fourth chapter, it should be noted that he repudiates the idea that "conquerors or dynasties" are examples of the highest specimens of humanity. Indeed, if great individuals do not live within the state as "pure models" for the improving of mankind, then what will arise is "the terrifying state filled with misery", a state in which "the strongest individuals take the place of the best". It is as if Nietzsche has the idea that only through continually having a "model" or a goal on which to focus will we be able to sustain the development of the nobler sides of our nature and continue across the dangerous adventure of human history without falling into the abyss of barbarism. For, as we saw in Chapter One, the disintegrating forces and barbarous sides of our nature are always with us, requiring not extirpation but sublimation and spiritualization. In the language of this chapter, the ever present possiblilities of sickness, weakness, mendaciousness, and cowardice will lead to barbarity, to a "pirate state", unless our energies are focused in terms of a unifying goal (or great human beings as models) which will continue to draw us sucessfully across the tightrope walk of human history. "Humanity", Nietzsche says, "grows only through admiration for what is rare and great." (DB p.25.)

"The highest individuals", he says here, "are the creative persons". Nietzsche intimates, with this notion of creativity, the historical and cultural function of great human beings. They are not only models for the rest of us, they are also creators of the unifying vision which makes a genuine culture a culture (this very creativity may itself serve as a model). Such a unifying vision involves an interpretation of human life and the place of a people within the human situation. A unifying vision is a

weltanschauung.

But here lies the paradox: the knowledge drive and the scientific impulse has shown that every weltanschauung is just that: it is merely an interpretation. That which unifies culture and provides the soil for the emergence of "the highest specimens" is the imaginative creations of great human beings. Whether the weltanschauung involves religion (the saint), a creative vision (the artist), or a metaphysical world view (the philosopher), it remains interpretation and hence, in Nietzsche's language, "illusion". "Our salvation", he says, "lies not in knowing, but in creating! Our greatness lies in the highest illusions...." (DB p.33.)

It is the unrestrained knowledge drive in the modern world that has only recently made us realize this. That is why philosophy, Nietzsche says here, now "destroys....happiness, virtue, culture". Philosophy in the modern world is the epitome of the unrestrained knowledge drive which debunks all unifying visions as "illusions" and creates a scepticism that allows no unified culture to develop. The traditional drive for truth which began with some of the Pre-Socratics and with Socrates has resulted in a scepticism where we realize (since Kant) that the traditional goal of attaining knowledge of "reality" is chimerical. The dialectical self-destruction of the will to truth begins to come full circle here: the unrestrained knowledge drive has led to scepticism about its own possiblity and now has led people (such as Nietzsche) to realize that it must be opposed if we are to have genuinely unifying cultural visions which create for mankind the models and weltanschauungen by which we continue to develop the nobler sides of our nature and continue to sublimate and spiritualize the barbaric sides. "In knowledge", Nietzsche says, "mankind possesses a beautiful means of decline". (DB p.44)

The roots of Nietzsche's entire philosophical odyssey are contained in these early writings. For he says here that his task is to examine the value of knowledge. (DB p.55, cf. p.155.) Just as we saw that his final philosophy resulted in what he took to be the tremendous historical need to call the value of truth experimentally into question, here he sees an historical need to examine the value of the drive to knowledge. The role of the philosopher in this examination is not merely that of the knower, it is the older role by which it thrived in the age of classical Greece, it is der Philosoph als Arzt der Kultur. The philosopher diagnoses the disintegration of genuine culture, and, as axiologist, works to help mankind cross the dangerous tightrope walk of human history:

> The difference between the effect of philosophy and that of science must be made clear, and likewise, their different origins.
>
> It is not a question of annihilating science, but of controlling it. Science is totally dependent upon philosophical opinions for all of its goals and methods, though it easily forgets this. But that philosophy which gains control also has to consider the problem of the level to which science should be permitted to develop: it has to determine value. (DB p.8.)

> Science probes the processes of nature, but it can never command men. Science knows nothing of taste, love, pleasure, displeasure, exaltation, or exhaustion. Man must in some way interpret, and thereby evaluate, what he lives through and experiences. Religions gain their power by being standards of value, criteria. An event appears in a different light when looked at from the point of view of myth. Religious interpretations have this to be said for them: that they measure life according to human ideals. (DB p.141.)

> If we are ever to achieve a culture, unheard-of-artistic powers will be needed in order to break the unlimited knowledge drive, in order to produce unity once again. Philosophy reveals its highest worth when it concentrates the unlimited knowledge drive and subdues it to unity. (DB p.9.)

We must conceive of a new role for philosophy, Nietzsche says in these early writings. That aspect of philosophy which understood itself

solely as a knowledge activity has been called into question since Kant. (DB p.153.) Philosophy must now conceive itself, at least in part, as a value activity, that is, as an activity which involves a creative element: interpretation. Those who do not understand this and try to maintain philosophy as a knowledge activity are reducing the discipline to a mere adjunct of science: to "professional border patrolling" (DB p.112) or to mere "intellectual housekeeping". (DB p.114, cf. p.119.) And the great danger of our modern world, to which the value-reflective and interpretative activity of philosophy must be addressed, is the danger of the unrestrained drive for "truth" or knowledge. The meaning, the focus, the unity, and the direction of any human culture all require myth, Nietzsche says in this passage, for myths (including all traditional religions) are "standards of value, criteria".

The unlimited knowledge drive results in radical scepticism: it destroys all interpretative myths and ultimately leads to the conclusion that "there is no truth". But in itself it offers nothing in the place of disintegrating scepticism, for it does not accept the necessity of creative interpretation as the core of any human weltanschauung and as the core of all human valuing. This point should be underlined since it is crucial for insightful interpretation of Nietzsche's later doctrines of Eternal Recurrence and Will to Power. From the very beginning of his thought, Nietzsche repudiated metaphysics as a knowledge activity and affirmed the need, the absolute necessity for, myth. For it is only through interpretative myths that value criteria enter human life. And it is the meaning provided by such myths, as we saw in Chapter One, that is the greatest human need.

The Greeks had a genuine culture because myth was still a living reality for them. But the knowledge drive progressively destroyed all

myths and hence all foundation for valuing. What is required now is tremendous creativity, a tremendous artistic renaissance, which could restrain science and the knowledge drive and provide a rebirth for a mythic dimension to human life:

> Whether or not a religion is able to establish itself here within this vacuum depends upon its strength. We are committed to culture.... In any case, that religion which would be able so to establish itself would have to possess an immense power of love - against which knowledge would shatter as it does against the language of art.
>
> But might not art itself perhaps be capable of creating a religion, of giving birth to myth? This was the case among the Greeks. (DB p.13.)

> In order to create a religion one would have to awaken belief in a mythical construction which one had erected in the vacuum - which would mean that this construction corresponds to an extraordinary need. It is unlikely that this will ever happen again after the Critique of Pure Reason. On the other hand, I can imagine a totally new type of philosopher-artist who fills the empty space with a work of art, possessing aesthetic value.[29]

Here we begin to comprehend the complexity of Nietzsche's philosophizing regarding the problem of truth. For all human life and culture requires myth (and the value criteria myth provides) rather than truth. Yet as the first sections of this chapter have shown, we have internalized the unrestricted moral demand for truth to the point where we cannot easily give up this demand: this was the case in Nietzsche's own life; he consistently demanded truth at any cost and castigated all those who wished to repose in any form of belief or dogma.

Nietzsche's "paradigmatic polarization" of "truth versus lie" is not,

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29. DB pp.14-15. See also GT xxiii on modern man's need for myth. On this general theme of art and illusion (myth) versus the knowledge drive see the following pages in DB: 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 32, 41, 44, 45, 56, 76, 86, 88, 90-91, 94, 96, 97, 132, 134, 141, 153, 154, 155, 157, 160.

therefore, the simple dichotomy that it might seem. His philosophy right to the end firmly underlines the value of truth and truthfulness, yet we see now that his philosophy also underlines the need to restore the "lie" (in a certain sense of this word) and limit the drive for truth. "The foundation of everything great and living rests on illusion", Niezsche says, "the pathos of truth leads towards decline". (DB p.156.) This paradox at the heart of his philosophy is also the paradox at the heart of the modern world: we cannot give up the demand for truth, yet we have seen that there is no such truth to be found, for every perspective is merely another interpretation.[30] We have a moral requirement for truth but at the same time a moral requirement for a mythos which can provide a foundation for culture and a value criterion by which we can live and interpret our place in the universe. We need the one and cannot give up the other: and yet the two, truth and "culture" in the early writings and truth and "life" in the latter, seem to be fundamentally opposed to one another. Hence the great difficulty with which modern man is faced: "It is extraordinarily difficult to revive the mythical feeling of the free lie," Nietzsche says, "Yet the great Greek philosophers dwell entirely within this justification of the lie."[31]

In the next chapter we will look at some of Nietzsche's early epistemological writings which led him to his radical scepticism and to this

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30. Nietzsche had a name for this conflict in terms of two types of philosopher: the philosopher of "desparate knowledge" versus the philosopher of "tragic knowledge". The first, of course, refers to the unrestrained truth drive and the second to those who have the tragic insight that truth is unattainable and that we must be content with "illusions". References on this theme include the following pages in DB: 11-12, 14, 22-23, 45-46, 56, 57, 65, 70, 72, 74, 89-90, 92, 94, 100, 143.

31. DB p.27. It is, of course, some of the Pre-Socratics that is meant.

doctrine that everything great in human life "rests on illusion". But before doing this, let us introduce a conception from contemporary philosophy of religion which seems to shed some light on Nietzsche's idea that we need to restore a mythic dimension to human life. His later polemical attacks on Christianity often obscure the fact that Nietzsche was not at all hostile to religion as such. Indeed (as we shall also see with Wittgenstein) he was in some sense primarily a religious thinker and a value thinker. Many elements of traditional religion are found in his philosophy: a sense of a fundamental flaw or "fallenness" about our human nature, the eschatological feeling of a crisis which will involve the end of history as we know it, the requirement that there be a total transformation of our all-too-human nature (which he calls "redemption" or "salvation") in order to transcend this crisis and our "fallenness", and, finally, the somewhat Kierkegaardian notion that it is "meaning" (rather than "objective truth") that human life needs above all else. Nietzsche wants to restore a revaluated "religious dimension" to human existence, a dimension, we have seen, in which "existence is considered sacred". What was needed, he insisted, was to come upon such a mythical or "religious" dimension in a way which does not deny or denegrate the phenomenal world but rather restored its integrity. And such a mythic or religious dimension must also be no longer confused with "the truth", as was the case with the traditional religious myths.

Contemporary philosophy of religion uses the notion of a "broken myth" in just such a way: in order to separate the question of truth, factual truth, from the way in which we understand the content of our religious beliefs. The idea of demythologizing religious beliefs was

popularized by Rudolph Bultmann[32] and was taken over in the philosophy of Paul Tillich as a way of recognizing the mythic and symbolic character of all religious beliefs while at the same time recognizing that we need such symbols and interpretative frameworks as part of the spiritual dimension of our lives. The tremendous difficulty of restoring the "mythical feeling of the free lie", to which Nietzsche refers, seems to be connected with the resistance people have to accepting religious myths in the spirit of "broken myths". Tillich writes that "a myth which is understood as a myth, but not removed or replaced, can be called a "broken myth"".[33] Many, however, are

> afraid of every act of demythologization. [They] ...believe that the broken myth is deprived of its truth and of its convincing power. Those who live in an unbroken mythological world feel safe and certain. They resist, often fanatically, any attempt to introduce an element of uncertainty by "breaking the myth", namely, by making conscious its symbolic character.[34]

Tillich's idea of the "broken myth" seems to express one of the fundamental ideas that Nietzsche was driving at in these early writings. Nietzsche says that we need artistic and symbolic interpretation of our life and yet we must remain conscious of its character as "lie". Indeed, we have seen that this requirement of creative "illusion", on the one hand, while remaining faithful to truth and truthfulness, on the other, provides a basic paradox of his philosophizing. And both Tillich and Nietzsche seem to agree that, in the face of the unconditional demand for truth, there

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32. See, for example, Bultmann's book Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

33. Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p.50.

34. Ibid. p.51.

will be great resistance to the possibility of restoring a mythic dimension which is at the same time "broken". This resistance can come from two very different directions. It can come, as Tillich emphasizes here, from those literalists who want to identify their beliefs with the "truth", who feel that "the broken myth is deprived of its truth and its convincing power". Or it can come, as Nietzsche tends to emphasize, from the radical scepticism fostered by science and the unconditional demand for truth. In either case, perhaps Nietzsche is correct in his prognosis that it will take tremendous creative energy, as well as a very great spiritual need, to control the demand for truth at any cost and restore a mythic, interpretive dimension to human life.

Perhaps Nietzsche's focus on the requirement of breaking the myths can reconcile to some extent the seeming conflict between the need to reestablish an interpretive myth which gives value and meaning to human life and his life-long polemic against those people who wish to sacrifice truth by psychologically resting in comforting religious beliefs. A broken myth is precisely that which restores the interpretive dimension to human life without sacrificing truth and truthfulness: for we are to remain conscious of its character as myth. Those who wish to sacrifice intellectual integrity for belief, on the other hand, are those also criticized by Tillich in the passage quoted: they do not have the honesty and courage to live with the "uncertainty" of broken myths.

In the light of these reflections, therefore, we should more clearly understand Nietzsche's response to the problem of nihilism discussed in Chapter One: his claim that we may need the "lie" in order to overcome the meaninglessness and valuelessness of the modern world. These early reflections, in response to what he took to be the disintegration of genuine

culture, claimed very much the same thing. And they claimed that the lie must be a "broken" one: our truthfulness demands that we must always be aware of its character as "lie". We shall develop below the way in which this latter requirement also has a parallel in the final philosophy: for that being who finally overcomes nihilism, the "overman", must be able to create values, Nietzsche says, (or create value interpretations of human life) while remaining fully conscious of the symbolic and mythic character of these constructions. We shall also see in what way the doctrines of eternal recurrence and will to power fulfill this requirement: they are "formulas" (EH Z 1) or "interpretations" (J 22) of which we are conscious that they are such.[35] It is Nietzsche's early reflections on the problem of the "truth versus culture" which provides the interpretive clue to his entire later philosophy, especially when seen in conjunction with his radical scepticism concerning the possibility of there being any such thing as "truth", even facts.

In this chapter we have developed the background materials necessary for comprehending not only the main doctrines of his later philosophy but

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35. Additional references useful in reflecting on these later doctrines are the following: DB pp.19, 61, 75, 89, 96, 105, 109, 152. This discussion of Tillich is not meant to suggest that Nietzsche would entirely agree with Tillich or vice versa. Our fourth chapter will attempt to clarify why Nietzsche thought that only superhuman creativity could live with entirely broken myths.

It is sometimes said that great philosophers are not necessarily good scholars and that this is true of such figures as Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger. However, this can become a serious problem when these philosophers write books, such as Heidegger's Nietzsche, which seem to purport to give us Nietzsche's philosophy. If Heidegger had read carefully these early writings, it is difficult to see how he could have presented the Will to Power as a metaphysical doctrine.

Walter Kaufmann says that Heidegger accepted the notorious exegetical methods of Baumler, the Nazi interpreter of Nietzsche, and labels "this whole approach a methodological scandal". (forward to DB, p.viii).

also the basic conflict in his philosophizing necessary for understanding in what way the problem of truth is connected with nihilism: nihilism, most fundamentally for Nietzsche, is that state of affairs in which mankind feels that there is no ultimate truth - and yet cannot give up the need and the demand for such truth. In the first three sections of this chapter we have documented this need and this demand in Nietzsche's own philosophical life. In the first section, we saw Nietzsche's insistence that the highest fruit of modern scientific culture lay not in the results of science but in the careful methodology, exacting discipline, and most of all "intellectual integrity" which it fosters. This remained his view throughout. In the second section we examined Nietzsche's life-long insistence that this intellectual integrity required tremendous psychological self-awareness, great "severity against oneself", because of the overwhelming tendency of human beings to fool themselves and to wish to rest in comfortable beliefs and illusions. The life committed to truth, psychologically speaking, for Nietzsche, is necessarily a difficult and often painful existence. In the third section of this chapter we examined the four basic paradigmatic oppositions of Nietzsche's final period and saw in what ways each of them is related to the pervasive theme of truth in his writings. It became clear here that Nietzsche was in the process of a revaluation in his final period in which the emphasis was being shifted from the belief in metaphysical truth to truthfulness: an existential way of life requiring that we face the terrible "fact" that there is no final truth, and that even what we call "facts" are interpretations.

Finally, in section four it became clear that, for all Nietzsche's emphasis on truthfulness, the innermost tension of his philosophizing will not let him rest in "truthfulness" alone: there is no metaphysical truth but

the greatest need of human beings is the need for a meaningful interpretation of human life, for interpretations provided through the creativity of great human beings and which (while those great human beings may also serve as "models") provides the meaning-framework within which we can continue to grow "nobler" rather than fall into the pit of barbarism and terror. Yet this requires us to affirm "lies and illusions", precisely because there is no ultimate truth, and in spite of the fact that we insist on only the highest truthfulness and integrity. In Nietzsche's later philosophy, we shall see, the demands of "life" are necessarily perspectival, necessarily interpretive. And yet truthfulness requires that we confront these demands of life with the continual realization that our perspectives give us nothing but "lies and illusions". The conflict between truth and culture in the early writings becomes the nihilistic conflict between "truth and life" in the later writings: there is no "truth" and yet we cannot give up the demand for truth in order to affirm "life". At the heart of this dilemma, and at the heart of nihilism, is Nietzsche's "metaphysical scepticism", a vision of the human situation in which all human meanings and all human "knowing" seem to hang over an abyss of meaninglessness and illusion. It is this metaphysical scepticism, the very core of Nietzsche's conception of the nihilism of the modern world, which must be examined if we are to ever see our way clear of it and find a path beyond nihilism. Let us undertake such an examination of this radical scepticism, then, including the epistemological reflections from which it is derived, in order to see our way clear to a critical assessment of the issues, and, ultimately, of Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

METAPHYSICAL SCEPTICISM

> Here yawns the abyss of that circularity in which the whole of human Dasein moves.
>
> Heidegger[1]

> Perhaps I know better than anyone why man alone laughs: he alone suffers so deeply that he had to invent laughter.
>
> Nietzsche[2]

i. The Problem of The In-Itself

Although Nietzsche was passionately concerned with truth and truthfulness from the very beginning of his career, we have seen that he was primarily a value philosopher concerned basically neither with metaphysics nor epistemology but with the consequences for man of developments in these areas. Indeed, the central crisis of the modern world on which his philosophizing focused was "the problem of truth". However, he does not offer another metaphysics, nor even an epistemology, to justify his radical scepticism but rather saw his own ultimate

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1. Nietzsche, Vol. I, p.127.

2. Quoted in Middleton, p.278, f.124.

contribution as calling attention to the tremendous historical need to examine carefully our traditional notions of truth and our values in connection with them. For he thought that these traditional notions and values were at the very heart of that spiritual crisis of the modern world which he called "nihilism". In his notebooks of 1885-86, Nietzsche, in looking back on his writings, makes these points in the following way:

> Deeply mistrustful of the dogmas of epistemology, I loved to look now out of this window, now out of that; I guarded against settling down with any of these dogmas, considered them harmful - and finally: is it likely that a tool is able to criticize it own fitness? - What I noticed was rather that no epistemological skepticism or dogmatism has ever arisen free from ulterior motives - that it acquires a value of second rank as soon as one has considered what it was that compelled the adoption of this point of view.
>
> Fundamental insight: Kant as well as Schopenhauer - the skeptical-epochistic attitude as well as the historicizing, as well as the pessimistic - have a moral origin. I saw no one who had ventured a critique of moral value feelings.... (WM 410.)

Our epistemology is dictated by our relationship to life, Nietzsche suggests here, rather than by any objective assessment of the grounds of knowledge. Even the attitude of epoche, the suspension of belief that we inherit from the ancient Sceptics, is a value attitude.

For this reason we would suggest that it is impossible to formulate one epistemological position attributable to Nietzsche. Those who have tried find his writings full of valuable insights but can discover no final position, only general themes and points of view which often resonate with one another. One of the full length studies which concentrates on this is John Wilcox's book Truth and Value in Nietzsche - A Study of His Metaethics and Epistemology.[3] With excellent scholarship Wilcox collects

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3. Washington: The University Press of America, 1982.

and organizes seemingly all of Nietzsche's epistemological writings and categorizes them as to their subject matter, especially under the broadest categories of whether the content of the aphorism is "cognitivist" or "non-cognitivist", that is, whether or not the epistemology allowed for values that were "objective" in some sense.[4] Wilcox states his general conclusions at the beginning of his fourth chapter:

> It is clear from the two preceding chapters that there are very strong cognitivist motifs in Nietzsche's metaethical thought. It is also clear, from Chapter I, that there are contrary motifs there as well. Can all these be reconciled? The position which will be defended here is that Nietzsche's cognitivism is dominant; there is so much rationalism in his thought and rhetoric, in his avowals and in his polemics, that it cannot be overlooked or explained away. Furthermore, the appearances of noncognitivism are often inconsistent with one another, at least if interpreted in the ways in which the earlier chapter suggested - and of course they are inconsistent with his cognitivism. The strategy here will be to look for an interpretation of Nietzsche's thought that will allow, insofar as possible, a consistent interpretation of all these elements of his thought. The upshot is that many, though not all, of the noncognitivist elements get explained away.[5]

These conclusions, and Wilcox's book as a whole, are valuable in placing Nietzsche within the epistemological, neo-Kantian setting of the 19th century and also for relating his thought to 20th century metaethics. What he calls Nietzsche's "cognitivism" is closely related to what our last chapter called "Nietzsche's moral commitment to truth at any price", a commitment which defined his life, and in his view, the value crisis of the modern world. However, to treat Nietzsche in this way (one might say in terms of the epistemological concerns of British and American philosophers rather than "hermeneutically" as perhaps with Heidegger and some

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4. Ibid. p.11.

5. Ibid. p.98.

European philosophers) is to miss what was fundamental to the entire third period of his philosophizing: the attempt to create and intimate a new ethic, a new way of valuing and of relating to the world which had no historical precedent, a way of valuing which was not "discovered" or come upon cognitively but which required a spiritual transformation of our human nature into a new mode of being-in-the-world. The very last paragraph of Wilcox's book intimates something of what is missing in his study:

> We can discover a clear cognitivism in much of his thought, and also clear emphases on the need for a union of the cognitive and the noncognitive. We can see that his cognitivism is employed destructively, and that the creation and appraisal of new values requires a union - a transcognitive approach, we might say. But how that union could be accomplished, how new values could be cognitive-and-more, that we do not discover. To these last intriguing problems in his metaethics, Nietzsche had the rudiments of several solutions, but nothing definitive; and major aspects of the problems remain unsolved.[6]

It would seem that what was most fundamental to Nietzsche's philosophy as defined in our Chapter One above, nihilism and the absolute historical imperative for its overcoming, is lost upon Wilcox as the context for Nietzsche's philosophizing concerning "truth". Wilcox only recognizes that "the creation and appraisal of new values requires...a transcognitive approach" and "how new values could be cognitive-and-more...we do not discover" and leaves out consideration of the great symbolic and transformative doctrines of Nietzsche's final period (overman, eternal recurrence, and will to power), all of which point to the need for a spiritual transformation of our being-in-the-world as an answer to nihilism and the crisis in values.

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6. Ibid. p.201.

It may be true that Nietzsche was entangled in the "dilemma of scepticism", that his "metaphysical scepticism", the claim that there is no truth, is a cognitive claim in some sense (the cognitive claim that there are no cognitive claims). But whatever his entanglements as a philosopher, to treat him simply as another epistemologist or another metaethicist is to miss the entire central force of his thought which is concerned, above all else, with nihilism and its overcoming through a transformation beyond our present human nature. This will become clearer in our discussion of Nietzsche's final philosophy in the next chapter. But it important to keep these points in mind as we present here an overview and summary of his epistemological reflections, beginning with the earliest writings and concluding with the writings of the final period. The problem of nihilism and its overcoming is precisely the problem of the cognitive claim that there is no truth. This furnishes the context within which Nietzsche (and the modern world) struggle to overcome nihilism.

There are quite a number of epistemological reflections in the early unpublished writings, the most extended of which is the 1873 essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"[7] The only essential difference between the scepticism of these notes and that of the later writings seems to be that the later reflections are attempting to drop the Kantian notion of an unknowable ding-an-sich while the early writings retain such a conception. In this section we will look at some of Nietzsche's reflections concerning this theme and then, in the following section, try to identify and summarize his main epistemological reflections which led to radical scepticism.

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7. OL 2, pp.171-192.

In the 1886 Preface to Human All-Too-Human (Vol. Two), Nietzsche describes his own "nihilism" of these early writings:

> For my own self, I was already in the midst of moral skepticism and dissolution, that is to say, just as much involved in the critique as in the deepening of all previous pessimism. And already I believed (as people say) "in nothing at all anymore" - including Schopenhauer. Just at this time I produced a work which has since been kept secret: On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense.[8]

Nietzsche is here recognizing that radical scepticism about the possibility of knowledge and about the grounds of value characterized his outlook as early as 1873. As we have seen, it is this scepticism and nihilism, and their coexistence with the passionate moral commitment to truth, which furnished the context and the dialectical mainspring for his philosophical quest. And we have seen that he believed he was among the first to really comprehend the implications of Kant's First Critique.

It is indeed Schopenhauer and the First Critique that are in the background here, yet already Nietzsche seems to have dropped the Schopenhauerian idea, present in The Birth of Tragedy, that ultimate reality is "the will" and that certain persons can attain an intuitive, immediate insight into this primal reality. Among the notes for this essay Nietzsche writes: "Truth cannot be recognized. Everything which is knowable is illusion."[9] And the essay focuses on the unknowability of anything we might designate as "reality": "The "thing-in-itself" (it is just

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8. DB, tr., p.xx, also found at OL 7, p.2. DB also uses the word "nihilism" to characterize this passage (p. xxxii).

9. DB p.97. It will become clear here, therefore, that those writers of popular histories of philosophy who assert such things as "whereas Schopenhauer believed we should deny the will, Nietzsche said that we should affirm the will and developed his metaphysics of will to power on this basis" have missed the boat from the very beginning.

this which would be pure ineffective truth)...." (OL 2, p.178.) Our perceptions of the world can make no claim to bring us closer to any such "reality", he says, and the essay goes to some lengths to explain this, concluding that "the standard of right perception...does not exist." (OL 2, p.184) For the "x" that nature knows is "inaccessible and indefinable":

> The disregarding of the individual and real furnishes us with the idea, as it likewise also gives us the form; whereas nature knows of no forms and ideas, and therefore knows no species but only an x, to us inaccessible and indefinable. For our antithesis of individual and species is anthropomorphic too and does not come from the essence of things, although on the other hand we do not dare to say that it does not correspond to it; for that would be a dogmatic assertion and as such just as undemonstrable as its contrary. (OL 2, p.180.)

Nietzsche here accepts the idea of an unknowable x to which our concepts and ideas may or may not "correspond". He says that it would be just as dogmatic to suppose the concepts do correspond as to suppose they do not. However, the bottom line is that there is absolutely no way to stand outside of those concepts and somehow compare them with that x. Hence what we call "truth" is always thoroughly anthropomorphic. Nietzsche continues:

> What therefore is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms: in short a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses; coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal. (OL 2, p.180.)

As a lover of truth, and as a Kantian, Nietzsche does not here belong to the tradition of Protagoras and other great sceptics who find man to be "the measure of all things" for this condition is not a conclusion but the

very source of our problem and the genesis of our philosophical perplexities. Man indeed is the measurer but he forgets, for Nietzsche, this very fact and comes to take his measurements (his metaphors, perceptions, perspectives) for the truth.

> If I make the definition of the mammal and then declare after inspecting a camel, "Behold a mammal," then no doubt a truth is brought to light thereby, but it is of very limited value, I mean it is anthropomorphic through and through, and does not contain one single point which is "true-in-itself", real and universally valid, apart from man. The seeker after such truths seeks at the bottom only the metamorphosis of the world in man, he strives for an understanding of the world as a human-like thing and by his battling gains at best the feeling of an assimilation.... His procedure is to apply man as the measure of all things immediately before him as pure objects. He therefore forgets that the original metaphors of perception are metaphors, and takes them for things themselves. (OL 2, p.183.)

Man is the measure of nothing, for Nietzsche. And although Nietzsche is imbued with the scientific spirit, the results of science fare no better as a claim to truth. The tremendous consistency and continuity of our findings from the "telescopic" to the "microscopic" worlds cannot convince:

> Against this it may be objected in the first place that if each of us had for himself a different sensibility, if we ourselves were only able to perceive sometimes as a bird, sometimes as a worm, sometimes as a plant, or if one of us saw the same stimulus as red, another as blue, if a third person even perceived it as a tone, then nobody would talk of such an orderliness of nature, but would conceive of her only as an extremely subjective structure. Secondly, what is, for us in general, a law of nature? It is not known in itself but only in its effects, that is to say in its relations to other laws of nature, which again are known to us only as the sums of relations. Therefore all these relations refer only to another and are absolutely incomprehensible to us in their essence.... (OL 2, p.186.)

The view that science does not give us truth about things is retained

throughout Nietzsche's career as we have seen.[10] This is also true of his idea that language is a series of metaphors upon metaphors which construct "reality" rather than refer to it. Together with these, Nietzsche finds self-knowledge, and even simple human actions unknowable at bottom (FW 335), and in Gay Science 357, the difficulties of knowledge apply finally to everything familiar: "What is familiar is most difficult to know...." The concept of the in-itself begins to seem more and more arbitrary as Nietzsche's sensibility comes to view all our concepts, images, and ideas as a series of ever shifting perspectives and perceptions of which we know nothing about any supposed "relation" to "reality itself".

This view that there is no knowledge of any "reality-in-itself" had been a foundation stone of the early reflections, but it was radicalized in the second and third periods both of which challenge the very intelligibility of the notion. By 1877, when his friend Paul Deussen sent Nietzsche a copy of his first book which contained strong Schopenhauerian and Indian mystical elements[11] (and hence a metaphysical conception of an ultimate reality-in-itself) Nietzsche replied in a letter:

> I personally only regret one thing: that I didn't receive such a book as this several years earlier! How much more grateful I would have been! As it is, and seeing the directions one's thoughts take, your book serves me, strangely enough, as a happy collection of all that I no longer believe to be true.[12]

And the following year (1878) saw the publication of the first volume of Human All-Too-Human where Nietzsche (for the first time in his published

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10. Cf. FW 112, 121, 357.

11. J.P. Stern, A Study of Nietzsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.11.

12. Ibid. p.11.

writings) questions the meaningfulness of the idea of an in-itself to things:

> PHENOMENON AND THING-IN-ITSELF. - Philosophers are in the habit of setting themselves before life and experience - before that which they call the world of appearance - as before a picture that is once for all unrolled and exhibits unchangeably fixed the same process, - this process, they think, must be rightly interpreted in order to come to a conclusion about the being that produced the picture: about the thing-in-itself, therefore, which is always accustomed to be regarded as sufficient ground for the world of phenomenon. On the other hand, since one always makes the idea of the metaphysical stand definitely as that of the unconditioned, consequently also unconditioning, one must directly disown all connection between the unconditioned (the metaphysical world) and the world which is known to us; so that the thing-in-itself should most certainly not appear in the phenomenon, and every conclusion from the former as regards the latter is to be rejected. Both sides overlook the fact that the picture - that which we now call human life and experience - has gradually evolved, - nay, is still in the full process of evolving, - and therefore should not be regarded as a fixed magnitude from which a conclusion about its originator might be deduced (the sufficing cause) or even merely neglected....
>
> "Perhaps we shall...recognize that the thing-in-itself is worth a Homeric laugh; that it seemed so much, indeed everything, and is really empty, namely, empty of meaning." (OL 6, pp.28-30.)

The conclusion here, that the thing in itself is "empty of meaning", Nietzsche has put into the mouth of a triumphant Wissenschaft. And it is precisely this historical and genealogical perspective which is part of his contribution to the spirit of "scientific objectivity". The origin of metaphysical concepts, indeed perhaps the origin of all our concepts and ways of looking at the world must be understood as having evolved; just as in the Genealogy of Morals he sees the Christian concepts of good and evil as having evolved as the response of certain peoples to certain historical situations. To try to "think" about the nature of good and evil, as many philosophers attempt to do, without focusing on the genealogy of these concepts, is for Nietzsche, to remain in an unscientific and indeed

metaphysical point of view. Yet such an accomplishment of seeing things scientifically and historically will only serve to increase relativity and get us no closer to any such thing as reality-in-itself for:

> We look at everything through the human head and cannot cut this head off; while the question remains, what would be left of the world if it had been cut off? (MA 9.)

By the time of Human All-Too-Human, therefore, Nietzsche is denying the meaningfulness of the idea of reality-in-itself. It is important to note here the continuing theme of truthfulness implicit in the moral tone - even our senses "lie" to us and "deceive" us - a tone one would perhaps only find in a philosopher, a lover of truth and of "reality". There is also the implication that the world of everyday is a construction of our language, of the habits of our senses, etc. Both these ideas remain fundamental in the later philosophy which takes its stand on the conclusion that there is no metaphysical truth, no thing-in-itself. Finally, it is also important to note that these later conclusions were a product of Nietzsche's genealogical method observed here. And, ultimately, his truthfulness required that he dare apply his method to the concept of truth itself: "truth" was originally merely a way of enforcing conformity and agreement within a social setting, as we saw in Chapter One. But it has taken on an independent meaning (a metaphysical meaning) and become a key value in the Western religious and philosophical traditions.

In the later philosophy, then, the world as we experience and describe it is a construction. This is borne out in the 1887 notes of the Will to Power:

> At last, the "thing-in-itself" also disappears, because this is fundamentally the conception of a "subject-in-itself". But we have grasped that the subject is a fiction. The antithesis

"thing-in-itself" and "appearance" is untenable; with that, however, the concept "appearance" also disappears....

There are no opposites: only from those of logic do we derive the concept of opposites - and falsely transfer it to things.

If we give up the concept "subject" and "object", then also the concept "substance" - and as a consequence also the various modifications of it, e.g., "matter", "spirit", and other hypothetical entities, "the eternity and immutability of matter", etc. We have got rid of materiality....

Will to truth is a making firm, a making true and durable, an abolition of the false character of things, a reinterpretation of it into beings. "Truth" is therefore not something out there, that might be found or discovered - but something that must be created and that gives a name to a process, or rather to a will to overcome that has in itself no end - introducing truth, as a processus in infinitum, an active determining - not a becoming-conscious of something that is in itself firm and determined. (WM 552.)

Against positivism, which halts at phenomena - "There are only facts" - I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing.

"Everything is subjective," you say; but even this is interpretation. The "subject" is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. - Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis.

In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. - "Perspectivalism".

It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against.[13]

Nietzsche says here that the concept of object in general, including "thing-in-itself", comes from the conception of a "subject-in-itself", and that once we have abandoned the latter, the former disappears as well. This argument is almost the reverse of the one Leibniz uses to illustrate his conception of the monad as a simple substance. For Leibniz appeals to our experience of ourselves as "a multiplicity in a simple substance"[14] to

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13. WM 481. Cf. FW 374, GM III 12, WM 567.

14. Monadology 16 in The Rationalists, Veitch, et. al. trs, (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), p.457. See also Principles of Nature and Grace, 1-2.

illustrate his conception of the monad as reality in itself. Nietzsche's presupposition seems to be that any "making firm" of the world through the use of concepts or names is necessarily an "interpretation" and a construction out of a flux which cannot be formulated or named in any way. If any claim at all that the names or concepts one uses mirrors a "reality" can be said to be "metaphysics", then Nietzsche here seems to be attacking all possible metaphysics. Subject, object, matter, substance, appearance, reality - all these disappear as merely "concepts", he says, leaving us with a "making firm" which is quite groundless, a making firm out of "nothing" so to speak.

In the fourth section of this chapter we will try to show in what ways Nietzsche, in spite of this seemingly radical and complete withdrawal from metaphysics, retained metaphysical assumptions which dictate his metaphysical scepticism and which are integrally involved with the nihilistic point of view. For the moment, however, it is only necessary to lay out this scepticism and document his belief that the world is a construction, but not out of things as they are in themselves:

> The "thing-in-itself" is nonsensical. If I remove all the relationships, all the "properties," all the "activities" of a thing, the thing does not remain over; because the thingness has only been invented by us owning to the requirements of logic, thus with the aim of defining, communication (to bind together the multiplicity of relationships, properties, activities). (WM 558.)
>
> That things possess a constitution in themselves quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity, is a quite idle hypothesis: it presupposes that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential, that a thing freed from all relationships would still be a thing. (WM 560.)
>
> Our psychological perspective is determined by the following:
> 1. that communication is necessary, and that for there to be communication something has to be firm, simplified,

capable of precision (above all in the...identical case). For it to be communicable, however, it must be experienced as adapted, as "recognizable." The material of the senses adapted by the understanding, reduced to rough outlines, made similar, subsumed under related matters. Thus the fuzziness and chaos of sense impressions are, as it were, logicized;[15]

2. the world of "phenomena" is the adapted world which we feel to be real. The "reality" lies in the continual recurrence of identical, familiar, related things in their logicized character, in the belief that here we are able to reckon and calculate;

3. the antithesis of this phenomenal world is not "the true world", but the formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations - another kind of phenomenal world, a kind "unknowable" for us;

4. questions, what things "in-themselves" may be like, apart from our sense receptivity and the activity of our understanding, must be rebutted with the question: how could we know that things exist? "Thingness" was first created by us. The question is whether there could not be many other ways of creating such an apparent world.... (WM 569.)

Nietzsche's later views are here clearly articulated and there is no need to multiply passages in this connection.[16] In the early work one sense of the word "truth" in "there is no truth" was that for human beings reality in itself was not knowable. The sense of this statement has

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15. These reflections and this scepticism are clearly a reading of, and influenced by, Kant. Kant himself, as is well known, had severe difficulties with his idea of the "thing-in-itself". One place where these difficulties are especially observed is through a comparison of the several changes he made in his chapter "Phenomena and Noumena" between the first and second editions of the First Critique. (See Appendix A for an outline and summary of these changes.)

Nietzsche's idea here that there is no such thing as a non-"logicized" sense impression also seems to have its roots in Kant. Norman Kemp Smith, in his Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1962) describes Kant's view of "awareness" as follows:

"...In what does awareness, whether of presented contents or of presented relations, consist, and how is it possible? In answering this question Kant is led to the conclusion that consciousness must be regarded as an activity, and as determining certain of the conditions of its own possibility. Its contribution is of a uniform and constant nature; it consists...of certain relational factors whose presence can be detected in each and every act of awareness." (p. xliii.)

16. But see also, e.g., GM III 5, WM 559, 562, 625, 631, 634, 715.

evolved into the later work to mean "There is no reality in-itself (truth) at all". This, then, is the groundwork, the starting place for Nietzsche's attempt to build a positive philosophy in the later works: radical scepticism - so radical that even the concept of "reality" has dissolved: reality is not "becoming" as opposed to "being" as some have claimed for him, "reality", he says here, "lies in the continual recurrence of identical, familiar, related things in their logicized character", in other words, in the "making firm" process by which we construct our world. Other than this there is nothing to be said or identified, only a "formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations". This is certainly not the scepticism of the ancients who denied knowledge in their search for ataraxia or peace of mind. Rather, this is the scepticism of a philosopher so dedicated to truth and knowledge, yet so aware of our psychological human weaknesses, as well as the apriori determinations of concept, language, and structure on our "perceptions", that he suffered great torment because of his own sceptical conclusions.

The early writings set the tone for the final nihilism concerning "truth". In the 1872 notes he asks the following rhetorical question concerning "man's fate": "Does he not actually live by means of a continual process of deception? Does not nature conceal most things from him, even the nearest things...? He is locked within his consciousness and nature threw away the key." (DB p.65.) And he says of this fate that: "The truth would drive him to despair and destruction: the truth that he is eternally condemned to untruth." (DB p.65.) The later Nietzsche characterized his experience of thinking as a continual penetration of "caves behind caves" (J 289), a perception of shifting perspectives and facades, like shimmering veils over an abyss, a frightening hole or

nothingness which he had at long last learned not to look into but to remain at the surface. (FW P 4.) For the concept of "reality-itself" was not only logically and grammatically challenged, in the later philosophy, it was existentially challenged as well. As an existentialist thinker, Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism led to a disintegration of the very sense of a reality behind the shifting appearances and illusions. It led to the feeling that human life was hanging over a terrible abyss, "like hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger", the terrible abyss that there is no truth.[17]

ii. Epistemology, Language, and The In-Itself

In the first section of this chapter we delineated Nietzsche's sceptical conclusions in order to set them clearly apart as a focus for understanding, and, secondly, because there are essential for comprehending Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. In this second section we will try to form a more specific picture of these matters by looking at a number of fundamental

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17. DB p.65. This is not to imply that Nietzsche personally or philosophically disintegrated. He believed that this would indeed happen to "weak" spirits, but with "strong" spirits it would create something like "a magnificent tension of the spirit the like of which had never yet existed on earth: with so tense a bow we can shoot for the most distant goals" (J Preface).

The "abyss" quality of Nietzsche's thoughts, reflected in the above quotations, contains elements sometimes associated with "mystical awakening" (Walter Stace's term in The Teachings of The Mystics (New York: Mentor Books, 1960)): the ideas that there is no self, that there are no 'things', that subject and object are a unity, that the 'world' is in some sense a construct of our linear linguistic habits, etc. Perhaps Nietzsche was very close to an insight in which the "abyss" quality of the world could have been dialectically transmuted into a quality of perfect peace and perfection. The question of Nietzsche's possible connection with such an "awakening" will be discussed in Chapter Four.

epistemological and linguistic points that Nietzsche makes in support of his scepticism. By doing this we will be articulating this scepticism itself more fully and preparing the way, first, for understanding why the word "truth" is used in so many senses in Nietzsche's writings (the subject of section iii) and, finally, for our own critical examination of this scepticism (section iv).

In this section we will first list eight general points Nietzsche makes in support of his scepticism and then look at each of them in turn. "Reality-in-itself", then, is either unknowable (in the early writings) or perhaps meaningless (in the later writings) for a number of broad reasons:

1. As Hume had suggested, the relation between cause and effect is not a necessary one but purely a matter of perceived conjunctions.

2. All quantification, and all measuring, is itself necessarily anthropomorphic.

3. The mind cannot comprehend the sheer qualitative presence of things, but only operates in terms of quantities.

4. Nietzsche's (very Leibnizian) idea that each thing perceives the world from its own point of view and has no way to transcend that point of view.

5. The ideas that we are, to a large extent, both psychologically and historically conditioned beings and that our concepts have evolved from earlier concepts that meant something quite different.

6. Beings such as ourselves need our errors and falsifications in order to preserve life. That is, perspective is a necessary condition of there being life (and human life) at all.

7. The idea that everything the human head perceives is a nerve stimulus and therefore a "translation" of the object into nervous impulses.

8. The notion that all language is merely an accumulation of conventional designations for the human relations to "things" and that even the idea that there are "things" in the world is dictated by grammar and not by any supposed

"experience" of those things.

Some of these points undoubtedly overlap with one another, and they certainly are not intended to be an exhaustive account of Nietzsche's epistemological reflections. However, Nietzsche does make all of them separately and they are all closely related to his conclusion that our concepts and thoughts about the world, our so called "knowing" is entirely "anthropomorphic". (DB pp. 37-38.) As he says in Dawn 210, in a passage entitled "Thing-in-Itself":

> We have...finally reached the conclusion that there is nothing which is good, beautiful, sublime, or evil in itself; but rather that there are conditions of the soul which lead us to attribute such qualities to things outside ourselves and in us. We have taken back their predicates from things; or we have at all events recollected that we have merely lent the things these predicates. (OL 9, p.224.)

To live in a world all of whose qualities are supplied by us is to be unable to make any pronouncements about any supposed "realities". Although Nietzsche does not use the word, it is to border on (if not to be trapped within) solipsism. Let us discuss in turn the arguments that lead to this conclusion.

1. Nietzsche seems to have accepted Hume's sceptical conclusions concerning the foundations of knowledge that can come from eliminating the idea of necessity from the cause-effect relation and seeing it simply as constant conjunction:

> Every natural process is fundamentally inexplicable to us. All we do in each case is to identify the setting in which the actual drama unfolds. Thus we speak of causality when we really see nothing but a succession of events. (DB p.94.)

However, rather than seeing this as calling into question the foundations of

empirical knowledge by suggesting that it can give us only probabilities rather than certainties, Nietzsche gives the scepticism here his usual "metaphysical" direction by using the arbitrary nature of what we call "cause and effect" to underline our inability to know "reality":

> Cause and Effect.-- We say it is "explanation"; but it is only in "description" that we are in advance of the older stages of knowledge and science.... We have discovered a manifold succession where the naive man and investigator of older cultures saw only two things, "cause" and "effect"...; we have perfected the conception of becoming, but have not got a knowledge of what is above and behind the conception. (FW 112.)

Nietzsche's epistemological aphorisms rather consistently follow this pattern. There is always something "behind the conception" which we cannot get to, which is forever barred from us. (e.g., M 121.) Hence, he concludes here: "It is sufficient to regard science as the exactest humanizing of things that is possible". "Cause and effect" is another example of the anthropomorphic nature of all knowing.

Unlike Kant, Nietzsche is not concerned to discover a non-empirical grounding for the universality and necessity that Hume's analysis has called into question. Kant is content to establish a connection between genuine knowledge and the phenomena, thereby sequestering ultimate reality for the realm of "faith". But Nietzsche, as we have seen, finds the notion of "faith" unsatisfactory and insists, right to the end, on knowledge of "reality". His metaphysical scepticism is "metaphysical" precisely because it will not let go of this logical requirement: that there should be something there which is missing in our knowledge. Whether we cannot get to it (as in the early philosophy) or it is called "meaningless" (as in the later philosophy), our age is the age of nihilism because the meaning and

purpose of human existence had always been connected with that "reality" which is now seen to be either unknowable or meaningless. This seems to be the dominant pattern of Nietzsche's epistemological thinking: there is something "above and beyond" our conceptions, or else something that "should be" above and beyond our conceptions, that is always missing.

2. Nietzsche's point concerning cause and effect is also extended to include all physics and mechanics. In the passage just quoted he says of science:

> We operate only with things which do not exist, with lines, surfaces, bodies, atoms, divisible times, divisible spaces -- how can explanation ever be possible when we first make everything a conception, our conception!

The Gay Science, from which we are quoting, was published in 1882 as the beginning of Nietzsche's final period, but nine years earlier he was saying very much the same thing about the "measurements" made by our sciences:

> We can say nothing about the thing in itself, for we have eliminated the standpoint of knowing, i.e. of measuring. A quality exists for us, i.e. it is measured by us. If we take away the measure, what remains of the quality? (DB p.37.)

And in the same notes, he says concerning any progress that might be made by the sciences: "...This is all nothing but formulas for absolutely unknowable forces." (DB p.37.)

3. The third epistemological point in our list is not one focused on very often by Nietzsche. It is worth pointing out here because some of Wittgenstein's discussions intimate much the same thing (as we shall see). In the early notebooks Nietzsche writes: "Man does not understand a single quality, but only quantity." (DB p.19.) If Nietzsche had continued to reflect on this idea, his final philosophy might have taken a different turn,

and the experience of the phenomena as hanging over an abyss of nothingness might have given way to a sense of the sanctity and unity that is beyond language which one sometimes finds, for example, in the writings of the Zen Buddhists. But Nietzsche's predominant orientation remained a cognitive one; he was focusing on the cognitive possibility of knowing "truth" or "ultimate reality" while articulating, at the same time, many arguments why such knowledge must be either meaningless or impossible. Even the note where he makes this comment shows such an orientation, for it begins: "Our understanding is a surface power; it is superficial".

4. It is possible to see the somewhat Kantian notion that each living thing organizes the world according to its own sensibility and understanding as a development of the Leibnizian idea, as in the Monadology 57, that each thing perceives the world from its own point of view. In the early writings, Nietzsche already uses this Leibnizian idea but seems only to have applied it to living things (while in the later writings he uses the idea as a logical-paradigmatic tool, applying to all things, for articulating his perspectivism). It is used in the early writings specifically as one of the arguments for the unknowability of the thing-in-itself. For example, in two consecutive notes (part of which we quoted earlier) he writes:

> We can say nothing about the thing in itself.... A quality exists for us, i.e. it is measured by us....
> Now the question is, how does such a measuring being originate? The plant too is a measuring being.
>
> For the plant the world is thus and such; for us the world is thus and such. If we compare the two perceptual powers we consider our view of the world to be the more correct one, i.e. the one that corresponds more closely to the truth.... On the contrary.... For the plant, the whole world is a plant; for us, it is human. (DB pp.37-38.)

In the later writings this perspectivism is universalized into an

ontological perspectivism which applies not only to living things but to all "centers of force". At first this looks like a metaphysical point of view until one reflects on three factors which together are decisive: first, that Nietzsche's thought continually took symbolic and paradigmatic forms (as we have repeatedly seen), secondly, that the pervasive and unchanging context of his philosophizing was always metaphysical scepticism (as we have demonstrated at length), and, finally, that he occasionally uses this very ontological perspectivism as an argument for his metaphysical scepticism. Therefore we can reasonably assume that when Nietzsche speaks as if every empirical object contains a "center of force" which functions as an organizing perspective similar to Leibniz' "dominant monad", he is not reverting to that metaphysics which he consistently repudiates but rather is articulating paradigmatically his radical perspectivism as part of the very expression of his metaphysical scepticism.

Heidegger, whose interpretation of Nietzsche we have repeatedly criticized, also recognizes this parallel with Leibniz. But he falls once more into the trap of assimilating Nietzsche to his own "history of Western metaphysics":

> Beings as such are perspectival. What we call reality is defined by its perspectival character. Only by keeping this fact constantly in mind can we think the "being" proper within Nietzsche's metaphysics. In the perspectival character of the being, Nietzsche is only expressing what has formed a covert basic trait of metaphysics since Leibniz.
>
> According to Leibniz all being is defined by perceptio and appetitus, by the representing urge which presses for the placing-before, the "representation", of the whole of beings.... In each case, the representation has what Leibniz calls a point de vue - a viewpoint. That is what Nietzsche says too:

> it is "perspectivalism" (the perspectival constitution of being)....[18]

A strange development seems to have taken place. For what was originally an argument for the unknowability of the thing-itself now seems, from Heidegger's point of view, to itself have turned into the thing itself. This same seeming reversal can be seen in the 1888 note to which Heidegger refers us:

> Physicists believe in a "true world" in their own fashion: a firm systematization of atoms in necessary fashion, the same for all beings - so for them the "apparent world" is reduced to take the side of universal and universally necessary being which is accessible to every being in its own way (accessible and also already adapted - made "subjective"). But they are in error. The atom they posit is inferred according to the logic of the perspectivism of consciousness - and is therefore itself a subjective fiction. The world picture that they sketch differs in no essential way from the subjective world picture: it is only construed with more extended senses, but with our senses nonetheless- And in any case they left something out of the constellation without knowing it: precisely this necessary perspectivism by virtue of which every center of force - and not only man - construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e. measures, feels, forms, according to its own force--.[19]

Heidegger quotes only the last three lines of this passage, omitting the seeming paradox that Nietzsche in one breath castigates the physicists for believing that their results give us "universally necessary being" (since they ignore the "perspectivism" of human consciousness which makes of their "atom" simply another human construct, another "subjective fiction") and in the very next breath tells us what real being really is, namely centers of force each of which "construes the rest of the world from its own viewpoint". Clearly the latter claim is a paradigmatic representation of

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18. Nietzsche, Vol. IV (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), pp.64-65.

19. WM 636. Cf. FW 374, GM III 12, WM 556, WM 567.

that sceptical perspectivism which Nietzsche accuses the physicists of not comprehending. Logically and paradigmatically, there are only points of view and hence the notion of "true being" loses its meaning.

Since the passages we have already studied demonstrate that Nietzsche believed there was no metaphysical truth from the beginning to the very end of his philosophizing, and since we have studied his use of paradigms as well as his call for "broken myths" to replace the traditional metaphysical interpretations of human life, we need comment no further on Heidegger's use and misuse of snippets from Nietzsche's writings. In our discussion of the will to power in the next chapter, we will examine other reasons why Nietzsche chose these particular ideas as a myth or paradigm to replace traditional metaphysics. Our point here is simply that Nietzsche uses this perspectivism to symbolically underline his metaphysical scepticism, not to throw it out the window.

5. The concepts in terms of which we grapple with the world are not only historically and psychologically conditioned to a large extent, but the realization that these concepts have evolved, that they have a genealogy, itself leads to sceptical conclusions. Nietzsche believed that if our moral conceptions are seen to have evolved from more primitive conceptions which we do not consider to be moral, then this would call into question the ostensive independent validity of those moral beliefs. He attempted to show this not only in the Genealogy of Morals but in a number of places, beginning with the notes of the early 1870s. He attempted the same genealogical critique with the concept of "truth", suggesting, beginning with these early notes, that the origin of the moral requirement of truthfulness was the need to ensure social conformity by requiring people to designate the same things with the same linguistic conventions. Later this took on

an independent meaning and people began to believe in truth and truthfulness in their own right.[20] The human situation is such, for Nietzsche, that the unrestrained knowledge drive can only lead to radical scepticism and the disintegration of meaning. He tries to show precisely this, precipitating nihilism (which had to come anyway, since it is implicit in our values) and at the same time trying to find a new relation to that human situation which could restore meaning and dignity to human life. As Nietzsche wrote as early as 1872:

> It has to be proven that all our constructions of the world are anthropomorphic, indeed, if Kant is right, all sciences.... Against Kant....this entire position is useless from a personal point of view; no one can live in this scepticism.
>
> We must get beyond this scepticism; we must forget it! (DB p.32.)

Here is Nietzsche's life-long philosophic program in a nutshell: to bring to a climax and to a logical conclusion the scepticism and nihilism of the modern world - to show that it is nihilism and that nobody can live in this - and to try to move beyond it, to create a new way of valuing which

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20. See DB pp.27-28 and, in "Truth and Lie", DB p.81ff. See also MA II (part one) 98, MA II (part two) 43, M Preface 4, FW 110 & 334, J 1, GM III 24-27 (all listed by DB on p.27).

This idea in itself does not remove the logical "problem of universals": for if conventional designations are required for "the same" things, then there must be something about those things themselves which allows us to identify them as "the same". Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances", sometimes claimed to be his answer to the problem of universals, fails in the same way. For even if two things are only similar, or only resemble each other in one or two characteristics (which allow us to identify them under a general term) logically speaking, there must be something, some "universal" actually shared by the things which allows us to establish the convention of subsuming them under the general term. To reply that they are not the same but only "similar" does not solve the problem, for to be even "similar" both objects must have something in common independently of the conventional designation. This problem would seem to be a logical one with which human beings are confronted and does not necessarily admit of an ontological conclusion.

does not require a metaphysical foundation. But the scepticism remained with him to the end, as we have seen. To what extent his final philosophy resolves this dilemma will be examined in the next chapter.

Genealogically, then, not only have our concepts evolved from ones that had a very different meaning, but this makes us realize as well that we are conditioned in our thinking by historical forces of which we often know nothing. The conventions and conceptual structures which we inherit from past generations dictate to us our possibilities of comprehending the world. There would seem to be no way to transcend this inherited apparatus to discover what the world really might be like in itself. This same argument applies to our unconscious drives which also condition our conscious philosophizing pointing once again to sceptical conclusions concerning the objective content of our philosophical ideas:

> ...It has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir.... (J 6.)

What could we possibly say about "reality itself" in the face of such pervasive and multifaceted conditioning of our conceptual and conscious lives?

6. Beings such as ourselves need our errors and falsifications in order to preserve life. The "need" referred to here is not a psychological need such as the need for a faith (which Nietzsche attributes to religious believers). Rather, the way we instinctually and naturally respond to the world is meant: the way our senses perceive, the way we divide the world into manipulatable physical bodies, the way we tend to accept the appearances of things as common sense reality, etc. All this is the product of a long evolution directed to our survival and "the preservation

of life". With the late development of an independent drive to truth at any price, a force potentially destructive of survival has arisen, a force which calls into question sense experience, the reality of physical bodies, and our common sense trust of the everyday world. Recognition of this, of course, makes us realize that the ultimate question asked by this independent truth drive, "What is reality in itself?" cannot be answered without destroying the vary basis of human life. In the notebooks of Will to Power Nietzsche writes:

> Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. The value for life is ultimately decisive. (WM 493.)

This idea is spelled out at some length in Gay Science 110, an aphorism which brings together a number of the central themes of this chapter. Although the aphorism is too long to quote here in its entirety, what we do quote is sufficient to illustrate the point made here as well as its connection with Nietzsche's genealogical approach discussed immediately above.

> Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny. Such erroneous articles of faith, which were continually inherited, until they became almost part of the basic endowment of the species, include the following: that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances bodies; that a thing is what it appears to be....
>
> ...Sense perception and every kind of sensation worked with these basic errors which had been incorporated since time immemorial. Indeed even in the realm of knowledge these propositions became the norms according to which "true" and "untrue" were determined - down to the most remote regions of logic.
>
> Thus the strength of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth but on its age, on the degree to which it has

> been incorporated, on its character as a condition of life. Where life and knowledge seemed to be at odds there was never any real fight, but denial and doubt were simply considered madness. (FW 110.)

In a later aphorism Nietzsche calls this idea "ultimate scepticism" and continues: "But what after all are man's truths? - They are his irrefutable errors". (FW 265, OL 10 p.208.) This is even true of the patterns of thought: "Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off". (WM 522.) This idea is ultimate scepticism because the question of the "in-itself" becomes a question that can only be answered by destroying life itself, or, rather, as long as life exists, there is no way to answer such a question.

7. The final two points to be made here are both raised in "On Truth and Lie in the Nonmoral Sense" and are there related to one another. The first is that everything the human head perceives is a "nerve stimulus" and therefore a "translation" of the object into nervous impulses. Nietzsche's point is that the excitation of the nervous system in sensation is activity in a totally different sphere from whatever is "out there" which ostensibly produces the nerve impulses. What happens in the nerves gives us no clue to the kind of "reality" we suppose to have excited them:

> To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image.... There is a complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one. One can imagine a man who is totally deaf and has never had a sensation of sound and music. Perhaps such a person will gaze with astonishment at Chladni's sound figures; perhaps he will discover their causes in the vibrations of the string and will now swear that he must know what they mean by "sound".... In the same way that the sound appears as a sand figure, so the mysterious X of the thing in itself first appears as a nerve stimulus, then as an image, and finally as a sound. (DB pp.82-83.)

Just as figures made in sand by sound waves would not give a deaf person

any real clue as to what sound is so the excitation of our nerves in a completely different sphere from whatever is "out there" gives us no clue to that reality.

8. After the passage just quoted Nietzsche continues with his account of the "transferences" from one sphere to another which results, finally, in human descriptive speech: the stimulation of the nerves results in the formation of an "image", and from the image results the descriptive word, for example, "green". In each case there is transference from one sphere to a completely different sphere which does not give us any real clue to the "reality" of the earlier spheres. (cf. WM 506.) Not only does this view of language lead to sceptical conclusions, but the fact that language rests on agreed upon conventions shows us, Nietzsche claims, that its descriptions of the world are falsifications and agreed upon "errors".

In section one of this chapter we considered some key passages where Nietzsche discusses language in this essay on "Truth and Lie". Indeed, the ways that language cuts us off from knowledge of any "in-itself" is one of the main themes of the essay. The crucial expression here is "metaphor": language is essentially metaphorical for Nietzsche. As he says in the 1872 notebooks:

> ...There is no "real" expression and no real knowing apart from metaphor. But deception on this point remains, i.e. the belief in a truth of sense impressions. The most accustomed metaphors, the usual ones, now pass for truths and as standards for measuring the rarer ones. The only intrinsic difference here is the difference between custom and novelty, frequency and rarity.
>
> Knowing is nothing but working with the favorite metaphors, an imitating which is no longer felt to be an imitation. Naturally, therefore, it cannot penetrate the realm of truth. (DB pp.50-51.)

The phrase "realm of truth" is, of course, a way of speaking about the

thing in itself. All language is metaphorical in that it only names our relation to things, and our associations among things, rather than the things themselves. Breazeale sees this as a fundamental point of Nietzsche's early reflections on truth and interprets Nietzsche's remarks as seeing "the power of metaphor formation...as synonymous with that fundamental creative drive which makes us human." (DB p.94, n.47.) We do not picture or mirror the world, for Nietzsche, we create metaphors in response to it.

The power of metaphor formation is connected with the rhetorical nature of language, what one might call the necessarily artistic aspect of all uses of language. The metaphor reveals something, as does art, but it reveals through transmuting into a completely different sphere and, therefore, by its very nature also conceals, and forever conceals, "the realm of truth", thought of as an "in-itself". Paul de Mann, a contemporary interpreter of Nietzsche at Yale, sees this insight into the rhetorical nature of language as the key to his critique of metaphysics. Unlike Heidegger, who sees Nietzsche as having simply inverted Plato's metaphysical dualism, de Mann says that Nietzsche's insight into language shows him as transcending traditional metaphysics:

> We can legitimately assert therefore that the key to Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics - which has, perhaps misleadingly, been described as a mere reversal of metaphysics or of Plato - lies in the rhetorical model of the trope....[21]

In speaking of the essay "Truth and Lie", de Mann says that "this

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21. "Nietzsche's Theory of Rhetoric" in Symposium - a Quarterly Journal in Modern Foreign Literatures, Spring 1974, p.38.

essay flatly states the necessary subversion of truth by rhetoric as the distinctive feature of all language",[22] and in support of this idea quotes Nietzsche's notes on rhetoric dating from this same period:

> No such thing as an unrhetorical, "natural" language exists that could be used as a point of reference: language is itself the result of purely rhetorical tricks and devices.[23]

There is no core referential language upon which metaphor and rhetorical devices are grafted. Rather, the very essence of language is these devices. There can be no referential picturing of the world. De Mann explains this in the following way:

> The straightforward affirmation that the paradigmatic structure of language is rhetorical rather than representational or expressive of a referential, proper meaning is more categorical, in this relatively early Nietzsche text, than in the predecessors from which it stems. It marks a full reversal of the established priorities which traditionally root the authority of language in its adequation to an extralinguistic referent of meaning,[24] rather than in the intralinguistic resources of figures.

And of the epistemological implications of this view of language de Mann concludes:

> I prefer the term "irony" to that of "scepticism", despite the weight of the philosophical tradition that stands behind scepticism. Irony goes beyond scepticism in that it puts the notion of the self in question. Scepticism is an attitude of consciousness while irony is a purely linguistic trope.[25] And in Nietzsche we are dealing with a radically ironic mode.

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22. Ibid. p.39.

23. Ibid. p.35.

24. Ibid. p.35.

25. Ibid. p.45.

With this discussion of language we are beginning to move into another, specifically 20th century, dimension of philosophizing. The first seven points Nietzsche makes here are more or less epistemological in a sense that might presuppose a relation to the world independent of, or prior to, language. But with the eighth point we are moving into a view of "epistemology" which does not see the human being as having pre-linguistic perceptions of the world, experiences prior to language, which are then "named" and translated into language. Rather, at least in terms of Wittgenstein, as we shall see, we are moving toward a view of the human situation in which it makes no sense to speak of experience or perception independent of language. One place in the 19th century where the roots of this transition are found is in the writings of Nietzsche. As Michel Foucault says, Nietzsche was "the first to reconcile the philosophical task with a radical reflection on language."[26]

De Mann claims that, rather than in traditional epistemological scepticism, Nietzsche was operating in an "ironic mode", due to his awareness of the rhetorical nature of all language. This might indicate to us why there is no "epistemological position" in Nietzsche but rather a series of dialectical reversals and symbolic reflections always returning to and revolving around the problem of the in-itself, the problem of metaphysical truth. Hence, the use of paradigm, symbol, and myth in all aspects of Nietzsche's philosophical project does not constitute a metaphorical, half-philosophical mode of reflection as some analytically oriented philosophers seem to believe. Rather, this paradigmatic and

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26. Les mots et les choses (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p.316. Quoted in DB p.xxxiv.

symbolic mode of reflection is itself the result of philosophic insight, the insight that all language (and hence all reflection) is necessarily metaphorical and symbolic.

Due to a similar insight, other philosophers (like Kant, to a certain extent, and Wittgenstein) have moved in a different direction (a direction also hostile to metaphysics): they have moved to a radical presuppositionalism which takes the form of a logical analysis of the presuppositions of discourse. Nietzsche's response to the death of the idea of "representational truth", on the other hand, was to look to art and the artistic mode of being-in-the-world. Perhaps a keen awareness of the threat of nihilism was the determining factor for Nietzsche. For the death of the idea of representational truth (which was simultaneously a calling into question of the " in-itself" or "being") was, for him, also the death of the traditional view of the meaning and dignity of human life. His response was an attempt to go beyond traditional epistemology (which was, after all, part of the problem, part of what he called "the drive for truth at any cost"). This attempt could well be called (with de Mann) the shifting into "a radically ironic mode". Indeed, as we shall see at some length, it was on the artistic impulse, and on superhuman creativity, that Nietzsche pinned his hopes for going beyond nihilism. As one who recognized the artistic (rhetorical) nature of all language and the need to push a creative relationship with life to the point where meaning could be restored through interpretive myths which were recognized as myths, Nietzsche also, so to speak, mythologized epistemology itself by dramatizing the conflict between the idea of an "in-itself" to things, which it seemed impossible to give up (since it was linked metaphysically with traditional values), and the idea of a radical scepticism forever cut off and

barred from contact with this "in-itself". Peter Heller describes this dramatic aspect of Nietzsche's thought and writing:

> The naive readings of Nietzsche are based on the assumption that the essentials of his works can be represented apart from the actual experience of involvement in the antithetical dynamism of his thought. But whatever their ideological emphases may be, these interpretations ignore at least that aspect of Nietzsche which was referred to above as his use and abuse of discursive reasoning for the purpose of non-discursive communication. It might be objected that all substantive human thought is subject to some such use and abuse, for no statement could be wholly adequate to a reality. This, however, is not the point. Even a rationalist might concede that reality exceeds his reason; but he could be expected to build the structure of his discourse and reasoning as consistently, as firmly, as unambiguously as possible, in order to approximate the truth. Nietzsche, on the other hand, uses and abuses the conflict between statement and counterstatement in order to suggest the nature of reality. To some extent at least, he proceeds as an artist who imitates what he conceives to be the dynamic flux of reality (or nature or truth) by dramatizing a dynamic of contrapuntal statements.[27]

If we add to the basic import of Heller's description de Mann's idea that Nietzsche understood the artistic and rhetorical nature of language itself (and therefore that his dramatizations were not only to "suggest the nature of reality" but also, so to speak, the inseparability of metaphor and symbol from our conceptualizations of "reality"), then it would seem that we have a balanced picture of Nietzsche's "epistemological" activity. This is why Nietzsche uses the word "truth" seemingly indiscriminately in so many senses. The communication and insight here is artistic as well as

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27. Dialectics and Nihilism (N.p.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), pp.129-30. We would want to qualify the metaphysical import of Heller's statements, however. Nietzsche wasn't trying to indicate "the nature of reality" but rather the conflict between our metaphysical requirement that there be an ultimate reality and the radical impossiblity of any such knowledge.

discursive (the two, for him, being inseparable). As artist he was trying to communicate an experience of the modern world, the experience of the nihilistic death of all traditional values, including truth, and his vision of the direction we must take if we are to restore value and meaning to human life. In the next section we will look at some sixteen different senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth". In order to understand what is going on with this multiplicity, it is important to keep the point just made in mind: all language is metaphorical and rhetorical and hence philosophy itself, for Nietzsche, becomes bound up, not only with paradigm and symbol, but with dramatization.

After discussing the different senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth" we will then be in a position for the project undertaken in the concluding section of this chapter: a critical examination of Nietzsche's reflections on the problem of metaphysical truth.

iii. Basic Meanings of the Word "Truth" in Nietzsche's Writings

In Chapter One we saw Nietzsche's belief that we are at the end of the line as far as the traditional drive for metaphysical truth (for understanding the "ultimate nature of reality") is concerned. Since Kant we have realized that this drive leads only to radical scepticism concerning our supposed relation to this "truth": indeed, scepticism concerning the very meaningfulness of the conception. Moving beyond this nihilism will mean groping our way beyond the traditional understandings of the human situation which based the value and meaning of human existence on its relation to "reality" or the "in-itself". It will mean a revaluing of all our values, including our understanding of "truth" and its role in human life.

We have seen that even Nietzsche's early notebooks (during and after the time of the Birth of Tragedy [1872]) show him grappling with the problem of the limitations of the truth drive as a foundation for Western culture (years before he had formulated his conception of nihilism). The activity of philosophy, he says there, is not to be identified with a knowledge activity but rather is above knowledge, for it includes an artistic element. (DB p.23.) Even when the great philosophical systems of the past (which claimed to be giving us metaphysical knowledge) are shown not to be knowledge, what is valuable about them remains, Nietzsche says, for what is left is "art", not art in the sense of mere decoration, but art which is in some sense fundamental to "life" itself. (DB p.17.) This same emphasis on the connection between artistic creation and human life shows up even in the Birth of Tragedy where Nietzsche had earlier written of his "conviction that art is the highest task, the true metaphysical activity". (GT P.) This emphasis on the value of art and creativity and their connection with the very roots of human life continues right into the third period where the overman is understood as being capable for the first time of truly "creating values". ""Will to truth"", Nietzsche writes in 1887-88, "as the impotence of the will to create". (WM 585.)

For these reasons, in spite of Nietzsche's emphasis on cautious methodology, truthfulness and honesty, and the need for a courageous truthfulness as part of the revaluation of all values, his philosophical activity itself was not primarily a knowledge activity in the usual sense. Nor was it an epistemological activity in the usual philosophical sense. Nietzsche does not try to systematically analyze and investigate the notion of "truth", nor even the foundations of his own scepticism. He wrote as an artist-thinker whose concerns were different from traditional

philosophical concerns (if these are thought of primarily as epistemological and metaphysical). Even as a value-philosopher Nietzsche wrote differently from traditional value-philosophers who usually, in one way or another, tried to ground their value conceptions systematically in what they took to be the nature of reality. But his understanding of the modern historical situation is precisely that no such grounding is possible any longer. He believes that he is the first to realize fully that our human situation is entirely groundless. Our values, as well as our science, our history, even our sense perceptions of the world, cannot be grounded in any "realities".

It is important to understand these points when looking at the various senses in which Nietzsche used the word "truth".[28] Not only was he in no way systematic in his use of the word, he was not primarily concerned with doing epistemology or even systematically defending his radical scepticism. His concerns, in a certain sense even in the early philosophy, were always with nihilism and its overcoming, with the conflict between "truth and life", for "life" in some way requires a creative element which is at odds with the knowledge drive. Our review of many of the senses in which he uses the word "truth" will underline this lack of traditional philosophical concerns. It will also prepare the way for our critical examination in the next section of the fundamental problematic of his philosophy. Our review here will take the form of enumerating the senses

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28. These categories should be taken as suggestive rather than mutually exclusive. Also, there is no claim that the following senses of the word "truth" themselves do not overlap, nor that the list is exhaustive. Nietzsche uses the word "truth" probably hundreds of times in his writings and many of these uses take on unique connotations from the context in which they are used. And since he does not use the word systematically, the number of senses would seem to be somewhat open-ended. Many of the senses listed have rich philosophical implications and could be the subject of an entire study. Our purpose, again, is not primarily epistemological but to study the main thrust of Nietzsche's thought.

in which he uses the word "truth" under three general headings: (1) What Nietzsche attacks or analyses as part of his critique of traditional conceptions of "truth", (2) Some of his more philosophical usages of the word, and (3) Those uses of the word connected with Nietzsche's attempt to overcome traditional values, including the traditional value of "truth". Our exposition will delineate sixteen senses of the word, and number them accordingly, allowing us to form an overview of Nietzsche's usages and his reflections in this regard.

When we look at what Nietzsche attacks or criticizes we can easily identify six senses in which he uses the word "truth" in this connection. These senses do not include the many ordinary, non-philosophical uses he makes of the word both in the published writings and in the letters.[29] He seems to consider these uses legitimate as long as we recognize that all language is merely conventional.

1. First, Nietzsche uses the word "truth" for the dogmas of faith and past metaphysical philosophies which are the brunt of his polemic and which, he claims, baptized falsehoods and lies as "truth" because they were held with conviction, rather than rationally, and because these people needed their faiths. Nietzsche speaks of the feeling these people have that "I possess Truth" (FW 13) and objects, for example, that so far the concepts "true" and "untrue" have been determined by priests (A 13).

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29. In the correspondence (in Middleton) we find, for example, the following. In a letter of 20 December 1872, "I shall be cautious about regaling...the people at Basel with truths about my life...." On 1 April 1884: "I thought that, when one speaks of distress, people in distress would understand. That is certainly true...." On 6 April 1883: "...People remember me kindly, and, to tell the truth, I was not the worst of teachers." On 7 October 1887: "Remain true to yourself - I can wish you nothing better than that!" On 10 April 1888: "Rumors have gone around that I am in a madhouse (have even died there). Nothing could be further from the truth."

Hence, many times Nietzsche uses the word to refer to what people have called "truth" and which he wishes now to call "lies".

2. "Truth" is also used in a related sense for the conventions and metaphors of language, the common categories and universals into which we categorize our world (e.g. this is a "tree") while ignoring the innumerable particular concrete variations of the phenomena. This is another form of "faith", which Nietzsche attacks, for "language is the obligation to lie according to a fixed convention". (OL 2, p. 181.) This is one of the basic points of the early "Truth and Lie" essay which we have already discussed.

3. Closely related to the second sense is the idea that people have a drive to "carve a world", so to speak, out of the flux of their experience and to call their designations in this carved out world "truth". As we have seen, Nietzsche calls this tendency a "making firm" of the "rich ambiguity" of existence. (FW 373, cf. WM 520, 552.)

4. This tendency to carve out a world from the flux of experience within which we live is contradicted by the historical development of the drive to truth as a moral impulse and a value. (M Pref. 3, FW 110, 334.) It is this moral and metaphysical requirement for "truth" (which we have seen characterize much of Nietzsche's own life) which he wished to critique and to overcome. For it leads to a radical scepticism which ultimately vitiates all traditional values as well as the lebenswelt connected with senses two and three. (See WM 568.) Yet there is no going back to a naive belief in that lebenswelt, for Nietzsche, and there is also no giving up truthfulness (for this is one of the highest spiritual fruits of the Western tradition, as we have seen). What is required, as intimated in Chapter One, is a dialectical overcoming of this opposition in such a

way that we can again live in a meaningful world while at the same time preserving absolute honesty and philosophical truthfulness. As Nietzsche says as early as 1875:

> My general task: to show how life, philosophy, and art can have a more profound and congenial relationship to each other, in such a way that philosophy is not superficial and the life of the philosopher does not become mendacious. (DB p. 134.)

5 and 6. Finally, Nietzsche critically, and often ironically, uses the word "truth" to refer to that modern tendency to accumulate "facts", as if facts were somehow self-interpreting. (WM 481.) In addition, he uses the word ironically to underline his psychological critique of philosophers who call "truth" those statements and interpretations that really only reflect their own psychological predispositions. (J 5 & 6.)

The next six senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth" can be linked to the more traditional philosophical uses:

7. Sometimes Nietzsche uses the word in the sense of designating the philosophical "problem of truth", as for example when he refers to Pontius Pilate's question to Jesus: "What is truth?" (A 46, cf. GM III 24.) This is of central importance: for by "philosophical problem of truth" he means the problem he believes he has discovered: the problem of the <u>value</u> of the truth drive itself in the face of nihilism. He seems to take his radical scepticism as a forgone conclusion which will be adopted more and more by people as the implications of Kantian philosophy begin to sink in. As we have seen, his sceptical arguments are not a systematic attempt to establish scepticism but are all in the service of his larger project of overcoming nihilism (and thus, in a certain dialectical sense, his own scepticism).

8 and 9. Nietzsche never systematically compares or contrasts various theories of truth, for his primary interests and insights involve the spiritual condition of the modern world and not theory of knowledge. But he does often seem to develop arguments for what people have called a "pragmatic" or "instrumental" conception of truth (although at the same time, as we have seen, many of his uses of the word seem to retain the implications of a correspondence model of knowing). Breazeale describes these tendencies as follows:

> On the other hand, Nietzsche constantly presupposed, and thought that science presupposes, a rather literal correspondence model of knowledge and ideal of descriptive adequacy. When the knowledge that we actually think we possess is measured by such an ideal it invariably falls short of the expected standard of truth. On the other hand, Nietzsche did not fail to see that the distinction between truth and falsity lends itself to an altogether different interpretation to which ideal standards of perfectly adequate description are irrelevant. Understood in this second sense, knowing is not an attempt to mirror an independently real world, but rather a process of accommodating ourselves to the world in which we live and that world to us: truths are humanly constructed instruments designed to serve human purposes. These two views of the nature of truth and knowledge are encountered together in almost all of Nietzsche's writings....[30]

Although Nietzsche does often use the word in a correspondence sense (and we have seen his reasons for this), his own philosophizing also often reflected what can be called truth in a "pragmatic sense".[31] Truth is

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30. DB pp.xxxi-ii. Breazeale's discussion here, of course, leaves out the world-historical context, and hence the genuine meaning, of this conflict.

31. Nowhere does he consider the possibility of a coherence definition of truth, perhaps because of his view of the world as "chaos" (FW 109) and of uninterpreted sensations as "chaos" (WM 569). And as we have seen, his usage, in connection with "correspondence", is actually more than an ordinary correspondence sense, since his concern is not simply with how concepts can be said to correspond to experiential phenomena but with whether concepts correspond to "reality itself".

what is useful to life. His many statements in this regard fall into two categories which should be distinguished. The first we will call "conscious pragmatism" in that truth is what people have found to work for them in their interactions with the world. (e.g. FW 307.) The second might be termed "evolutionary pragmatism", that is, what we call "truth" is what worked for us in terms of our evolutionary survival (e.g. FW 111, 265; WM 493). Truth here is, in a certain sense, the "perspectival estimates" that have evolved as the human way of experiencing the world. (J 34.) Those estimates that worked best allowed us to survive, those that did not work died out. Nietzsche does not distinguish clearly these very different kinds of "pragmatism".

Some interpreters have assimilated his rather extensive remarks on these topics to some of his final remarks concerning the "will to power" and have claimed that Nietzsche held, for example, a "pragmatic and existential" theory of truth. Rose Pfeffer, in her book Nietzsche - Disciple of Dionysos, sees him in this way as a forerunner of both the existentialists and the pragmatists. These contemporary philosophers live, she says, in a very different world, a world of probabilities and tentative hypotheses, from that inhabited by traditional philosophers who looked more for stability and certainty. Of Nietzsche, she says:

> He does not ask "How are synthetic a priori propositions possible?" but "Why are synthetic a priori propositions necessary?" While previous philosophers, even when sceptical and critical, had still been guided by a deeply rooted longing for certainty, Nietzsche breaks the ground for what Charles Peirce calls a "new maturity", which replaces certainty of knowledge with various degrees of probability. He accepts a truth that is contradictory and changing, implying a never-ending search, a never-ending will to create.[32]

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32. Pfeffer, p. 103.

Among her quotations in support of this is the following passage from the Nachlass:

> "Truth" is not something that is there to be found and discovered, but something that must be created and can be called a process, or better, a will to conquer which has no end...a process ad infinitum.... It is a word for the "will to power".[33]

Nietzsche, however, might well find a great disparity between the quotation and the gloss. In Chapter Two above, and again in this section, we have seen him strongly critical of ever judging truth on the basis of what is useful to human beings, on what works, for truth must be told even if it is terrible and ugly. This insistence implies a sense of truth as what is independent of human perceptions and activities, a sense which is metaphysical, as we have seen, and which he retains to the end. The truth as "will to power" passage quoted here is a result of Nietzsche's attempt at revaluing the concept of "truth" through a dialectical synthesis of the demands of "life" (its interaction with, and inseparability from, the flux of the phenomena), on the one hand, and the metaphysical scepticism (which finds us forever cut off from an ultimate knowledge or "in-itself") on the other hand. Modern pragmatism, which rests with "various degrees of probability", is indeed an extremely modified version of the traditional conceptions of knowledge. But it contributes nothing to restoring the meaning and value of human existence which Nietzsche finds to be the central problem of our time. Whatever Nietzsche's revaluation of the notion of truth amounts to, it would have to involve a mode of being-in-the-world that allowed such a restoration. This was true

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33. Ibid. p.93.

throughout his career and was only intensified in the final period. Even in the middle period, we find this basic tension which was the mainspring of his philosophical activity:

> Here is the antagonism between the separate provinces of science and philosophy. The latter desires, what art does, to give the greatest possible depth and meaning to life and actions; in the former one seeks knowledge and nothing further, whatever may emerge thereby. So far there has been no philosopher in whose hands philosophy has not grown into an apology for knowledge.... (MA I 6, OL 6, p.19.)

As he was to put it only four years later (1882): "God is dead" - and a mode of being must be found that restores value and meaning to human existence. This is the bottom line and the criterion by which Nietzsche's final conception of "truth" must be judged.

Therefore, even though Nietzsche does develop distinctively "pragmatic" uses of the word "truth" (what we have called "conscious pragmatism" and "evolutionary pragmatism") these do not represent his "theory of truth". Rather, they are among his reflections on the "problem of truth" as he sees it and ultimately function as arguments in the service of that scepticism which is dialectically opposed, in his writings, to the unshakable drive for metaphysical truth. Pragmatic truth is the way human beings use, interact with, and "make firm" the world around them. It gives them what they have often called "truth", and it underlines the impossibility of ever getting to an "ultimate reality" or "in-itself". But Nietzsche's own "theory of truth" would be one that would attempt to dialectically encompass and transcend both sides of this opposition. Indeed, he attempts to effect this with his final doctrines of overman, eternal recurrence, and will to power. But "truth" in connection with the "will to power" (which, at the close of this section, we will call "Dionysian truth")

must be clearly distinguished from Nietzsche's "pragmatic" usages of the word.

10, 11, and 12. Nietzsche has certain uses of the word "truth" which are indeed part of his own philosophical views but which are ancillary to his ultimate attempt to revaluate the concept itself. First, he uses the word to refer to his own genealogical and psychological insights (e.g., A Preface, EH GM, & EH W 2). Secondly, he generalizes from his perspectivalism to the notion that "truth" is the sum total of perspectives that we bring to a thing. (GM III 12.) This last is undoubtedly an important idea in that it may be an attempt to formulate a non-metaphysical view of what may be called "knowledge" in terms of the idea that there are only interpretations and no facts. Yet Nietzsche does not develop or repeat this idea very often because his main concern, in terms of the idea of "truth", is not knowledge but meaning, the overcoming of nihilism.[34]

Thirdly, Nietzsche uses the word "true" to identify the correctness of his "materialism", his often polemically asserted emphasis on the scientific-naturalistic perspective against all forms of Platonism, religious or philosophical Idealism. (e.g. EH P 2 & 3.) The clue to this use of the word "true" is in its polemical nature. If this is not understood, Nietzsche's philosophical "materialism" and naturalism would seem to involve him in a metaphysical world-view which, once again, is untenable in the face of his radical scepticism. We have seen, on the other hand,

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34. As with some "pragmatic" uses of the word, some of the aphorisms denoting this perspectivism can be connected with the "will to power" (and some not: see GM III 12). In the last section we saw Heidegger focus on one of these (WM 636) and interpret it metaphysically. Our exegesis of the will to power in the next chapter will clarify its difference from both these misreadings.

that a key aspect of Nietzsche's philosophical project is an attempt to restore the integrity of the phenomena. In his view this requires a sustained attack on that denigration of the phenomena which has characterized most of the Western tradition. Modern scientific-naturalism is, one might say, a dramatic "mask" (J 289) which Nietzsche dons in his role as vernichter, as destroyer of the old values. But it is a far cry from his role as schoepfer in which he is attempting to overcome all metaphysics and bring humanity into a new relation to the phenomena which would, of course, far transcend scientific-naturalism or materialism. As we have seen, positivism and naturalism are, for Nietzsche, only new forms of faith, attempts to make firm and secure the dynamic flux of the phenomena.

In what ways, then, is Nietzsche's emphasis on scientific naturalism "true"? It is not metaphysically true, but, one might say, "truer" than all non-naturalistic perspectives. For one thing it is psychologically truer. Proponents of non-naturalistic perspectives resent the world and are trying to negate it. This justifies his claim that naturalism is "true" in polemical contrast to all non-naturalistic perspectives. Secondly, the naturalistic perspective is part of what Nietzsche means by "objectivity". We have seen this above in his belief that a new, cautious, scientific scepticism is the greatest legacy of the modern world since Copernicus. With the rise of the scientific spirit, we find "objectivity" and what we call knowledge associated with a systematic and cautious investigation of the natural world. All other (non-naturalistic) perspectives are not objective compared to what science reveals. Hence, when Nietzsche speaks of the naturalistic perspective as "true", this means, at least in part, objectivity, all that is associated with cautious method, as opposed to dogma, belief, and

metaphysics. Science is open-ended and never gives a final truth, Nietzsche realized, but the very condition of its spirit involves the assumption that the phenomenal world is "real" and must be taken seriously. It is this very "naturalistic" objectivity and scepticism which informs the philosophy of Kant (at least in the First Critique, which Nietzsche took seriously) and ultimately leads to the conclusion that truth (metaphysical supertruth) is impossible.

There is a third sense in which Nietzsche seems to have made claims for the "truth" of naturalism. It arises in connection with his attempts in the later notebooks to scientifically justify the doctrines of eternal recurrence and will to power in terms of the scientific naturalism of Roger Joseph Boscovich[35] whose work ("A Theory of Natural Philosophy Reduced to A Single Law of Action as Existing In Nature", 1858) anticipated contemporary relativity physics and also abolished the "particle

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35. See L.L. Whyte, "Boscovich", Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p.350. For Nietzsche's interest in Boscovich see the letter to Gast of 20 March 1882 in Middleton, pp.181-183. In a note Middleton quotes the following relevant material from Nietzsche's notes of the late 1880s (cf. Werke in drei Banden, 3: 777-78):

"One translation of this world of effect into a visible world - a world for the eye - is the concept "motion". Here it is always assumed that something is moved - which means that a thing is envisaged, whether in the fiction of a molecule atom ["Klumpchen-Atom"] or even of its abstract version, the dynamic atom: a thing which causes effects - that is, we have not freed ourselves from the habits imposed by the senses and by language. Subject, object, a doer to what is done, the doing itself and what it does - these are considered in separation; let us not forget that this is mere semeiotics and does not designate anything real. Mechanics as a doctrine of motion is already a translation into the sense language of men.... The mechanistic world is imagined in terms of a world as presented to eye and touch (as a world "in motion"), in such a way that it can be calculated, in such a way that causating units are presupposed ["fingiert"], "things", "atoms", whose effect remains constant (the false concept of the subject carried across into the concept of the atom).... If we eliminate all these trimmings, no things remain but dynamic quanta, in a relation of tension to other dynamic quanta, whose essence consists in their being related to all other quanta, in their "effect" on these." (p.182).

conception of matter". Here it seems as though Nietzsche is trying to use this materialism to justify clearly metaphysical doctrines, the very thing he spent his life arguing against. By implication it would also seem as though he is here accepting the "truth" of Boscovichian science in order to argue for the "truth" of the will to power. But let us recall from Chapter Two Nietzsche's insight that the only permanent value of science lay in its "methods" and not in its "results", and that even these results cannot be called "facts" because "there are no facts, only interpretations". (WM 481.) What Nietzsche seems to be doing, therefore, must be understood in the light of what we have seen to be his call for a mythic weltanschauung to replace "the drive for truth at any cost". Acting on this fundamental premise of his early philosophizing, the later Nietzsche is attempting to integrate all cognitive aspects of the human situation into a mythic world view held consciously in the face of the "fact" that there is no truth. That is, his activities here are part of an attempt to establish "broken myths". We will see further in Chapter Four that once the non-metaphysical character of the will to power and eternal recurrence is understood, his activity here is not incompatible with his radical scepticism.

13. The final four main senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth" bring us closer to the heart of his philosophizing. By introducing these specifically "Nietzschean" uses of the word, we will be reintroducing, in terms of Nietzsche's symbolic language, the basic problematic of his philosophy (nihilism) and intimating the direction of his vision for the overcoming of nihilism (which will be discussed in Chapter Four). Here we will only look closely at two of the four senses introduced (#s 13 and 14), two senses which culminate our exegesis of "metaphysical scepticism":

Nietzsche's symbolic designation of truth as "a woman" and, secondly, his use of this symbol to indicate the vacuum or the "nothing" left to us with the calling into question of "metaphysical truth". A deep understanding of the symbol of truth as "a woman", therefore, now becomes possible in terms of the preceding investigations in this chapter and in the earlier chapters. We will then briefly introduce the final two senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth": the "truth" of art (# 15) and what we will call "Dionysian truth" (# 16). Both of these senses are connected with Nietzsche's attempt to revaluate the concept of "truth" and therefore discussion of them will be postponed to Chapter Four on the overcoming of nihilism.

In each of three aphorisms at the beginning of Beyond Good and Evil (J 2-4) Nietzsche designates the fundamental tension of his later philosophy, the tension between the unrestrained drive for "truth", on the one hand, and the requirements of "life", on the other hand. For what if "error" and "illusion" were among the very conditions of life and the unrestrained drive for truth cut at these conditions? Nietzsche calls such conditions of life "perspectives" and seems to mean by this what we have already seen: the neo-Kantian idea that all experiencing depends on the conditions of the possibility of that very experience, hence, logically speaking, seeming to cut us off from the thing-in-itself, leaving "life", as Nietzsche says, dependent on "deception". (J 2.) Therefore "perspective", Nietzsche says here, "is the basic condition of all life". (J P.) In section 3, another word for "perspectives" is "valuations":

> Behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, too, there stand valuations or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life. For example, that the definite should be worth more than the indefinite, and mere appearance worth less than "truth"....

Here the two things which logic finds to be "worth more" are the "definite" and the "truth", while what it takes to be worth less are the "indefinite" and "mere appearance". The "truth" as it is needed to preserve life is in some sense equated with the definite, while appearance is equated with the indefinite. Nietzsche seems to be using the word "truth" here in the sense of what we have called above "evolutionary pragmatism". However, we have also seen that he refuses to call by the name of "truth" (in his ultimate sense, connected with "reality itself") those characteristics that we carve out of the flux in order to make a lebenswelt for ourselves. (WM 552.) Any such carving out, whether through the evolutionary process or through philosophical dogmatism, will not give us truth:

> Supposing truth is a woman - what then? Are there not grounds for the suspicion that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, have been very inexpert about women? That the gruesome seriousness, the clumsy obtrusiveness with which they have usually approached truth so far have been awkward and very improper methods for winning a woman's heart? What is certain is that she has not allowed herself to be won.... (J P.)[36]

A dogmatist is one who thinks that it is possible to find a final truth, who believes that his or her interpretation is final and who denies the legitimacy of all other interpretations. But what if the very conditions of being a living being require perspectival estimates? How then do we win

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36. Such metaphors, of course, would only be created by male philosophers. However, the metaphor of truth as a woman is fundamental to Nietzsche's philosophy. Jacques Derrida's book Spurs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) is a full length exegesis of this theme in Nietzsche. Throughout the book, Derrida takes Heidegger to task repeatedly for missing this fundamental theme and therefore giving "truth" (and will to power) a false metaphysical interpretation (e.g. pp.73ff).

the heart of the woman "truth". For the more we pursue her, the more she recedes. The more we try to grasp her, the more she slips through our fingers. Yet all philosophers are in love with her.

Yet what about "life"? Isn't it also true that the more we pursue her, the more she recedes? "Life" is not only the perspectival estimates needed for human beings to live, it is also the dance of the phenomena themselves, and the relationship between our being-in-the-world and the flux of the phenomena. Nietzsche's "highest type of human being", Zarathustra, right after having achieved his ultimate spiritual awakening (in Part Three of the book that bears his name) has become the teacher of the eternal recurrence. From this highest spiritual level he sings a love song to life:

> Into your eyes I looked recently, O life: I saw gold blinking in your night-eye; my heart stopped in delight....
>
> I leaped toward you, but you fled back from my leap, and the tongue of your fleeing, flying hair licked me in its sweep.
>
> Away from you I leaped, and from your serpents' ire; and already you stood there, half turned, your eyes full of desire....
>
> Whereto are you luring me now, you never-tame extreme? And now you are fleeing from me again, you sweet wildcat and ingrate!
>
> I dance after you, I follow wherever your traces linger. Where are you? Give me your hand! Or only one finger! (Z III 15.)

The more he tries to grasp her, the more she slips through his fingers. Yet Zarathustra is in love with her and ultimately, as the song goes on to show, in harmony with her.

The problem of nihilism is in part the problem of finding a relationship to the ever-changing dance of the phenomena which restores their integrity and does not negate them through creating a metaphysics which denies them in one way or another. No interpretation of the

phenomena is possible which would capture "truth", for truth is systematically ambiguous and is forever veiled beyond the multiplicity of perspectives we bring to her. "Life" is also systematically ambiguous and can never be captured by us, yet we love her and love to dance with her. Are truth and life then identical in Nietzsche's final philosophy? If we could come upon a mode of being-in-the-world which experientially affirmed this identity we would be overmen. We would be gods, beyond good and evil, beyond the identification of metaphysical truth with "the good" and the devaluation of the phenomenal flux as "evil" or "illusion". We would be Zarathustra - at the highest spiritual level. But for Nietzsche, as philosopher rather than as visionary, the two are not only not the same, they remain in irreconcilable opposition to one another. This is why spiritual transformation beyond ourselves is needed - because the overcoming of nihilism requires a total affirmation of the phenomena, on the one hand, and a revaluation of the traditional moral demand for truth, on the other. The moral demand for truth forces us to attempt to look behind the phenomena and so devalue them, yet the concomitant spiritual requirement that we love life asserts the integrity of the phenomena over the search for ultimate truth.[37] This tension is the mainspring of Nietzsche's later philosophy and a large part of his passion for the Overman.

The preface to Beyond Good and Evil was written in 1885. A year later, in the 1886 preface to The Gay Science, Nietzsche again uses the

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37. What if the dualism between the phenomena and the idea of something (or nothing) behind the phenomena could be shown to be illusory? What if the sacred could be then seen to be the "nothingness" which is at the same time identical with the phenomena? It is just such an identity that is affirmed by Mahayana Buddhism, as we shall see, and it is this understanding toward which Wittgenstein's philosophy points the way.

metaphor of truth as a woman:

> And as for our future, one will hardly find us again on the paths of those Egyption youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons. No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to "truth at any price," this youthful madness in the love of truth, have lost their charm for us: for that we are too experienced, too serious, too merry, too burned, too profound. We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and "know" everything....
>
> One should have more respect for the bashfulness with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties. Perhaps truth is a woman, who has reasons for not letting us see her reasons? Perhaps her name is - to speak Greek - Baubo?
>
> Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial - out of profoundity.... Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore - artists?

Nietzsche uses two mythic images to intimate his relationship to truth, one from Friedrich Schiller's ballad "The Veiled Image at Sais", the other from the Greek myth of "Baubo".[38] In Schiller's ballad "the truth", in the inner sanctum of a temple, is concealed beneath a veil which no mortal is allowed to lift. One youth, ardent with the love of truth, enters the temple by night, lifts the veil, and is destroyed by whatever he saw there: his joy in living is gone and he is brought to an early grave.[39] Baubo, to

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38. Both of these are discussed in Dr. Richard Perkins' unpublished paper "Baubo and The Will to Truth". The next few references will cite this paper. Actually there is a third myth here: a myth of Greek artistic profundity - which Nietzsche uses as a symbol of his insight.

39. Ibid. p.11.

40. See Kaufmann's note 8 in FW p.38.

the Greeks, was "a primitive and obscene female demon"[40] and was identified by them with a word meaning "the belly, the bowels, the womb, or any other recess, chamber, or ventricle within the body as well as any depression or hollow in the earth."[41]

Nietzsche identifies truth here as a woman, but it is not the woman of Beyond Good and Evil whom all philosophers love and clumsily try to win. For Nietzsche has gone beyond the naivete of these philosophers, he says here; he has torn away the veil and seen the frightening and ugly truth that there is no truth. Beneath the veil there is only an abyss, nothingness, symbolized by the mythic woman Baubo. Hanging over this abyss leads to vertigo: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted".[42] With the death of truth we seem to be left with nihilism - nothingness. Truth is frightening and ugly; it is Baubo - the abyss.

"Oh those Greeks!", Nietzsche says, "They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface,.. to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance." "Life" requires that we stop at the surface. We can only restore the integrity of the phenomena if we give up "this youthful madness in the love of truth". We must overcome the moral requirement for truth at any price - or we shall be destroyed. In this respect, Nietzsche says, we must be Greeks: "Adorers of forms, of tones, of words. And therefore - artists". But ultimately (we shall see) this will not be enough, and Nietzsche as visionary realizes that it is not enough. For behind these appearances which we adore still lurks the abyss. We are still here carrying with us

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41. Perkins, Op.Cit., p.12.

42. A motto which Nietzsche attributes to an ancient group who had lost their faith in truth: GM III 24, cf. WM 602.

the metaphysical requirement that makes us think in terms of a behind to the phenomena, even if this "behind" is now only nothingness.

The thinking of the later Nietzsche is animated by much the same dialectical tension that animated the early writings discussed above: the tension between the requirements of "truth", on the one hand, and "art" or "life", on the other. This is true even in the Birth of Tragedy where the tragic insight into the depths of existence is opposed to the requirements of life and art. The serene illusions of the art-world of the Olympian Gods are in dialectical tension with the tragic insight expressed by the wise Silenus when King Midas forced him to divulge what would be the greatest good for mankind:

> Ephemeral wretch, begotten by accident and toil, why do you force me to tell you what it would be your greatest boon not to hear? What would be best for you is quite beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best is to die soon. (GT 3.)

In the Birth, this Greek profundity came from gazing into the metaphysical thing-in-itself of the restless, insatiable, Schopenhauerian will. In the 1886 preface to The Gay Science, the tragic insight has moved beyond this metaphysical "dogmatism" and now gazes into the abyss of nothingness: there is no truth, no in-itself. The response in both cases, as Greek profundity and affirmation of life dictate, is artistic creation: the adoration of the surface, of forms, tones, and words. But this is Nietzsche speaking here, and not Nietzsche's Zarathustra. The dialectical tension remains and has not yet exploded into a third possibility: a synthesis which transcends the opposition and fundamentally alters the character of both poles. In Nietzsche's philosophy, for such a synthesis to occur we would have to transform ourselves - and transmute our human

nature into superhuman nature. This is the recommendation of Nietzsche as visionary and will be discussed in the next chapter.

14. In elucidating the identification of truth as a woman (a sense of the word "truth" which shares the depth and ambiguity of all symbols) we came upon a more specific yet related sense which should be focused on specifically: truth as "metaphysical truth", the idea of reality in-itself. "The will to truth at any price has lost its charm for us", Nietzsche says, "perhaps her name is...Baubo".[43] Nietzsche uses the word "truth", in this sense, many times in his writings, from the early writings, as we have seen, to the later writings where it is used not only in his critique of traditional metaphysics but also, as here, to "refer to" the "nothingness" indicated by the phrase "there is no truth". This entire third chapter on Nietzsche's "metaphysical scepticism" has, in effect, been an elucidation of this sense of the word "truth". If the idea of truth as "a woman" symbolizes the systematic ambiguity of the word "truth", then it can be said to intimate the entire multiplicity of uses that we have discussed in this section. And if truth as the woman Baubo can be said to symbolize a narrower multiplicity of uses connected with the sense of an abyss or nothingness "behind" the appearances, then "metaphysical truth" can be said to be a correlative specification of this idea, one that does not intimate specifically the sense of nothingness but rather focuses on the idea of a reality, an "in-itself". Let us move on, then, to name the last two major senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth", senses which are connected with the revaluation of all values and which will be discussed fully in Chapter Four.

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43. This entire aphorism is repeated in the Epilogue to NCW.

15. Nietzsche was vitally interested in the significance of art in human life from his earliest to his latest writings. And on occasion he identifies "art" with one sense of the word "truth". For example, in 1873 he writes: "...Art treats illusion as illusion; therefore it does not wish to deceive; it is true." (DB p.96.) But the truth of art, in his reflections, ultimately does more than treat illusion as illusion, it is connected with the creative powers of transformation. In the notes for the Will to Power he writes:

> ...Here we discover art as an organic function..; we discover it as the greatest stimulus to life - art thus sublimely expedient even when it lies -
>
> But we should do wrong if we stopped with its power to lie: it does more than merely imagine; it even transposes values. (WM 808.)

In the preface to The Gay Science "truth" (symbolized by Baubo) is opposed to the artistry of the Greeks, "adorers of forms, tones, and words". But this 1888 note in the Will to Power intimates Nietzsche's sense of the transformative possibilities that lie within art conceived as human creativity: "it even transposes values". Nietzsche's insight here, into the transformative potentialities of art, is intimately connected with the final and most important sense of the word "truth":

16. Dionysian truth. "Truth" here indicates the possibility of a relation to existence which transcends and transfigures anything known so far. It is a realization of the ultimate transformative possibilities of the artistic-creative dimension within human existence. "Dionysian truth" is both the possibilities of such transformation and the relation to existence which is the result, in Nietzsche's vision, of a transformed being-in-the-world. Nietzsche sometimes speaks of the latter as connected

with a "creative will".[44] This is where the passage quoted in Rose Pfeffer's book (above) is appropriate. "Truth" here does not indicate "pragmatic truth" but rather Dionysian truth: "Truth", Nietzsche says, "is something that must be created.... It is a word for the "will to power"". (WM 569.)

With this final sense of the word "truth" in Nietzsche's writings, we have entered into his visionary philosophy: his vision of a transformed mode of human existence beyond nihilism and the death of God. Explication of the "Dionysian" sense of "truth" would be premature here outside of the context of Nietzsche's other visionary doctrines: overman, will to power, and eternal recurrence. Suffice it to say that it belongs among the multiplicity of meanings which the word "truth" is given in Nietzsche's writings, a multiplicity which itself dramatically and symbolically indicates the depth of his "metaphysical scepticism" and the centrality of the "problem of truth" within his philosophy. Before going on to examine these visionary doctrines, we are now in a position to turn our attention to a critical examination of this pervasive "metaphysical scepticism".

iv. Critical Assessment of Nietzsche's Metaphysical Scepticism

In this chapter we have looked at some of the most basic epistemological reflections which underlie Nietzsche's scepticism as well as some of his key reflections concerning the unknowability (or the meaninglessness) of the thing-in-itself. This was done within the context of his early writings concerning the danger of the unrestrained knowledge

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44. E.g. J 211, 43, EH Z 6, & Z I 1. Cf. "truth and power": WM 534.

drive and the disintegrating character of the scepticism to which it leads. We saw that from the very beginning Nietzsche's project was to limit this knowledge drive through an artistic creation which would put it in the service of genuine culture, or of "life". Even in the early writings Nietzsche saw the movement of human history as a dangerous affair in which essentially incomplete beings could easily fall into the pit of "barbarity and regression" unless there was a continual movement toward a "nobler" condition drawn onward by a proper interpretive weltanschauung, as well as by admiration for great human beings: for great philosophers, saints, and artists.

We have also seen that this dynamic tension was radicalized in the third period into an insight into the "nihilism" of the modern world where the meaning and value of human existence is called into question because of a radical scepticism, a despair over the possibility of metaphysical or ultimate truth, which had been the source of all our traditional values. Nietzsche's reflections on the possibility of moving beyond nihilism, we saw, conclude that two related things are necessary. First, philosophers must develop a weltanschauung which restores the integrity of the phenomena in their own right rather than logically negating or devaluing them as has historically often been the case. Secondly, we must come upon a spiritual transformation which redeems us from the subtle and insideous "resentment" against life which tends to characterize the human species in general and poison our religious and philosophical conceptions in particular.

In the later philosophy, Nietzsche as artist-thinker can be said, broadly speaking, to be grappling with both of these requirements. We have seen him grappling with the first requirement in sections one and two of this

chapter, examining the meaningfulness of the idea of the "in itself" and advancing epistemological and other arguments to try to clarify the human situation in this regard. But the later writings are also full of concern for the second requirement for overcoming nihilism: spiritual transformation. Even though exposition of this concern will not occupy our discussion until Chapter Four, it is important to mention it here in order to clarify the basis for our criticisms of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism.

Our discussions have shown that the character of the spiritual transformation called for by Nietzsche included not only the idea of a redemption from resentment but also the idea that we must become capable of a complete affirmation of this world, an affirmation which includes a restoration of "the integrity of the phenomena" and avoids any return to the naive or dishonest faiths of the past. We must come to affirm life with all its ambiguity and complexity, its joy and suffering, its creation and destruction, without ever giving up our intellectual integrity and radical honesty. However, an ambiguity remains in Nietzsche's conception of this spiritual transformation which is due to his metaphysical scepticism and hence is relevant as background for our criticisms below. One possible conception of the transformation would be that in which the transformed person would no longer experience the world as hanging over the abyss of nothingness, the abyss that "there is no truth".[45] Another possibility, which Nietzsche often seems to retain, is that the transformed being would have such superhuman creative power that he or she would be capable of affirming all existence in spite of the abyss of meaninglessness and valuelessness that we associate with nihilism and metaphysical

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45. These possible interpretations of what Nietzsche intended with his call for a "transformation" will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

scepticism. This is intimated in passages like the following:

> We find that the sole means of enduring the truth is the creation of a being that can endure it, i.e. unless we voluntarily become blind to it and deceive ourselves again.[46]

This aphorism can serve as an example of the way in which both aspects of the revaluation of values, the logical and the spiritual, are in large measure interconnected and dependent on one another. Nietzsche intimated that moving beyond nihilism would require not only a new, non-metaphysical comprehension of the world (the logical) but also a redemption from the spiritual poison of resentment (the spiritual). What if logically and philosophically we were able to come upon a comprehension of the world in which metaphysical scepticism was seen to be itself based on false metaphysical assumptions? Then perhaps the abysmal character of existence, the horrible "truth that there is no truth" (which we must transform ourselves in order to "endure") would dissolve, would be seen to be itself an illusion. In our first chapter we saw that these two tasks (required for the overcoming of nihilism) were inseparable from one another. Indeed. Then on Nietzsche's own grounds, our criticisms of his metaphysical scepticism will be certain to have tremendous spiritual implications. If we can move logically and philosophically beyond metaphysical scepticism, then we are well on the road to moving beyond nihilism.

It is precisely the contention here that if Nietzsche had been clearer in his logical and philosophical thinking concerning the problem of the in-itself, he might have come upon an entirely different way of looking at

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46. GOA XII 399, quoted in Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche, Wallraff and Schmitz, trs. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969), p.223.

the human situation which obviated some aspects of what he took to be the need for spiritual transformation. There would be no need for "the creation of a being" who could "endure truth", for the abyss character, the hideous "Baubo" character, of a nothingness lying beneath the "illusions and lies" of the "surface" might have completely disappeared. Nietzsche remained trapped in the nihilistic perspective that he sought to overcome precisely because he never really freed himself from metaphysical presuppositions, in spite of his life-long critique of metaphysics. This is not to say, as interpreters such as Heidegger assert, that Nietzsche remained in metaphysics because his doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence are metaphysical doctrines. On the contrary, what we have seen so far, and what we will see in Chapter Four, should clearly establish that these doctrines are precisely attempts to overcome metaphysics through establishing "broken myths" which would restore meaning and value to human existence without denigrating the phenomenal world in the process. However, Nietzsche's thinking in general did retain metaphysical presuppositions which continually undermined the very integrity of the phenomena that he wished to restore. It is these presuppositions that must be examined here.

We have seen that in Nietzsche's thinking Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, with its distinction between phenomena and things in themselves, held a key place in the history of philosophy and became foundational to his own metaphysical scepticism. Indeed, he believed that metaphysical scepticism was precisely the ultimate implication of Kant's philosophy. What Nietzsche did not understand was that the ultimate implications of Kant's critical philosophy lay not in his distinction between phenomena and things in themselves but in his presuppositional method. It is this method

that led to the kind of revolution in philosophical thinking that we find in the work of Wittgenstein and that can perhaps lead to a new, non-metaphysical understanding of the human situation itself. Since Part Two of the present work will investigate Wittgenstein's view of the human situation in connection with his presuppositional method, here we will simply introduce the distinction we have in mind for use as a critical tool in approaching Nietzsche's philosophy, leaving a complete exegesis for later chapters.

In order to introduce that relationship between philosophical method and one's view of the human situation which we have in mind, let us turn to a brief discussion of this question in connection with Kant's philosophy by a contemporary philosopher, Anders Nygren, in his book Meaning and Method.[47] Nygren believes that in Kant's First Critique there is a confusion between two distinct notions of what is the task of philosophy. On the one hand, there is a conception of philosophy as a purely logical activity of the critical analysis of concepts; on the other hand, there is a conception of philosophy as a basically epistemological activity. It is this latter conception, Nygren says, that leads to the metaphysics of transcendental idealism, or, as we shall suggest below, to Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism. This is due to Kant's misleading way of characterizing his own presuppositionalism: claiming that the understanding "prescribes laws for nature".[48] This characterizes the difference, Nygren claims, between the two editions of the First Critique. In the first this phrase dominates Kant's thinking and leads to the predominant

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47. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972, pp.201-207.

48. Ibid. pp.201-202.

"epistemological subjectivism" of the book. In the second, however, we have a quite different account of the transcendental deduction and its role because Kant had discovered "the logical problem of presuppositions and validity as the chief problem of philosophy - a discovery that drives him step by step away from epistemological subjectivism towards a critical analysis of knowledge...."[49]

However, it would seem, Kant never completely emerges from his metaphysical attitude toward the phenomena-noumena distinction. Nygrens' account of this failure focuses on the idea that Kant continued to blur the distinction between presuppositions and prescriptions:

> By means of its categories (presuppositions), Kant holds, the understanding prescribes laws for nature (prescriptions). The only problem is how it comes about "that nature must adapt itself to them". The answer to this question, according to Kant, lies in the fact that nature is only an Erscheinung, an appearance, not a Ding an sich. In other words, "phenomenalism" provides an explanation. But what is a metaphysical theory like this doing in a critical analysis of knowledge? It is a relic of Kant's earlier epistemology, which was both psychological and ontological. Kant is struggling to get away from metaphysical ontology. "The proud name of Ontology, as a science that professes to supply in a systematic doctrine synthetic knowledge a priori of things as such, must give way to the more modest claims of an analytic of pure understanding." The critical analysis of knowledge offered a possibility of effectively escaping ontology. But Kant was unable to take advantage of this possibility, owning to his original commitment to the dichotomy of knowing subject and ontological reality. What he could do was to transfer the emphasis from the ontological object to the knowing subject, and treat existence as a "world of phenomena", a "nature" which has to obey the laws which the knowing subject "prescribes". But this is only apparently an escape from ontology, since the very distinction between "Ding an sich" and "phenomenon" is an ontological distinction.

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49. Ibid. p.203. For a systematic comparison of the changes in Kant's view of the meaning of "Noumena" (in his chapter "Phenomena and Noumena") between the two editions of the First Critique see Appendix A. This summary illustrates one aspect of the difference in epistemological orientation between the two editions to which Nygren is referring.

> Kant's idea of a critical analysis of knowledge and a quest for the logically necessary presuppositions of knowledge opens the way for us to overcome metaphysical ontology. But then we must not blur as Kant does the distinction between presupposition and prescription.... Rightly understood the categories "prescribe" nothing, they are purely and simply presupposed. They are presuppositions, not prescriptions.[50]

Kant's language of "prescriptions", Nygren says, is linked to an "epistemological subjectivism" which tries to begin its presuppositional analyses with subject and object separated, that is, with the (basically Cartesian) ontological picture of a knowing subjectivity opposed to a world which is its object and which it wishes to know. From this picture, there can be no other result than that the presuppositions somehow dictate to nature what its laws shall be, a view which also seems to logically require the phenomena-ding an sich distinction. However, when philosophy begins with a presuppositional methodology, rather than ontological assumptions, then it is possible to free itself from metaphysics without giving itself over to science as simply another factual activity.

Hence, for Nygren, if philosophy is neither to remain in baseless metaphysics nor concede all valid knowledge to science, its task must be to "give an analysis of logically necessary fundamental presuppositions",[51] what Kant called synthetic a priori propositions. These are "synthetic" because they "are obtained by analyses of what is given in experience, and they are of such a nature that without them experience itself would not exist, would not be possible".[52] Speaking, then, in terms of presuppositions of experience, rather than prescriptions, helps to eliminate the danger of

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50. Ibid. p.205.

51. Ibid. p.205.

52. Ibid. p.206.

interpreting "prescriptions" in a "structural" way and hence helps to avoid falling into ontological distinctions like that between appearance and reality in itself. Beginning with the ontological assumption of a knowing subject confronting an objective world, in other words, can lead to the picture of mental, grammatical, or perceptual "structures" in some way "prescribing" laws to nature. But if we begin with, and stick to, the presuppositional method of the logical analysis of concepts, then we can avoid falling into ontological distinctions like that between appearance and reality in itself.

Nygren stresses the opposition of this reading of Kant to all possible metaphysics:

> We are no longer at the mercy of metaphysics with its arbitrary, dogmatic proclamation of principles, but we possess a critical standard by which to test them. The principles do not hang in the air above experience, but are anchored in experience, being inherent in every empirical judgement as necessary presuppositions and categories. But this means that they are principles of quite a different sort from those of metaphysics. The position is not that some fundamental principles pass, while others fail, the test of presuppositional analysis. The whole metaphysical way of thinking about principles is rejected from start to finish, and its place is taken by "principles" of a quite different kind, namely categories and presuppositions that are conditions of experience.[53]

What Nygren criticizes in Kant, and in traditional metaphysics, can be applied mutatis mutandis to Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism which, like Kantian metaphysics, implicitly retains the distinction between phenomena and thing in itself, between appearance and a behind to the appearances. In our study of Wittgenstein we will see that it is this presuppositional method - conjoined with a radical reflection on language - which can point

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53. Ibid. p.218.

toward a genuinely non-metaphysical view of the human situation. Using Nygren's ideas as a critical tool we will look here not only at the way in which Nietzsche's thought begins with metaphysical assumptions but we will also try to show how his view of the human situation could have turned out very differently if he had dropped these assumptions. All the criticisms here will be linked to Nietzsche's lack of any genuine presuppositional method and therefore to his consequent lack of clear distinction between the facts, on the one hand, and the logically distinct presuppositions of the facts on the other.

When we look at Wittgenstein's philosophy in later chapters, we will see just this: that the presuppositional method can result, in one form of another, in a distinction between facts, on the one hand, and the presuppositions of the facts, on the other. For if what we mean by facts is determined, in some sense, by the presuppositions, the conceptual, grammatical, or interpretive framework that we bring to experience, then the presuppositions themselves cannot be factual. They are presuppositional "meaning conditions", so to speak, which make the facts facts, and hence themselves are on a different logical plane from the factual one. Nietzsche does not make this distinction and involves himself in serious logical difficulties because of it.

What is in some ways the obverse of this lack of presuppositional method, and an equally serious problem (as Nygren's comments concerning Kant suggested) is the starting point of "epistemological subjectivism", a starting point which Nietzsche shares with Descartes. In addition to these criticisms, we will see that Nietzsche's scepticism also involves a form of Cartesian doubting, that is, a metaphysical doubt which attempts to transcend the conditions of ordinary certainty and ordinary doubt. Our

critical examination of his metaphysical scepticism will make use of these three ideas in conjunction with one another. Let us begin, then, by first glancing at Descartes' Meditations in order to distinguish between a philosopher's metaphysical conclusions and his possibly unconscious metaphysical presuppositions. This will introduce the first of seven critical points, all related to one another, and all directed at Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism.

1. Descartes' ontological conclusions, in the Meditations, concerning the reality of "mental substance" (Meditation Two) and its relation to "extended substance" (Meditations Five and Six) can be distinguished from the orientation with which he begins his investigation (Meditation One). One might say that these ontological conclusions are a result and an articulation of a certain epistemological and metaphysical picture that he held from the start: the picture of himself as a consciousness or subjectivity opposed to a world "outside himself" which he conceives as an objective reality which he would like to come to know. It would seem that his ontological conclusions were implicit, to a certain extent, in the view of himself as a subjectivity from which he began. It is this picture of himself and his situation, already presupposed in the First Meditation, that we are calling, after Nygren, "epistemological subjectivism".

Now Nietzsche certainly criticized Descartes, and some of his later writings even look as though they are challenging the starting point of epistemological subjectivism. For example, in Twilight of The Idols he says that our belief in the ego as a substance is due to our "belief in grammar" (G III 5), and in Beyond Good and Evil he suggests that our belief in the reality of the "subject", "predicate", and "the object" is due to our "faith in grammar". (J 34.) Again in the latter book, he suggests

that the idea that there must be a thinker which is doing the thinking is merely due to "a grammatical habit" which requires a subject for the verb "thinks" in the phrase "it thinks". (J 17.) Finally, in a note of 1886-87 he writes: "We think only in the form of language....Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off." (WM 522.) If Nietzsche were taking these grammatical requirements as presuppositions in a purely logical sense, he might have genuinely gone beyond metaphysics by really dropping the notion of the thing in itself from his thinking. But he does not; rather, like Kant's tendency in the "A" Edition of the First Critique, he thinks of these as "prescriptions" for nature, conceptual constructions, and grammatical habits, which we impose upon nature. His unconscious presupposition, as Nygren pointed out with regard to Kant, is epistemological subjectivism. He begins with the view of himself as a subjectivity which is attempting to acquire knowledge of a world "outside" itself. He focuses here on the many grammatical presuppositions which are fundamental to language and looks at them as prescriptions through which our subjectivity interprets the world. The result is perspectivism and radical scepticism of which the following familiar note from the Will to Power serves as an example:

> Against positivism, which halts at phenomena - "There are only facts" - I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations....
>
> "Everything is subjective", you say; but even this is interpretation....
>
> In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. - "Perspectivism". (WM 481.)

Nietzsche here sees "interpretations" as frameworks or points of view in terms of which the world is cognized. And any and every cognition of the

world must necessarily presuppose such a framework. Hence the world appears differently with each different framework. All cognition is perspectival, and there is no possibility of transcending perspectivism since the frameworks, like Kant's categories, are the conditions of the very possibility of cognition. The starting point of epistemological subjectivism makes it seem as if each interpretation were imposing "conditions" on nature: it seems as though our cognitions give us only "appearances" and that we can never get to the thing-in-itself.

Even when Nietzsche challenges the Cartesian notion of a thinking substance, he is still implicitly involved in Descartes' epistemological subjectivism. For he consistently approaches the world with this picture which he never seriously challenges. Hence, when he looks into the self, he could have stopped at the grammatical presuppositions of experience as the logical (grammatical) requirements that they are, but instead he retains the picture of conditions which we impose upon the world. When he looks into the self, he brings this same picture with him: "Our inner world too, as "appearance"". (WM 476, cf. 477.) The ontological implications implicit in epistemological subjectivism lead him to the idea that the subject imposes something on the world, and hence to the phenomena-thing in itself distinction.

Such an epistemological subjectivism, which is Nietzsche's starting point (and which leads him to implicitly retain this metaphysical distinction), is not necessarily connected with a conscious belief in the ontological reality of either subject or object. We have just seen that he repudiates substantializing of grammatical categories. However, like Descartes in the First Meditation, he assumes a picture of himself (and each person) as a consciousness attempting to surmount its own subjectivity

and come to know an objective reality "outside" of itself. We have seen ample evidence of this orientation in our earlier discussions in this chapter. For example, in the early "Truth and Lie" essay, we saw Nietzsche speak of the transference of whatever is "out there" into consciousness and, finally, into language, presupposing that this is a transference between radically different "spheres": "...The mysterious X of the thing in itself first appears as a nerve stimulus, then as an image, and finally as a sound." (DB pp.82-83.) And in another passage discussed above, we saw him conclude of man: "He is locked within his consciousness and nature threw away the key. Oh, the fatal curiosity of the philosopher, who longs, just once, to peer out and down through a crack in the chamber of consciousness." (DB p.65.) Finally, in the later philosophy, Nietzsche is still involved with this same picture: like Descartes, his starting point is a subjectivity which feels it must in some way transcend itself in order to gain knowledge. And since (barring a Deus Ex Machina like Descartes' God) there is no way to move from this starting point to a non-subjective knowledge of the world, the danger of solipsism is always present:

> That things possess a constitution in themselves quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity, is a quite idle hypothesis: it presupposed that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential....
>
> Conversely...could it not be...that the objective is only a false concept of a genus and an antithesis within the subjective? (WM 560.)

Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism results from the extreme consistency with which he adheres to the belief in himself as a subjective consciousness isolated from, and forever opposed to, a world he can never reach. This Cartesian starting point, in spite of all Nietzsche's attacks on

metaphysics, is the central metaphysical assumption within which his philosophy remains mired.

2. Therefore Nietzsche remains in metaphysics even though he rejects the meaningfulness of the "thing in itself". He could have found a path beyond these ontological assumptions if he had seen fully the implications of his statement that "in so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable". (WM 481.) For this might have been the clue to the idea that there are presuppositions, grammatical and linguistic presuppositions, for the very possibility of knowledge. "Whatever lies outside" (to use an ontological and spatial metaphor) these presuppositions, therefore, is not unknowable, nor is it the abyss of "nothingness", the abysmal truth that there is no truth. Rather, such talk is, in a certain sense, meaningless. If grammatical and meaning presuppositions are necessary for the very possibility of knowledge, then the words "knowable" and "unknowable" only have meaning in terms of these presuppositions.

This same reasoning applies to the meaning of the word "truth". The words "truth" and "untruth" have certain grammatical presuppositions for their usage. To say, as Nietzsche does, that the "will to truth is a making firm, a making true and durable, an abolition of the false character of things, a reinterpretation of it into beings" (WM 552) is to make a metaphysical, and hence, in some sense, a "meaningless" statement par excellence. To say that things have a "false" character is to retain the phenomena-thing in itself distinction, seeing them as mere appearances, as phenomena which are the product of subjective conditions which we impose upon the world. Then to define "truth" as this very process of imposing conditions on the world, as "a making firm and durable" is to violate the grammatical presuppositions for meaningful use of the word

"truth". When Nietzsche says that "truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions" (OL 2, p.180), he is engaged in the same metaphysical-meaningless use of the word. The very meaning of the word "truth" is logically dependent on its being distinguishable from "illusion" as well as falsehood. But in his metaphysical perspective there is no distinguishing between the two. Because the experienced world is merely phenomenon, appearance, all our truths about it are simultaneously, from this metaphysical perspective, "illusions". When we begin to speak in this way, the very intelligibility of language with its ordinary meanings begins to break down - and nihilism looms on the horizon.

We have seen that part of Nietzsche's philosophy of "power" comes from the idea that we must create beings who have the power to face reality as it is (with the awful thought that there is no truth) without having to falsify, sweeten, and distort this truth. But if the idea that "it is true that there is no truth" is itself an idea which violates the grammatical presuppositions of intelligibility, then the picture may look very different. The second use of the word "truth" in this statement is clearly a metaphysical use of the word, indicating, or "referring" to, what it purports to deny: the thing-in-itself or ultimate reality. But if, as Nietzsche says from the time of Human All-Too-Human on, the idea of a "thing in itself" is meaningless, then how is it that the word "truth" in this usage has meaning? The first use of the word "truth" in this statement seems to be a factual one. When Nietzsche makes the statement "There is no truth",[54] this first and factual use of the word "truth" seems to be implied: it is a fact, the statement says, that there is no truth. But what

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54. E.g., GM III 24, WM 13, 598, 602, 616. In WM 616 (KGW VIII 1, 112), it is "es giebt keine "Wahrheit"".

of the use of the word "truth" within the statement? If the word here means the same as "fact", then the statement seems to claim that "it is a fact that there are no facts", a manifest contradiction. But as we have indicated, Nietzsche rather seems to be using the word "truth" within this statement to "refer" to or indicate something that might transcend all facts, the thing-in-itself or ultimate reality. But if, on his own neo-Kantian grounds, all cognition and intelligibility depend on an interpretive framework which is the condition of its very possibility, then what meaning could this use of the word "truth" have? If the very possibility of using the word "truth" with sense depends on certain a priori presuppositions of intelligibility, then what kind of usage of the word is it that purports to transcend all the necessary presuppositions of intelligibility and indicate or "refer to" a "thing in itself" or "ultimate reality" which it wishes to deny? If the statement "there is no truth" is a metaphysical statement, as we have suggested, then it is nonsense. And if the need for a being of great spiritual power is in part the need for a being who can endure the truth that there is no truth, then one might say (to speak ironically in a way which ignores, for the moment, the greatness of some of Nietzsche's insights) that a being of great power is needed to endure grammatical confusions.

3. The idea of a genuinely non-metaphysical view of the human situation, however, is so new that many 20th century philosophers have not come upon it either. This includes some of Nietzsche's interpreters. For example, Harold Alderman (in an otherwise excellent study of the spiritual dynamics of Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra) gives the following exegesis of Nietzsche's idea of truth:

> Both our truths and our falsities are then kinds of

> interpretative "errors" which purport to show in a neutral fashion the way things really are. Some of these errors (i.e. interpretations)...help us creatively and fruitfully organize our experience. These useful errors we call true.... Our very bodies, Nietzsche argues, are organized in such a way that we can not get along without such "errors".... The epistemological error of all such fundamental claims stems from the fact that there is no way for us to adopt a neutral position from which we can check the correspondence of our ideas with their referent (reality). Given this inability, our truths become a kind of fiction which we employ to give coherence to our experience.[55]

This is a clear and accurate gloss on Nietzsche's thinking in this regard. But Alderman goes on to say:

> Nietzsche's work...is a further development in the history of ideas which recognizes the need to acknowledge explicitly the interpretative, fictive character of thought.[56]

Alderman's recognition of Nietzsche's work as a further development, indeed a specifically post-Kantian development, in the history of thought which contributes a "needed" insight perhaps intimates that what was "needed" was this form of metaphysical scepticism and hence a metaphysical point of view. In ordinary discourse, including scientific discourse, we can and do distinguish meaningfully the true from the false. On this level, objective truth does exist if we allow for ambiguities in measurement, description, etc. This is what we mean by "objective", as opposed to "subjective" and merely personal ideas. But what does it mean to suggest that all thought, all human ideas, are "interpretative" and "fictive"? Where is the logical correlate of these "fictive" ideas - the "true" ideas? Presupposed here is the ontology of epistemological subjectivism in its post-Kantian form: with its retained distinction between

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55. Nietzsche's Gift (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977), p.148.

56. Ibid. p.150.

appearances and a reality to which we can never somehow penetrate.

Nietzsche says that the "truth" would destroy "life" because the interpretive and perspectival conditions necessary for life are "lies". But why so? This use of the words "truth and lie" attempts to transcend the grammatical presuppositions for their intelligible use. "Truth and lie" as a meaningful distinction arises within the sphere of meaning, within what Nietzsche would call the sphere of "life", within, so to speak, the lebenswelt. The logical correlate of meaningfully speaking of "lies" is that there be some things recognizable as "truths". But it seems meaningless to speak of all our ideas as being "lies". In the same way, it would seem to be meaningless to speak of truth (or lie) as being prior to, or "outside" the presuppositions of meaning. The word "outside" is a spatial metaphor subject again to certain linguistic presuppositions for meaningful use. To imply that there is an "outside" where "truth" may or may not exist, just as to imply that all our cognitions are "lies", is again to speak metaphysically and hence, in a certain sense, meaninglessly.

4. Another way of putting this criticism is to focus on the doubling of the truth-illusion or appearance-reality distinctions that takes place with the metaphysical uses of these words. This doubling is discussed by H.A. Prichard in his chapter "Phenomena and Things in Themselves" in Kant's Theory of Knowledge[57] Prichard's main point here is that Kant's appearance-reality distinction is not meaningful because it does not accord with our ordinary ways of using these words but rather superimposes on the ordinary uses another metaphysical pair of the same words which destroys the meaning of the first pair. By discussing a number of

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57. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

examples (e.g. the appearance that railway lines have of converging in the distance) Prichard attempts to show that the appearance-reality distinction depends on our sometimes being able to say that we see the reality which allows us to make the contrast with appearance. Therefore, we are justified in saying something looks a certain way because we know that in certain cases what they look like is identical with what they are.[58] Prichard concludes that the doubling of the appearance-reality distinction by the addition of Kant's philosophical distinction destroys or annuls its first and ordinary application. Kant's conception of the phenomenal object is "an attempt to achieve the impossible, vis., to combine in one the characteristics of a thing and an appearance."[59] What meaning could it have, we might add, to say that all things appear a certain way if there is never a possibility of contact with the reality from which the word "appearance" derives its significance?

The same argument applies, of course, to Nietzsche's uses of the phenomena-thing in itself distinction. Nietzsche denies the meaningfulness of the "thing in itself" yet continues to suggest, as we have seen, that all our knowledge and experience are still only appearances. Even when Nietzsche says that both poles of the metaphysical distinction should disappear after we have realized the meaninglessness of the "thing in itself", he does not philosophically act on his suggestion. For example, in Twilight of The Idols (IV) he writes:

> We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps?... But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world! (RJH p.41.)

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58. Ibid. p.83.

59. Ibid. p.98.

Perhaps he does not act on this idea, and change his terminology accordingly, because he continues to see Kant's essential contribution as this very "appearance-reality" distinction and does not comprehend the radical nature of the presuppositional method itself. Yet if he had acted on this idea, not only might his terminology have changed, the metaphysical scepticism (and the frightening truth that "there is no truth") might have also disappeared. For this scepticism, we have seen, is dependent on the idea that every point of view is merely an interpretation, merely another articulation of appearances, an idea which logically assumes, in turn, an ultimate reality of some sort "out there" from which we are cut off and to which we cannot penetrate.

5. We have seen that, in spite of repeated criticisms of Descartes, Nietzsche approaches the question of knowledge from Cartesian assumptions: the point of view of epistemological subjectivism. Yet there is still another way in which Nietzsche's philosophizing involves the Cartesian point of view. He approaches the question of knowledge from the point of view of super-ordinary doubting, or from what can be called "superdoubt".

Descartes' Meditations are perhaps the classic example of the philosophical difficulties that can result when we begin with a doubt that insists on calling everything into question (as he purports to do in the First Meditation), even the so called "ordinary certainties" like that fact that I am not now dreaming, that I am sitting here with a piece of paper in front of me, that these are my two hands, etc. By calling these things into question Descartes involved himself in the famous dilemma of the Second Meditation where the only thing he could be certain of was his own consciousness: even if all the ideas and perceptions within consciousness

were illusions, the one thing he could not doubt was that he was "a thing which thinks". Trapped within his own consciousness (in part because of his epistemological subjectivism and in part because his starting point was a super-ordinary doubting which vitiated all ordinary certainty) Descartes finds everything else called into question:

> I suppose, then, that all the things that I see are false; I persuade myself that nothing has ever existed of all that my fallacious memory represents to me. I consider that I possess no senses; I imagine that body, figure, extension, movement and place are but the fictions of my mind. What, then, can be esteemed as true? Perhaps nothing at all, unless that there is nothing in the world that is certain.[60]

Once Descartes discovers a starting point, which is the certainty of his own consciousness, the well known difficulties of the last four Meditations begin: for he is in danger of solipsism. If superdoubt is applied to all possible modes of knowledge, then the only thing that will satisfy this doubt is a kind of metaphysical certainty: supercertainty. However, as with epistemological subjectivism, the ordinary world, the body and our ordinary perceptions, do not satisfy superdoubt. Descartes ultimately finds no other way to certify the existence of a world outside his own consciousness than the appeal to God's veracity. He does not manage to "prove" that the world outside his mind exists until his last and Sixth Meditation, and then the "proof" (that the perceptions in his mind originate from an external world) is simply an appeal to a Deus ex Machina which allows him to repudiate his superdoubt: "...I do not see how He could be defended from the accusation of deceit if these ideas were

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60. Margaret D. Wilson, ed., The Essential Descartes (New York: New American Library, 1969), p.171.

produced by causes other than corporeal objects".[61]

Now it was Nietzsche's great insight that we must discover a new, non-metaphysical relation to the world, for all metaphysical points of view would seem to logically devalue the integrity of the phenomena. Yet we have seen him, even in his earliest writings, bring such a strident doubt to questions of knowledge that all our perceptions, all our sciences, even our mathematics are called into question. None of this is knowledge, he claims, but only anthropomorphisms and illusions. He even borders on solipsism occasionally as in his early essay on "Truth and Lie". Even though he immediately pulls back and does not follow through with the solipsistic conclusion, his super-ordinary doubt leads him to conclude, as we have seen, that all our so called truths are only illusions:

> It is only by means of forgetfulness that man can ever reach the point of fancying himself to possess a "truth" of the grade just indicated. If he will not be satisfied with a truth in the form of tautology, that is to say, if he will not be content with empty husks, then he will always exchange truths for illusions. What is a word? It is the copy in sound of a nerve stimulus. But the further inference from the nerve stimulus to a cause outside of us is already the result of a false and unjustifiable application of the principle of sufficient reason. (DB p.81.)

To infer from a perception to a "cause outside of us" is false reasoning, Nietzsche says. The picture behind such passages, we have seen, is epistemological subjectivism. Nietzsche imagines a subjectivity, a consciousness full of ideas and images, and then attempts, like Descartes, to think his way back to knowledge of an external world which he supposes may be the cause of these images and ideas. But in addition to the tremendous difficulties of getting the subject and object together once we begin (in epistemological subjectivism) with them separated, such an

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61. Ibid. p.215.

attempt becomes quite impossible (barring a Deus ex Machina) if we add the attitude of super-ordinary doubt. To infer from a nerve stimulus to a cause outside us, Nietzsche says, is unjustifiable. Yet in our ordinary activities we live in a world of perceptions and reactions to those perceptions perfectly well and with perfect justifiability. With Nietzsche's extra-ordinary doubt, we are in danger of solipsism, of being trapped not only within our own consciousness, but of doubting the entire structure of common sense reality.

We have seen that Nietzsche, as an existentialist thinker, lived through the implications of nihilism in his own life and thought. What he was living through were the tremendous implications of the death of God, of which the modern world as yet had no idea. His vision of "the overman" was a vision of a being beyond nihilism, of a time in which a sacred dimension was restored to human life and the meaning and value of life was found in this world, not in some negation of this world. But he himself remained trapped in the nihilism he was seeking to overcome. His unconscious metaphysical presuppositions, connected with epistemological subjectivism and the "metaphysical" requirements of super-ordinary doubting, led to the vitiation of all truths and ultimately to the disintegration of a meaningful world. Whereas the traditional metaphysical orientation of Descartes (in spite of its implicit nihilism) could appeal to the veracity of God to overcome its radical scepticism and restore belief in the ordinary certainties and ordinary knowledge, Nietzsche had no such court of appeal. Without God, and from the starting point of superdoubt, he remained mired in a metaphysical scepticism which disintegrated the very fabric of ordinary certainty and ordinary doubt. He remained, in a word, in nihilism.

6. In section three above we discussed Paul de Mann's view that Nietzsche saw clearly the non-referential and "rhetorical" nature of language. We saw that Nietzsche does say explicitly that all language is "metaphorical" and consists "of purely rhetorical tricks and devices". Such an insight might have been a stepping stone toward the dropping of all metaphysics from his philosophical thinking. It could have led to an investigation of meaning itself: its character, how it evolves or changes, its relation to the facts, how it arises (if not from "reference" to the world), etc. A systematic investigation in this regard might have pointed to a radical distinction between meaning (in a presuppositional role vis-a-vis the facts) and the aposteriori status of facts themselves. It might have led, in other words, to a significantly different understanding of the human situation. This in turn would have required that he move out of epistemological subjectivism as well as the attitude of super-ordinary doubting. For (as our study of Wittgenstein will make clear) if meaning must be presupposed before we can even talk about what is true and what is false, then a scepticism which calls all of the ordinary meanings themselves into question can get no foothold.

The retention of these assumptions also affected his view of art and myth. Nietzsche's own critique of metaphysics, we have seen, led him to call for "broken myths", interpretive frameworks which might restore meaning and value to human life. Yet this restoration, he said, must be achieved with an intellectual honesty which recognizes their character as "lies". Such a restoration of a mythic and symbolic dimension to human life might indeed be useful in helping the modern world move beyond nihilism. But Nietzsche's understanding in this regard might have been much more valuable if he had not taken his insight into the non-referential

character of language as one more sceptical argument, one more way in which we are cut off from a hypothetical thing in itself. For if metaphysical scepticism could be dropped, we might be able to achieve an appreciation of the value of myth, symbol, and art which does not see them as merely creative "lies".[62] We have seen Nietzsche speak of the "truth" of art, but ultimately his view of art and myth retains the somewhat paradoxical sense that they are at the same time "lies".

Nietzsche's reaction to the idea of a non-referential character to language, and to art in general, is similar in this respect, to that of some members of the present day movement known as "Deconstructivism". Indeed, Nietzsche's work seems to be one of the formative intellectual influences on this movement. And like him, many of them have not passed beyond metaphysical scepticism and hence remain caught in nihilism. Members of this movement sometimes seem to suggest that all interpretation, especially in art, is merely subjective, and that there is no possibility of transcending this subjectivity to speak of genuine "objective" meanings, whether of an artistic text or of human knowledge in general. In his book Studies on Nietzsche, Professor Peter Heller, who is often critical of the "Nietzschean" point of view, is critical as well of the Deconstructivists as influenced by Nietzsche:

> Evidently this also inspired nihilistic virtuoso displays in the academic circus (though one recalls Nietzsche saying: they lack la force): Clowns playing games with games; the sophisticated league of deconstructeurs who, had they been consistent, would have deconstructed themselves....
>
> ...They read their favored brand of nihilism out of or into every text which they hold dear; a procedure intended to prove that a worthwhile author never has anything definite to

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62. Nietzsche's view of art will be further discussed at some length in Chapter Four.

> say, and that a worthwhile text can never be anything but a self-sufficient, self-contained game with fictitious perspectives that cancel out or suspend one another. This, they claim, is the only beautiful and true and good thing which must now take the place of what was formerly considered to be reality and supplant the superannuated beauty, goodness, and truth of bygone ages.[63]

One of the differences between the deconstructivists as described by Heller and Nietzsche himself, as our study has shown, is that Nietzsche insisted that the one and only task of humankind should be the overcoming of nihilism while those that he has influenced seem to have settled down in nihilism. Our contention here is that the reason why such movements remain in nihilism is because (even though, like Nietzsche, they are critical of metaphysics) they have not managed to come upon a truly non-metaphysical way of looking at the world. They are involved in a form of scepticism which is itself metaphysical, and behind which are those "metaphysical presuppositions" which we are here articulating.

Such presuppositions, we have seen, strongly influenced Nietzsche's view of the human situation, including his views on myth and art. But we should make clear here our differences from some of Nietzsche's interpreters who claim that his views on "truth", as well as his views on such things as "art", were influenced in the way they were simply because Nietzsche never gave up an implicit "correspondence model of truth", even though he often also argued for a "pragmatic" or "instrumental" model of truth. We have seen this idea suggested, in one way or another, by Wilcox and by Breazeale. And we have seen Harold Alderman, in describing Nietzsche's views that all our truths are really "errors", express this in the following way:

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63. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1980, pp.213-14 & 216.

> The epistemological error of all such fundamental claims stems from the fact that there is no way for us to adopt a neutral position from which we can check the correspondence of our ideas and their referent (reality).[64]

Although it is true that some idea of a possible correspondence is involved in Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism, we have made clear that the real root of the problem goes much deeper and involves what we have called an implicit "epistemological subjectivism" and a "super-ordinary doubting". For the correspondence model of truth might operate perfectly well without any requirement that our ideas correspond to some ultimate reality in itself. The correspondence could easily be conceived to involve only the "phenomena" and the everyday common sense world: in which case there would be no suggestion that all our ideas are "fictions" or "illusions". There is much more to the problem than the retention of a correspondence model of truth. But as we have tried to indicate, the real heart of nihilism and Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism is perhaps not realized by many 20th century philosophers precisely because they retain the same epistemological subjectivism which animated Nietzsche's work and much of the philosophy since Descartes.

Seeing the non-referential and "rhetorical" character of language, therefore, does not necessarily bring us either out of Cartesianism or out of metaphysics in general. For unconscious metaphysical assumptions can be retained even in a Post-Kantian framework. And as with Nietzsche, this in turn can affect, not only our view of knowledge and truth, but our interpretation of art and myth as well.

7. Nihilism, that is, the radical scepticism and relativism that

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64. Nietzsche's Gift, p.148.

characterizes much of the modern world, remains nihilism in large part because it is unable to drop the phenomena-thing in itself distinction which is the result of a post-Kantian epistemological subjectivism. The sceptic or relativist conjures up a mental image or picture of a knowing subject faced with an object already separated from him which he must somehow reach, adds to this picture all the conditions which the knowing process is supposed to impose upon the object as an in-itself, and then concludes that ultimate reality is unknowable. Whether or not the relativist denies the "meaningfulness" of the phenomena-thing in itself distinction, it would seem that this picture is in the background. They conjure up the image of an ultimate reality divorced from us, that we can never get to, and then sceptically deny that there is such a reality. The result is extreme relativism: the feeling that there is no ultimate truth or value, that below the meaningless phenomena there lies - nothingness.

One of Nietzsche's great insights, we have seen, was into the degree in which metaphysical truth was a value in the Western tradition, stemming in part from the Platonic metaphysical trilogy of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Since the great critiques of metaphysics in the 18th century (by such figures as Hume and Kant) seemed to him to have forever put these values out of reach, he saw that to continue to hold these values (which had formerly been metaphysically grounded) would be to move from latent into "active" nihilism: into despair over all meaning and value. Nietzsche urged us in different ways to drop what may be called "the metaphysical requirement", and simultaneously, to create myths toward a restoration of meaning and value in human life with full consciousness that they were myths. In part, his philosophy of superhuman creativity was needed because it seemed as though these myths had to

attempt a restoration of meaning and value (once provided by God and metaphysics) in spite of the nihilistic abyss that there is no truth.

Our suggestion, in the Wittgenstein section of this paper, will be, in part, that if we really succeed in dropping the metaphysical requirement, the feeling of a nihilistic abyss connected with metaphysical scepticism may ultimately disappear. At that point, we may or may not wish to create "broken myths" as part of our response to the world, but this will not be necessary to restore a large measure of the integrity of the phenomena, and of human life, because everything else, so to speak, will be restored to its rightful place and its apparent "lie" character will disappear. It may be that this would make the world, and the human situation, look very different from the way these have been seen in much modern and contemporary philosophy. In this case it may be that the dissolution of what Nietzsche called the "nihilism" implicit in much of this philosophy would involve, as we have seen him suggest, both "logical" and "spiritual" dimensions. The "logical" (a philosophical critique of metaphysics), if deeply understood, might result in a "spiritual transformation" (a new way of seeing and new mode of being-in-the-world).

The possibility of seeing the world in a completely different way is an intriguing one. Such a new way of seeing, beyond either some form of metaphysical dogmatism, on the one hand, or scepticism and relativism, on the other, would not here be the result of a new metaphysical point of view or set of conceptual structures. Rather, it would be the result of dropping something: dropping an implicit and largely unconscious "metaphysical" orientation. Hence there may be what can be called an "awakening" connected with this act of "dropping" something understood to

be no longer needed: truly giving up the metaphysical requirements connected with epistemological subjectivism can and does make the world look very different. In Zen Buddhism, for example, they speak of an "awakening" (which they call "nirvana" or "satori") and yet they insist that "the everyday mind is nirvana". And this awakening is come upon, in part, through transcending the image of ourselves as subjects opposed to an "external world" as object. Perhaps this should be considered as a possible candidate for a "non-metaphysical" mode of being-in-the-world. Such an "awakening" would not seem to logically follow from philosophical argumentation, however, but requires a "dropping" which is prior to, and below the level of, conceptualization.

There are intimations of such an awakening in Wittgenstein's work which we will look at more closely in Part Two. These intimations can be said to find in the phenomena themselves an "unsayable" dimension or aspect which restores value, indeed sanctity, to the everyday. Hence nihilism may be superseded through coming upon a "dimension" of value, "sanctity", which does not find the need to link value to a cognitive requirement. For what cannot be gotten into language cannot be expressed in any form, whether mythical or discursive. What may be intimated in Wittgenstein's work, we will see (a work which in a thoroughly Kantian way is attempting to show the limitations of language) is not non-cognitivism (and certainly not any form of positivism or behaviorism) but a new, non-metaphysical mode of being-in-the-world. Just what Nietzsche believed was necessary.

But before moving into our exegesis of Wittgenstein's philosophy in Part Two, and our attempt to grapple with the problems of nihilism and metaphysical scepticism in Part Three, let us turn to a discussion of

Nietzsche's final visionary philosophy, using these criticisms, as well as our understanding of his philosophizing concerning truth, as hermeneutical stepping stones to gain an insight into his vision of a being beyond nihilism: an overman.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FINAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE OVERCOMING OF NIHILISM

> For every great thinker always thinks one jump more originally than he directly speaks. Our interpretation must therefore try to say what is unsaid by him.
>
> Heidegger[1]

> Wo aber Gefahr ist, wachst Das Rettende auch.
>
> Hoelderlin[2]

i. Thus Spoke Zarathustra and The Overman

In Chapter One we saw Nietzsche's response to nihilism, to the calling into question of traditional values in the modern world, as a cautious, tentative experimentalism, a moving into the future with an artistic and conceptual experimentation the only goal of which was our absolute need to restore the integrity of the phenomena and the value and meaning to human life. In Chapters Two and Three, we saw the basic conceptual and artistic tension which animated Nietzsche's career as the tension between our commitment to the absolute value of truth, on the one hand, and the

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1. Nietzsche, Vol. I, p.134.

2. Patmos.

need to live, affirm, and find meaning in this life and in the phenomenal world, on the other hand. We also saw that Nietzsche ultimately was unable to transform this dialectical tension into a synthesis which went beyond metaphysical scepticism and so remained in nihilism. He remained a philosophical nihilist, caught in the old values and ultimately unable to move beyond them. In this chapter we will see a third side of Nietzsche's response to nihilism, his vision of a new mode of being-in-the-world beyond the death of God and nihilism. All three of these responses to nihilism characterize his philosophical project: he is at once a cautious experimenter, tentatively groping his way beyond nihilism, a philosophical nihilist, caught in a metaphysical scepticism which vitiates all his attempts to affirm life through seeing experience as "lies" and "illusions" hanging over an abyss, and a visionary, inspired beyond himself and his own limitations in terms of his insight into the problem as well as into the possibilities of a transformed mode of human relationship to life and to the world.

We have seen that Nietzsche was in some ways a fundamentally religious thinker because he saw, as few non-Christian philosophers before him had, that there was something "fallen" about our human being-in-the-world which stood in need of transformation. He was not fooled by the 19th century faith in progress, nor by the modern world's blind faith in science, that science which, in the 20th century, is on the verge of wiping out the human race. Nor did he settle down among the ruins of the fallen and ordinary world, the world of petty egoism and competition, of small people vindictively struggling with one another, a world of stupid ideologies, of never ending war and slaughter, a world in which a superficial and deadening busi-ness is the primary value (e.g. MA I

283). He saw that philosophy, if it was not to abdicate its responsibilities in the form of what he called "intellectual housekeeping", must address itself to the most fundamental problems of human life, which, in Nietzsche's case, involved the question of our mode of being-in-the-world. He saw that it was time for mankind to become conscious of what is perhaps the ultimate question: what kind of beings do we want ourselves to be? Do we want to remain trapped in the petty nightmare of human history to date, or do we want to set ourselves a goal of a transformed mode of being, a goal to which he gave the name "overman". Lewis Mumford, in his book In The Name of Sanity asked very much this same question:

> Not the Power Man, not the Profit Man, not the Mechanical Man, but the Whole Man, Man in Person, so to say, must be the central actor in the new drama of civilization.... If technics is not to play a wholly destructive part in the future of Western Civilization we must now ask ourselves, for the first time, what sort of society and what kind of man we are seeking to produce?[3]

The religions, to a certain extent and in varying degrees, had been calling for such a transformation right along. However, especially in Christianity as Nietzsche understood it, the religions always seem to be involved in a devaluation of nature, of "this world", and of the body. They always seemed to be involved in the very spiritual poison of resentment that so characterizes, in Nietzsche's view, our fallen condition. But a devaluation of nature and of the body would seem to cut us off from that unique transformative potential which exists within us, a transformative potential in which sexuality, and bodily energy, is

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3. Quoted in Floyd W. Matson, The Broken Image (New York: George Braziller, 1964), p.16.

fundamental to the unheard of possibilities latent within creativity and the artistic relation to life. (WM 805.) A similar insight permeates the work of another great artist-thinker who also called for a transformed mode of being-in-the-world: William Blake. Blake opposes much of traditional religion precisely because it denies the body, sexuality, and the redemptive potential within our natural energies. Yet Blake, like Nietzsche, criticizes deeply what we have taken to be the natural and inevitable course of things; he criticizes deeply the way we have settled down in the nightmare of history and take that as "reality". As Thomas Frosch writes of Blake:

> It might seem that Blake's critique of the natural world is so complete that any story of its redemption must introduce, through some form of transcendence, factors outside that world. This is, indeed, a temptation to which Blake's characters often fall prey. But the crux in his myth is that redemptive potentiality exists within nature, specifically in the fallen artist and in the fallen senses.[4]

Nietzsche was, in a fundamental way, a religious thinker who saw as the highest task the need to restore the sanctity, and a meaning and value, to human existence. In a late notebook entry Nietzsche clarifies the meaning of his earlier statement that God is and remains dead:

> You call it the self-destruction of God: but it is only his molting: - he sheds his moral skin. And you shall see him once again, beyond good and evil.[5]

His vitriolic attacks on Christianity and on the metaphysical tradition connected with it were only the first step in what he took to be necessary for coming upon a genuinely transformed mode of being. Nietzsche saw

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4. The Awakening of Albion (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1974), p.87.

5. KGW VII 1, 105, RP, tr.

that religion historically has been an abomination, full of resentment, pettiness, and whatever else the pretensions of human all-too-human creatures were capable. He understood the need for a religious transformation, a transformation beyond the traditional life-denying metaphysical values (which he called "good and evil"). Yet he understood at the same time the nightmare into which such pretensions can and have taken us. As Reinhold Niebuhr has written:

> There is no social evil, no form of injustice whether of the feudal or the capitalist order which has not been sanctified in some way or other by the religious sentiment and thereby rendered more impervious to change. In a sense the word of Marx is true: "The beginning of all criticism is the criticism of religion. For it is on this ultimate level that the pretensions of men reach their most absurd form. The final sin is always committed in the name of religion."[6]

What, then, is Nietzsche's vision of the overman? It is a vision which is at once a goal for humanity (Z Prologue 3-5) and a goal for Nietzsche himself, for both are mired in nihilism. We find among Nietzsche's late notebooks the three following entries:

> ...That man becomes the transfigurer of existence when he learns to transfigure himself. (WM 820.)
>
> Goal: to attain the overman for one moment. For <u>this</u> I suffer everything![7]
>
> To become artist (creator), saint (lover), and philosopher (knower) in <u>one person</u>: - <u>my practical goal</u>.[8]

And in <u>Ecce Homo</u>, he writes concerning his book, <u>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</u>:

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6. Quoted in Adrienne Koch, <u>Philosophy For A Time Of Crisis</u> (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1959), p.220.

7. GOA XIV 306, RP, tr.

8. GOA XII 213, RP, tr.

"Zarathustra...that great noon at which the most elect consecrate themselves for the highest of all tasks." (EH GT 4.) The highest of all tasks, it would seem, is the transfiguration of existence through transfiguring ourselves. And the goal of this task is called "overman", a designation which makes very clear its status as a transformed state of human being. And it may well be that the three highest types of geniuses on which we have seen the early Nietzsche pin his hopes for overcoming "the disintegration of our time" and for new "models" on which culture might be revived (the artist, saint, and philosopher) give us a preliminary insight into the character of Nietzsche's vision of the overman. It may well be that the symbolic qualities of each of these figures, when fused in Nietzsche's visionary dialectical synthesis, produce a being who transcends their merely cumulative natures.

Each of these paradigmatic geniuses of Nietzsche's early philosophy now seems to nurture the vision of human transformation in a dual manner: each serves first as a symbolic rendering of certain qualities that will characterize the transformed state of being and, secondly, each also serves as a symbolic pointer of the way to that transformation. The philosopher as knower provides that capacity to face reality which will characterize the overman. He also provides the insight into what is needed and how we might go about attaining to this new state of being. The saint as lover provides the passion, total dedication, and intensity which will characterize both the overman and the way to the overman. And the artist as creator will provide the artistic transfiguration of existence as well as the creative and transformative drive necessary to attain the goal of the overman. However, the way and the goal are in some sense one. The way requires a creative engagement with, and

affirmation of, existence, and the goal will be characterized by a creative engagement with and affirmation of existence. Nietzsche's Zarathustra, at the beginning of the book, is not the overman, but as "the teacher of the overman" he is characterized in part by the goal or spiritual model which draws him across the tightrope walk of human all-too-human history. (Z Prologue 3-4.) Zarathustra is at once a symbol of "the highest type of being" and a symbol of humanity moving towards that type of being.[9]

For "the most elect" to consecrate themselves for the highest of all tasks is for these elect to undertake the process of self-transformation through committing themselves to the goal of a transformed state of being. The religious language here is no accident. Nietzsche uses the word "weihen" which is "to consecrate, to ordain, to devote, to dedicate, to bless".[10] For "what was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned" is now dead (FW 125), and it is precisely this sanctity, this meaning and value, which must be restored to human existence. The task of attaining the overman for Nietzsche is a sacred task, and its goal is restoring the sanctity of existence. In either case it is a "religious" mode of being-in-the-world in a broad sense of that word, in a sense beyond sin and guilt.

In his response to nihilism, therefore, Nietzsche was concerned, above all else, with what can also be called "spiritual alchemy". The "gold" that mankind once possessed, that is, its great metaphysical values of the true, the good, and the beautiful, have become devalued in the modern world. They have been converted into their opposites, into the "base metal" of

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9. EH Z 6, and, for example, Z Prologue 10.

10. The Schoeffler-Weis German and English Dictionary (Chicago: Follet Pub. Co., 1968).

"lies, illusions, and falsehoods". Nietzsche, as we have seen, was an heir of this tradition and passionate believer in truth and intellectual integrity. He was forced by that very integrity to face the fact that all our world interpretations are only lies and illusions, for there is no truth. The task of the revaluation, which is at the same time the task of transfiguring ourselves, is to perform the spiritual alchemy of turning the base metal of "lies and illusions" into the gold, not of traditional values, but of new unheard of values. In a late sketch for a Preface to a new book, and secondly in an 1888 letter to George Brandes, he writes:

> The alchemist is the only true benefactor of mankind. That one transvalues values, that one makes much out of little, gold out of next to nothing: the only sort of benefactor of mankind.
>
> These are the enrichers.
>
> The others are merely exchangers.
>
> Let us consider an extreme case: that there were something hated and condemned beyond all else - and that precisely this were turned into gold: that is my case. . .

> I have used these weeks to "transvalue values". - Do you understand this trope? - At bottom, the alchemist is the most worthy sort of man in existence: I mean him who out of next to nothing, out of what is despicable, makes something valuable, even gold. He alone enriches, the others only exchange. My task is at present altogether peculiar: I have asked myself what it is that has been most hated, feared, and despised by mankind up to now - and out of this I have made my "gold". . .[11]

What has been despised (and resented) by mankind up to now are "lies and illusions", and since human cognition is confronted with nothing else, it is these which must be transmuted into gold. And in a secondary sense, what was also despised was that which was taken to be lie and illusion - the whole of the phenomenal world, including birth, death, suffering,

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11. KGW VIII 3, 297, RP, tr. (some punctuation added); letter of 23 May 1888, RP, tr.

illness, and (that which connected us with these things): the senses and the human body. Nietzsche's visionary philosophy is a philosophy of alchemical transformation. We will see in the next sections that even the doctrines of eternal recurrence and will to power, insofar as they are both visions of radical self-transformation, can also be associated with the alchemical metaphor: both can be seen as conceptual constructions designed to catalyze transformation into the overman as well as to symbolize the state of being of one who has effected this transformation. Let us now examine this transformational process as it was articulated at length by Nietzsche in his book Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche says in Ecce Homo, was written under "the experience of inspiration". (EH Z 3.) It is not a book written by Nietzsche as philosophical nihilist. Rather, it has the character of vision. It transcends Nietzsche himself and points beyond nihilism. Nietzsche describes this character of the book and speaks of it as "revelation":

> The concept of revelation - in the sense that suddenly, with indescribable certainty and subtlety, something becomes visible, audible, something that shakes one to the last depths and throws one down - that merely describes the facts. One hears, one does not seek; one accepts, one does not ask who gives; like lightning, a thought flashes up, with necessity, without hesitation regarding its form - I never had any choice. (EH Z 3.)

The tremendous value which Nietzsche places on this book in Ecce Homo, in comparison with all his other writings, stems from its character as vision of a transformed mode of being-in-the-world. The character Zarathustra represents, in some sense, both the way and the goal. The book is in large measure a dramatization of Zarathustra's spiritual growth toward the overman. Through dreams, personal reflections, dialogues, and

spiritual experiences this character comes more and more to comprehend his own resentments and limitations which keep him from a complete affirmation of existence. These experiences, in turn, allow a transformation to take place which moves him beyond resentment to a higher state of being. (Z II 20.)

Early in the book Zarathustra teaches the goal of the overman; soon it becomes clear that he also believes in something called "the will to power" (Z I 15), and finally, after intense inner struggles and spiritual experiences, he becomes "the teacher of the eternal recurrence". (Z III 13.) It becomes clear that the overman is, in some sense, that being who "holds" the doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence. Near the close of Part Three of the book, where Zarathustra has overcome his greatest obstacle and becomes the teacher of the eternal recurrence (Z III 13), he then breaks into poetry and song in praise of life. (Z III 15.) And Part Four of the book, like that satyr play following the ancient Greek tragic trilogies, contains very few further spiritual struggles and overcomings. Rather, it is full of clowning, joking, dancing, and laughter. (Z IV 17 & 18.) Zarathustra would seem to be here celebrating a transformed mode of being which now involves a spirit of play, a sheer delight in existence itself, and for its own sake.[12]

In spite if the fact that the "type" Zarathustra is the predominant motif of the book, a type whose spiritual struggles and metamorphoses of spirit give us insight into the vision of the overman, the "basic conception" of the book is not the overman. It is that doctrine which marks the point

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12. See, in this regard, Richard Perkins, "The Genius and The Better Player: Superman and the Elements of Play", International Studies in Philosophy, XV 2, 1983, pp.13-23.

at which Zarathustra has grown to become an overman, the doctrine of eternal recurrence. This too was an experience of inspiration which came to Nietzsche some eighteen months before the inspiration of the book itself. He says in Ecce Homo:

> Now I shall relate the history of Zarathustra. The fundamental conception of this work, the idea of eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation that is at all possible, belongs in August 1881: it was penned on a sheet with the notation underneath, "6000 feet beyond man and time". (EH Z 1.)

We will look at this doctrine more closely in the following section. Here the point to be made is that the vision of the overman as explicitly embodied in Thus Spoke Zarathustra is inseparable, in a fundamental sense, from the idea of eternal recurrence.

Zarathustra's spiritual struggles and transformations to the point where he becomes the teacher of the eternal recurrence are foreshadowed in his keynote speech of the book. This speech becomes a paradigm for the pattern of spiritual transformation leading to the overman. The Prologue has already introduced the teaching of the overman and the metaphor of mankind as on a tightrope walk across the dangerous abyss of human history. Now the very first speech of the book presents the notion of "transformations of the spirit". It is clear that, like the tightrope walk, we have here a paradigmatic representation of the movement towards the overman. It is entitled "On The Three Metamorphoses":

> Of the three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion, finally, a child. (Z I 1.)

Zarathustra's descriptions of these three transformations intimates the process of overcoming through the revaluation of all values. The

descriptions of the three states, and the fact that "the child", at the highest stage, is able to "create new values" (Z I 1) indicates that we have here both a paradigm for the spiritual development of the individual and a symbol for the historical movement of Western civilization.

The first stage of the spirit seems already to be an advanced spiritual state of being, just as advanced as the metaphysical and ascetic ideals of Western civilization. For the camel would seem to be a believer in traditional values. It symbolizes as well Nietzsche's reverence for these values, for like him, it suffers greatly in bearing the burden of them: it is "the strong reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands". (Z I 1.) The camel, even though at the beginning of the journey of self-transformation here, is no slouch, nothing to scorn. These traditional values include, of course, the value of truth. The camel, Zarathustra says, bearing the burden of the love of truth, is capable of "stepping into filthy waters when they are the waters of truth". And the Western value of truth, as we have seen, is not only one of the highest traditional ideals, it is the catalyst which precipitates the crisis of nihilism, and hence a key element in the overcoming of nihilism which was implicit in Western history all along.

The history of nihilism and its overcoming can itself be schematized in terms of this three step process. First, there was the love of traditional values (which were nihilistic at the core because they devalued this world). Secondly, there is the attack on traditional values and the movement into metaphysical scepticism. And, finally, there is the possibility of movement beyond metaphysical scepticism and nihilism into a transfigured mode of existence. Therefore, if the strength of the camel represents the tradition, and traditional values, then this is only the

beginning: after the camel comes the lion of metaphysical scepticism, and after the lion, the creator of new values: the child.

To attack the traditional values is a terrible thing, a terrible necessity, Zarathustra intimates. This is why, for this to become possible, another transformation of the spirit is necessary. The inner logic of these traditional values themselves, as we have seen, has led to nihilism. Therefore to move beyond nihilism we must free ourselves from them. But the camel qua camel is incapable of this:

> The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred "No" even to duty - for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume the right to new values - that is the most terrifying assumption for the reverent spirit that would bear much. (Z I 1, WK p.27.)

Zarathustra characterizes this second stage of the spirit as living in a "desert" (WK p.26) because the freedom of the lion is an empty one: he has not yet created new values but has destroyed the old values. As Nietzsche says in an 1885 note:

> ...The destruction of an illusion does not produce truth but only one more piece of ignorance, and extension of our "empty space", an increase in our "desert". (WM 603.)

In this desert of the spirit the lion has fought and conquered the "great dragon" which symbolizes all traditional values:

> Values, thousands of years old, shine on these scales; and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: "All value of all things shines on me. All value has long been created, and I am all created value. (WK p.27.)

In this desert we have entered the period of conscious nihilism and the modern world. We are in a limbo of scepticism and relativism with the old values called into question and no new values in sight. There will be

no new values as long as we remain in the stage of the lion, in the stage simply of a human all-too-human criticism of traditional values. "That man becomes the transfigurer of existence when he learns to transfigure himself", Nietzsche says. There can be no new values, no restored meaning and value to human existence without such a transformation, for the metaphysical sceptic still shares with the traditional metaphysician our fallen and resentful all-too-human nature. We must come upon a third metamorphosis of the spirit - the lion must become a creative and innocent child:

> ...What can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes". For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world. (WK p.27.)

It is no accident that the first two symbols were animal symbols and that here, with the highest stage of the spirit, we come upon a human symbol. For, in Nietzsche's veiw, our present mode of existence has still not actualized the full potential of our humanity. As Zarathustra put it in his Prologue: "You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes, and even now, too, man is more ape than any ape." (WK p.12.)

The child is "innocence and forgetting", for it is beyond resentment and the negation of its body and the world which characterized traditional values and traditional humanity. The child alone, Zarathustra says, can "create new values" (WK p.27), and this creation is, unlike that often attributed to traditional values, not given to us fixed and finished all at once in a revelation from heaven. Rather, this creation is like an ever

renewed "game", a perpetual "new beginning", like a "self-propelled wheel". For the values Nietzsche envisions arise out of the creation process itself, out of a creative engagement with the ever-changing flux of the phenomena, within the perpetual birth and death, and new birth, of existence. Such perpetually created values involve, in a word, a sacred "Yes" to all existence. Nietzsche envisions the overcoming of nihilism in the symbol of an innocent and free child, a fullness and overfullness of creative energy, which can, like the real human child, create an entire world of meaning and value through the intensity and seriousness of its imaginative engagement.

The child is a symbol of the overman because of its sacred "Yes" to existence. It becomes a symbol of the state of being toward which Zarathustra himself is moving. When Zarathustra finally achieves the height of his spiritual growth, and becomes the teacher of the eternal recurrence, he bursts into a song in praise of life which goes in part:

> The world is deep,
> Deeper than the day had been aware.
> Deep is its woe;
> Joy - deeper yet than agony:
> Woe implores: Go!
> But all joy wants eternity -
> Wants deep, wants deep eternity. (Z III 15.)

With this repeated refrain of the book, Nietzsche intimates the equation between joy and affirmation. The affirmer finds joy in living, a sacred "Yes" to existence. Perhaps this is the bottom line. And just as Zarathustra's beliefs reflect this joy and love of life (as he desires nothing more than to have the eternal recurrence of this exact same life (WK p.221)) so the beliefs of the nihilist and the traditionalist reflect their suffering, resentment and discontent. Such a total affirmation of life

requires a spiritual transformation to a higher level of being.

Finally, the child, in its capacity to create values and in its capacity to affirm all of existence, is a symbol of spiritual power (as we will see further in section iii below). Just as there is an identification of affirmation and joy in the book, so there is an identification of attained spiritual power and the game-playing child. This is what animates, in part, the satyr play style of Part Four. Zarathustra, at the end of Part Three, has come upon a spiritual transformation which makes him long for nothing more passionately than the eternal repetition of every detail of his life. (WK p.221.) He has come upon the highest spiritual power or capacity to affirm all existence. This creative power now manifests itself, in Part Four, in the spirit of play: song, jest, dance, etc. As Nietzsche says in a note written two or three years after Zarathustra: ""Play", the useless - as the ideal of him who is overfull of strength, as "childlike". The "childlikeness" of God, pais paizon."[13] The "child" and "play" are symbols of one who is "overfull of strength". As a symbol of the overman, these related metaphors are symbols of creative power. And as symbols of the overman, they include the idea of a sacred "Yes" to all existence, to the eternal recurrence of every detail of one's existence. The doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence are inseparable from the doctrine of the overman, and all three are connected with a transformed mode of being-in-the-world beyond nihilism. And as we have seen, the paradigmatic symbol, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, of a transformed state of being beyond nihilism is that of the highest stage of the spirit: the innocent creativity,

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13. WM 797. For a full length exposition and documentation of the symbol of play in Nietzsche's writings see Richard Perkins, Prolegomena to The Study of Play in Nietzsche, doctoral dissertation, SUNY at Buffalo, 1977.

and total affirmation, of the child.

Let us turn, then, to an exposition of each of these doctrines, keeping in mind that our discussion will simultaneously be a continuing exegesis of Nietzsche's vision of the overman. The points that we have made in this section should furnish the context for this continuing discussion. These include first the idea that the overman and Nietzsche's visionary philosophy must be understood within the context of nihilism and as a response to nihilism. Secondly, that Nietzsche was, in some fundamental way, a religious thinker who, very much like Blake, insisted on a transformation of our "fallen" human nature in a way which did not deny, but rather involved, the body and our natural bodily energies. We saw as well that Nietzsche's goal of transformation seemed to be conceived in terms of a synthesis and transcendence of the qualities of the saint, the philosopher, and the artist, and that this goal was not only an historical goal for mankind but also a personal goal for the individual. In addition, this goal was not an evolutionary one but was symbolized, for Nietzsche, in the transmutative work of the alchemist. "The alchemist", he says, "is the only true benefactor of mankind". The vision of this goal, and the way to it, we saw, are found primarily in the book Thus Spoke Zarathustra and a complete understanding of this vision would require a comprehensive study of that work, since the vision is embodied dramatically within the speeches and spiritual transformations of the figure Zarathustra. Finally, we saw that there are at least two key points to keep in mind when approaching that book. The first is that the paradigm for the overcoming of nihilism and for the spiritual transformations of the figure Zarathustra is found in Zarathustra's keynote speech "On The Three Metamorphoses of The Spirit", and the second is that comprehension of the overman is inseparable from

comprehension of the will to power and eternal recurrence, the latter of which Nietzsche calls "the fundamental conception of the work". Hence, as we now turn to sections two and three, our discussion will continue to elucidate the meaning of "overman".

ii. Eternal Recurrence

In his published writings, Nietzsche does not often discuss (nor define at any length) the idea of eternal recurrence. It is referred to in a general way in Beyond Good and Evil 56 and in Twilight of The Idols, "What I Owe The Ancients", 4 and 5, and is presented at slightly greater length in a dramatized aphorism at Gay Science 341. In Ecce Homo the idea is mentioned several times (EH II 10, EH GT 3, EH Z 1, & EH Z 6) and is underlined, we have seen, as the fundamental conception of Thus Spoke Zarathustra. This contrasts with the unpublished writings where it is brought up with relative frequency, variations of it are experimented with, it is looked at from different points of view, etc. Since it appears in a number of plans for the unrealized magnum opus (e.g., WM 1067 & 1059), we can assume that Nietzsche planned to publish much more lengthy descriptions of his idea.

As with the idea of will to power, in these unpublished notes it sometimes looks as if Nietzsche were trying to use the latest results of science to demonstrate and corroborate the doctrine as a metaphysical

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14. E.g., WM 1062, 1063, 1064, & 1066. Further translations from the notebooks on this theme are found at OL 16, pp237-256. The longest published definition, discussed below, is within Zarathustra. The doctrine is defined briefly at EH GT 3 as "the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular course of all things".

doctrine.[14] But as with the study of Wittgenstein's philosophy, and perhaps as with the study of most philosophers, there is no interpretive procedure that can take the place of examining any particular passage within the context of the whole of that philosopher's thought. In Nietzsche's case, we have seen repeatedly that the bottom line of his philosophizing is the advent of nihilism and the thought of its overcoming. It will become clear, here, that this is also the major context within which the idea of eternal recurrence is developed, both in the unpublished notes and in Zarathustra: and that presenting it within this context shows, beyond reasonable doubt, that the doctrine functions as a "broken myth" rather than as a new metaphysics.

Let us remind ourselves briefly, then, what this "context" of nihilism means. We have seen that it is the fundamental idea of Nietzsche's later philosophy; it is the key concept in his interpretation of history as well as the center of his understanding of the modern world. His entire later philosophy is devoted in one way or another to an analysis of it and to finding a way into the future beyond it. His vision of the overman, we have seen, is also directed to the overcoming of nihilism, and that overman, as envisioned in Zarathustra, is connected with becoming "the teacher of the eternal recurrence".

We have also seen that nihilism is directly connected with Nietzsche's "metaphysical scepticism", the belief that there is no truth. In Will to Power 598 Nietzsche says that the "belief that there is no truth at all" is "the nihilistic belief", just as we have seen him say that: "Nihilism....presupposition of the hypothesis: that there is no truth, that there is no absolute nature of things nor a "thing-in-itself"". (WM 13.) Because of this, because all the highest values are gone with the

realization that there is no truth, we find the world to be meaningless and in vain: "The philosophical nihilist is convinced that all that happens is meaningless and in vain...." (WM 36.) What the doctrine of eternal recurrence does, for Nietzsche, is give an interpretation of the world which articulates this nihilistic feeling that everything is meaningless and in vain:

> Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: "the eternal recurrence".
>
> This is the most extreme form of nihilism: the nothing (the "meaningless"), eternally! (WM 55.)

Nihilism, we have seen, is itself a response, a point of view adopted in response to the death of traditional values. When these are seen no longer to give value to the world, we "plunge into opposite valuations". The world now appears meaningless. Hence the nihilistic thought in its most terrible form, the thought of the eternal recurrence of a meaningless universe, is not a metaphysical doctrine purporting to give us knowledge of the world, it is (at our present spiritual level) an articulation of the nihilistic reaction to the world. Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism remained fundamental to his entire philosophy: all our so-called truths are only interpretations, only lies and illusions. Value or disvalue, nihilism or affirmation, all involve interpretation, never knowledge:

> ...The value of the world lies in our interpretation....
>
> The world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable and approximation in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for there is no "truth". (WM 616.)

Just as we have seen his earliest writings call for "broken myths" which could restore the creative function of culture and continue to

"ennoble" mankind, so in the later writings (of 1885) we see him holding a similar insight into the possibilities of the interpretative dimension of human life:

> Moralities and religions are the principal means by which one can make whatever one wishes out of man, provided one possesses a superfluity of creative forces and can assert one's will over long periods of time - in the form of legislation, religions, and customs. (WM 144.)
>
> In place of "metaphysics" and religion, the theory of eternal recurrence.... (WM 462.)

Perhaps Nietzsche thinks that, if this doctrine grips people, it will be believed by the masses since they are not capable of enduring broken myths. Perhaps his experiments with scientifically justifying the doctrine were undertaken with this possibility in mind. Whatever his reasoning, the doctrine clearly functions primarily within the context of possible responses to the world rather than within the context of metaphysics as a form of knowledge.

Nietzsche's dialectical pattern of thinking is apparent here as well, for he seems to have thought that, through articulating nihilism in its "most terrible form", he could force the issue to either moving beyond nihilism or being destroyed by it. That is why he could call the doctrine a "principle of selection". (WM 1058.) Those who could not bear to live in a meaningless universe and who did not have the capacity to create new values would despair of life. Those who had the capacity to transform themselves into beings who find sanctity and meaning in this phenomenal world of unending temporality and becoming would see the doctrine as a great symbol of their joy and affirmation.

Hence the idea of eternal recurrence is designed to articulate the most extreme nihilism and thereby elicit response: either as a formula of

despair or as a formula of affirmation. In connection with the former Nietzsche says:

> The unhealthiest kind of man in Europe (in all classes) furnishes the soil for this nihilism: they will experience the belief in the eternal recurrence as a curse, struck by which one no longer shrinks from any action.... (WM 55.)

Nihilism, it is important to recall, is historically inevitable for Nietzsche. His doctrine of eternal recurrence only articulates and helps to precipitate a raised consciousness of the fact that all traditional values are empty because they have lost their metaphysical grounding. This doctrine formulates the principle of a universe that is meaningless and in vain and this is what people will experience as a "curse": "There is one great paralysis", he says, "to work in vain, to struggle in vain.---" (WM 597.)

On the other hand, in Ecce Homo we have seen him characterize the doctrine of eternal recurrence as "the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable". For Nietzsche himself the doctrine is a formula which is at once a means to move beyond nihilism and a symbol of the transformed state of being itself. In its interpretative character as unending temporality without aim, goal, or meaning, the doctrine serves as a focal point for the revaluation of values that will move us beyond nihilism. For to go beyond nihilism is to find a new relation to this world of transitory phenomena which finds in these phenomena sanctity, perfection, and a source of joy. Hence Nietzsche can say: "To the paralyzing sense of general disintegration and incompleteness I opposed the eternal recurrence". (WM 417.) Dialectically, the eternal recurrence as the articulation of nihilism in its most terrible form forces the issue: we either transvalue all our values or despair of living. He says of the doctrine:

> Means of enduring it: the revaluation of all values. No longer joy in certainty but in uncertainty; no longer "cause and effect" but the continually creative; no longer will to preservation but to power; no longer humble expression, "everything is merely subjective," but "it is our work! - Let us be proud of it!" (WM 1059.)

Here we see again that the revaluation of all values does not give us a new metaphysics: we still admit the creative nature of all our interpretations, but we now affirm this creativity; we no longer disparage the interpretations as lies, as mere subjectivity. Everything about this life and this world, from its necessarily interpretive character to the simplest bodily activities must be sanctified and transfigured:

> There is a need for those who will sanctify all activities, not only eating and drinking - and not merely in remembrance of them and to become one with them, but this world must be transfigured ever anew and in new ways. (WM 1044.)

The association here with the Christian communion service would not seem to be accidental. Holiness and sanctity in the acts of eating and drinking are often thought to come only with the partaking of the bread and the wine and then only because these are performed "in remembrance". But the transformed mode of being-in-the-world which is the key to Nietzsche's revaluation will find sanctity in everything and on all occasions. Just as the eternal recurrence as a means to the revaluation will cause us to transform ourselves or else despair of life, so once the revaluation has taken place it will become a great "formula of affirmation" and a "consolation":

> A certain emperor always bore in mind the transitoriness of all things so as not to take them too seriously and to live in peace among them. To me, on the contrary, everything seems far too valuable to be so fleeting: I seek an eternity for everything: ought one pour the most precious salves and

> wines into the sea? - My consolation is that everything that has been is eternal: the sea will cast it up again. (WM 1065.)

When we turn to the book Thus Spoke Zarathustra, of which the eternal recurrence is "the fundamental conception", we find again these dual possibilities of response to the doctrine: despair or spiritual transformation into affirmation. Zarathustra's spiritual growth toward becoming an overman, which takes place primarily throughout Parts Two and Three of the book, centers around his response to this doctrine.[15]

The first we hear of this cyclical view of things comes, in Part Two, not from Zarathustra but from Zarathustra's symbolic enemy, "the Soothsayer":

> --And I saw a great sadness descend upon mankind. The best grew weary of their works. A doctrine appeared, accompanied by a faith: "All is empty, all is the same, all has been!" And from the hills it echoed: "All is empty, all is the same, all has been!" (Z II 19.)

It is this that initiates Zarathustra's internal struggles that finally result in the affirmation of the idea of eternal recurrence near the end of Part Three. Such a doctrine is, of course, a poetic rendering of the nihilistic consequences of the death of God and the harvesting of the innermost implications of resentful Christian values. We have become "weary of man". And the Soothsayer's teaching has just such an effect on Zarathustra: "He walked about sad and weary; and he became like those of whom the soothsayer had spoken.":

> "Verily," he said to his disciples, "little is lacking and this long twilight will come. Alas, how shall I save my light

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15. Z II 19. The rest of this section (on the eternal recurrence) draws on the present writer's Master's thesis: "The Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence and Method of Attaining The Overman - A Study in The Basic Conceptions

through it? It must not suffocate in this sadness.

Zarathustra's response to this weariness is to fall asleep and have a dream. It is a weary dream which symbolically portrays the saying "no" to life that is characteristic of nihilism:

> I had turned my back on life, thus I dreamed. I had become a night watchman and a guardian of tombs upon the lonely mountain castle of death. (Z II 19.)

When Zarathustra finally faces up to his "most abysmal thought" ("On the Convalescent", Part Three), he explicitly tells us that it was the soothsayer's doctrine and his own weariness with man that was the object of his greatest overcoming: the affirmation of the eternal recurrence of an intrinsically meaningless universe, including necessarily the meaningless, human all-too-human existence of the small man.

> The great disgust with man -- This choked me and had crawled into my throat; and what the soothsayer said: "All is the same, nothing is worth while, knowledge chokes." A long twilight limped before me, a sadness, weary to death, drunken with death, speaking with a yawning mouth. "Eternally recurs the man of whom you are weary, the small man" - Thus yawned my sadness and dragged its feet and could not go to sleep. Man's earth turned into a cave for me, its chest sunken; all that is living became human mold and bones and musty past to me. My sighing sat on all human tombs and could no longer get up; my sighing and questioning croaked and gagged and gnawed and wailed by day and night: "Alas man recurs eternally! The small man recurs eternally!"... And the eternal recurrence even of the smallest--that was my disgust with all existence. (Z III 13, WK p.219.)

How did Zarathustra prevent himself from "suffocating in this sadness?" How did he "save his light" in the face of this doctrine? The answer to this is the story, in Parts Two and Three of the book, of his development toward becoming an overman and thus a teacher of the

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of Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra" (Hunter College, 1976).

eternal recurrence. The soothsayer's doctrine is clearly a version of the idea of eternal recurrence: it articulates that nihilism which is the context of the modern world and which engenders the dual possibilities of despair or self-transformation into an affirmative state of being. And Zarathustra's initial response is to realize that he is in danger of despair.

The first step in the process of overcoming this despair and spiritually transforming himself comes in the very next speech ("On Redemption") where Zarathustra realizes what is needed for a complete redemption and what it is that poisons our relationship with life: it is man's temporal existence, the inability to alter the past. This inability leads to what we have seen in Chapter One as essential to both historical and modern nihilism: resentment and the spirit of revenge:

> This, indeed this alone, is what revenge is: the will's ill will against time and its "it was"....
> "The spirit of revenge", my friends, has so far been the subject of man's best reflection; and where there was suffering one always wanted punishment too. (Z II 20, WK p.140.)

That this is a response to the soothsayer's doctrine is made clear in a refrain which is placed in quotation marks:

> "Everything passes away; therefore everything deserves to pass away. And this too is justice, this law of time that it must devour its children." Thus preached madness. (Z II 20, WK p.140.)

We are not here concerned to assess these ideas philosophically as if they were metaphysical attempts to give an account of the nature of the cosmos. They are not: they are interpretive myths. Rather, we are trying to articulate the function of the eternal recurrence as a symbol within Nietzsche's philosophy as well as its connection with the whole of his

thought. We have seen that Nietzsche finds in temporality, in the unending flux of the phenomena and in the aging, illness, and death processes of human life, a key source of our inability to completely affirm this world and of our historical tendency to construct religious or metaphysical doctrines which devalue this world and relegate it to the status of mere appearance. Here he specifies the linear character of time (and by implication our inability to alter the meanest aspects of our own past lives) as the basis of our resentment. Therefore the great affirmation of a spiritually transformed relation to life, that is, our "redemption", depends on a complete affirmation of every detail of the unalterable past:

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all "it was" into "thus I willed it" - that alone I should call redemption. (Z II 20, WK p.139.)[16]

But to understand this is one thing; to be spiritually transformed so that one is completely without resentment is quite another. Zarathustra's spiritual growth toward becoming teacher of the eternal recurrence is far from complete. The next step in this process is dramatized in the section "The Stillest Hour" where Zarathustra feels the need to withdraw from people and to return once more to his solitude. In these solitary reflections he finds that there is something within him to which he must face up, a great realization that is so terrible that he feels it is beyond his strength:

> Then it spoke to me without voice: "You know it, Zarathustra, but you do not say it!" And at last I answered defiantly: "Yes, I know it, but I do not want to say it!....Alas,

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16. As Nietzsche says in Ecce Homo (II 10): His formula for affirmation is "that one wants nothing different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity."

> I would like to, but how can I? Let me off from this! It is beyond my strength!" (Z II 20, WK p.145.)

This section ends Part Two of the book, making it clear not only that Zarathustra is not now the overman (the Prologue has only told us that he is the "teacher of the overman") but also by linking the direction of Zarathustra's growth with the highest of the three metamorphoses of the spirit that we saw defined in the opening speech of the book. His inner voice says to him: "You must yet become as a child and without shame." (WK p.145.)

Early in Part Three we again come upon the doctrine of recurrence. The section is entitled "On The Vision and The Riddle", and again it is underlined that Zarathustra has not yet reached his spiritual potential: for what comes to him is once more in the form of an inner voice and a dream-like vision. He has just endured his "stillest hour" and declared that he was not yet ready to face up to the thought which is within him. Before he finally allows his "abyss" to speak this thought at the end of Part Three, it is symbolically portrayed to him in the form of this dream-like vision (which is as yet a "riddle" to him).[17] In the vision he is struggling with the "spirit of gravity", his "devil and archenemy". Finally he forces the moment to a crisis and cries, "Stop, dwarf....It is I or you!":

> "Behold," I continued, "this moment! From this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane leads backward: behind us lies an eternity. Must not whatever can walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before? And if everything has been before--what do you think, dwarf, of this moment? Must not this gateway too have been there before? And are

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17. Ratsel. Perhaps Thomas Common's translation, "enigma", would be better, the connotations of "riddle" being a puzzle which is intellectually soluble whereas the connotations of "enigma" tend to make one think of a mystery which requires a deepening of the understanding.

> not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it all that is to come? Therefore--itself too? For whatever can walk--in this long lane out there too, it must walk once more.
>
> "And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things--must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane--must we not eternally return?" (Z III 2, WK p.158.)

These thoughts lead directly to a vision of a shepherd who is struggling with a great black snake that has crawled into his throat and bit fast. There is no pulling the snake out of the shepherd's throat and the shepherd is caught alive in this nightmare unless he can summon all the strength of his being (all "his dread, his hatred, his nausea, his pity, all that is good and wicked in him" (WK p.159)) into the extreme act of biting off the head of the snake. It is this summoning up of every fiber of his being that leads to his transformation <u>beyond human nature</u>:

> No longer shepherd, no longer human - one changed, radiant, <u>laughing</u>! Never yet on earth has a human being laughed as he laughed!... And now a thirst gnaws at me, a longing that never grows still. My longing for this laughter gnaws at me; oh how do I bear to go on living! And how could I bear to die now! (WK p.160.)

It is <u>this vision</u> of a transformed human nature that is here a <u>direct response</u> to the thought of the eternal recurrence. It is this vision which animates Nietzsche's later writings and which is the key to the possibility of overcoming nihilism. It seems as if Nietzsche thought that by articulating nihilism in its "most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim...the eternal recurrence", he could precipitate a crisis of awareness where we realize that we must either summon up our entire being to transform ourselves or else die in despair. We see that it is just this which is going on in <u>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</u>. Zarathustra encounters

the doctrine, is in danger of despair, and then must go through a series of terrible spiritual struggles until he can summon up the strength and the courage to transform his entire relation to life.

When Zarathustra does finally attain the ability to summon up his "most abysmal thought", in the section called "The Convalescent" (Z III 13), he must undergo his greatest spiritual struggle, so great that it causes him to be struck down "as one dead", finally lying there for seven days without eating or drinking. After his recovery, he explicitly recalls the earlier events we have just discussed, the events found in "The Soothsayer" and in "On The Vision and The Riddle". His statement now implies that he has performed the same deed as the shepherd in his vision:

> But now I lie here, still weary from this biting and spewing, still sick from my own redemption....
> The great disgust with man - this choked me and had crawled into my throat; and what the soothsayer said: "All is the same, nothing is worth while, knowledge chokes". (WK p.219.)

Like the shepherd, he had to "bite off the head" of something that permeated his entire human all-too-human being: resentment and revenge against time, articulated in its most terrible form: the thought of the eternal recurrence of the smallest, most terrible, and most nauseating aspects of existence. He has become an overman.

Only now, when he is recovering from his "biting and spewing", does he become the "teacher of the eternal recurrence". At this point "his animals", the eagle and the serpent (who were introduced in the Prologue and here watched over him during the seven days of his convalescence), articulate the doctrine that he now teaches:

> "Behold, we know what you teach: that all things recur eternally, and we ourselves too; and that we have already

> existed an eternal number of times, and all things with us. You teach that there is a great year of becoming, a monster of a great year, which must, like an hourglass, turn over again and again so that it may run down and run out again; and all these years are alike is what is greatest as in what is smallest; and we ourselves are alike in every great year, in what is greatest and in what is smallest. (Z III 13, WK p.220.)[18]

It is from this point on, as we have seen, that the character of the book changes dramatically. Gone are the spiritual struggles with "abysmal thoughts". Rather, at the end of Part Three, Zarathustra bursts into "The Other Dancing Song" which is a love song in praise of "life", and Part Four, like a satyr play following a tragic trilogy, is full of song, dance, jest, and laughter.

It should be clear at this point why Ecce Homo calls the eternal recurrence "the fundamental conception" of Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Whatever Nietzsche may have said occasionally of its scientific or metaphysical status in his notebooks is strictly secondary to its predominant function as a symbolic elucidation of this vision of the overman and its articulation of the spiritual dynamics he thought necessary for transforming our mode of being-in-the-world. It should also be clear that the eternal recurrence is both a means to that transformation and a symbol of the transformed state of being. It is a "broken myth", having clearly symbolic and visionary dimensions, and such myths, like moralities and religions, we have seen Nietzsche say, "are the principal means by which one can make whatever one wishes out of man". (WM 144.)

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18. That the animals are part of Zarathustra himself is evident to any careful reader. They are presented in Prologue 10 as being Zarathustra's ideal for thinking, that is, for having integrated the ego and the unconscious (the eagle or "spirit" and the serpent or "body") into a unified whole. He says "May my animals lead me!" and wishes he were entirely consonant with the great wisdom of his body: "that I might be wise through and through like my serpent!".

In the published writings outside of Zarathustra, the longest presentation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence is a condensed version of what we have just seen within Zarathustra. This is Gay Science 341 which, as in Zarathustra, focuses on the possibilities of response to the doctrine, and hence on the question of our relation to this world, a world which may seem to be of unending temporality, without meaning, purpose, or aim. After the doctrine is presented he continues:

> Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine". If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to crave nothing more fervently than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?

The doctrine is clearly an integral part of Nietzsche's vision of a transformed mode of being-in-the-world which was free of resentment and which restored the integrity of the phenomena. As he says in Will to Power 585: we must "deify becoming and the apparent world as the only world and...call them good". It is a "broken myth" created in response to nihilism and the belief that there is no truth, a myth which, by articulating that very nihilism in its most extreme form, sought to elicit insight into the need for a spiritual transformation which would at the same time transfigure our relation to existence itself.

The overman is that being who believes in the eternal recurrence as "the highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable". The overman, like the child, is "innocence and forgetting" for this being, for the first time in human history, is without resentment. Only with this

state of being is there the possibility of a sacred "Yes" to all existence.

In the next section we will find that in many respects the doctrine of "will to power" functions, in Nietzsche's philosophy, in much the same manner as the eternal recurrence: like the eternal recurrence, it is a "broken myth" which functions both as a means for the required spiritual transformation and as a symbol of the transformed state of being.

iii. Power and Will to Power

If we place our discussion of "power" within the interpretive context which we have thus far developed, it should not take us long to get to the heart of Nietzsche's philosophizing in this regard. However, since his views on this subject have been much maligned and much misunderstood from the time of the Nazis to the present, let us first briefly lay to rest the idea that Nietzsche's conception of power had anything to do with political power of "masters" over "slaves".

We have seen in our exposition of his early view of culture (Chapter Two, section iv) that genuine culture could only be sustained if great, creative human beings (geniuses like artists, saints, and philosophers) were its models and foundations. Indeed, he took this idea seriously not simply as an abstract theoretical idea, but practically as well, setting in motion plans for a kind of monastic community where persons of superior intellect and creativity could work together, independently of political concerns, to form the nucleus for a cultural renaissance in Europe.[19] Herman Hesse,

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19. See Elizabeth Foester-Nietzsche, The Young Nietzsche (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1912), pp.284ff.

one of the more perceptive interpreters in this regard, partially embodied Nietzsche's life-long ideal in his novel The Glass Bead Game.[20] In this novel a society is organized around the idea that its most creative and intelligent members are its most precious possession and should be protected from the distracting concerns of politics, practical affairs, governing, etc.

When the later Nietzsche radicalized his early conception of the significance of "the genius" to include the need for a transformed human nature into an Uebermensch, he again believed that these Uebermenschen should be separated in a kind of monastic community, for they would now not only be the meaning and models for a culture, they would be the meaning and models for the entire earth. (Z Prologue 3.)

> My demand: to bring forth beings who stand elevated above the entire type "man": and to sacrifice ourselves and "our neighbors" to this goal.
>
> The limits of previous morality lay within the type: all previous morals were required to give the type absolute stability in the first place: when this is achieved, the goal can be taken higher.
>
> The one movement is absolute: the leveling of mankind, great ant colonies, etc.
>
> The other movement, my movement, is on the other hand the intensification of all oppositions and gaps, elimination of equality, the creation of the overwhelming.
>
> That engenders the last man, my movement the superman. It is by no means the goal to conceive the latter as masters of the former: but rather, the two types should exist alongside one another - separated as much as possible. The one like the Epicurean gods, not concerning itself with the other.[21]

The creation of such a community is not a mere luxury. We have seen that the context of Nietzsche's late philosophy is a crisis of meaning for

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20. New York: Bantam Books, 1969.

21. GOA XIV, 261-262, RP tr.

mankind the like of which the world has never seen. Hence, "man", whether in the form of ourselves or our neighbors, is not the goal since the very nature of "man" is identical with the source and meaning of this crisis. Meaning and value can only be restored to human life through "his movement": the "intensification" of the crisis itself, of the need for creativity, and of the need for transformation, to the point where our all-too-human nature is transfigured and the overman emerges. This is why both "ourselves" and "our neighbors" must be sacrificed. Nietzsche was no proponent of bourgeois individuality, of wallowing in all-too-human smallness and trivial personal problems. What is at stake is the meaning of the human project itself. But he is also no proponent of political oppression and slavery. The meaning of "power" in his writings is a spiritual meaning, "spiritual" in the broad sense of geist. Those with spiritual power should be "separated as much as possible" from the masses and "by no means" be their masters. As with his other ideas, this becomes clear if understood within the context of his whole philosophy. What, then, is the character of the later Nietzsche's philosophy of power?

The general context for understanding Nietzsche's philosophy of power is, once again, his understanding of the problem of nihilism and the possibility of its overcoming which was the fundamental problematic of his later philosophizing. And the first point to be made in this regard is that nihilism, as we have seen, cannot be separated from metaphysical scepticism, the belief that there is no truth. "We create reality", Nietzsche says, "the concept "reality" for ourselves". (WM 516.) As we have seen, Nietzsche's version of the Kantian insight that all cognition requires conditions for its very possibility, led him to the epistemological position that every perception, every cognition, and every linguistic

description was necessarily a falsification, an "active determining" and shaping of a world for ourselves rather than a mirroring of some "reality" with which we are in contact. In the Will to Power 539, he sums up his position succinctly:

> Parmenides said, "one cannot think of what is not"; - we are at the other extreme, and say "what can be thought of must certainly be a fiction."

Because of this position, fundamental to Nietzsche's entire later philosophy, the first thing that context tells us is that the notion of will to power is not very likely to be a metaphysical notion. Everything that can be thought of must be a fiction, including Nietzsche's own notions of eternal recurrence and will to power.

Secondly, the context of nihilism and its overcoming can lead us directly to an understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy of "power" itself. Let us recall that nihilism has two central aspects. The first is the one just considered, the idea that all traditional, metaphysically conceived values are called into question in the modern world, including the value of truth. The second aspect of nihilism involves our human all-too-human nature itself, what we called above our "fallenness". The overwhelming evidence of human history demonstrates our inability to escape the spiritual poison of resentment. Since both these aspects of nihilism are integral to the spiritual crisis of the modern world, the overcoming of nihilism involves: (1) the capacity to live in the face of the "abyss" that there is no truth, and (2) a spiritual transformation of our human nature beyond resentment. This is why the "overman" is a vision of spiritual transfiguration. "Nihilism" is inseparable from what human beings are and what human beings have been up until now. Hence, in the overcoming of

nihilism we must literally, without the aid of a transcendent dimension or divine grace, create beyond ourselves. This is why Nietzsche's later philosophy is a philosophy of "power": such a transformation can only come about through a tremendous creative power which we somehow find within ourselves.

With this understanding in place, we can articulate specifically the reasons why the overcoming of nihilism required a philosophy of great spiritual and creative power. We will present this in terms of two analyses, the first focusing on resentment and the possibility of overcoming resentment. The second analysis will then combine resentment with the second aspect of nihilism, metaphysical scepticism, and present a more general and comprehensive breakdown of why power is needed for the overcoming of nihilism. Together, these analyses will give us the raison d'etre of Nietzsche's philosophy of power and hence insight into the meaning and nature of "power" in his writings.

A breakdown of the ways in which resentment operates in human life is also a breakdown of the ways in which a new (superhuman) power is needed in human life. Resentment, for Nietzsche, can basically be associated with weakness, with the incapacity to affirm this world and these conditions (the polarity "strength versus weakness", we have seen, being one of the basic pargdigms of Nietzsche's later philosophy). This inability results in a desire to escape from or disparage in one way or another the world and these conditions.[22] Although there is some overlapping among the following five categories, each could and should be

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22. In this and in what follows we refer the reader to our discussion in Chapter One, section iv, where documentation is supplied for each of these ideas.

articulated as a separate aspect of that tendency toward resentment which Nietzsche takes to be our basic human flaw. Fallenness, the spiritual poison of resentment, operates in the following ways:

1. Resentment of others (the "lying" common man resents the "nobles").
2. Resentment of suffering, illness, pain, and death.
3. Resentment of perpetual change and the unending temporal flux of the world.
4. Resentment of the seemingly amoral and impersonal nature of the phenomena.
5. Resentment of the seemingly meaningless and valueless character of the phenomena.

The overcoming of resentment (and hence of nihilism) can only be done by generating a strength, a spiritual capacity or "power", which allows us to "affirm", rather than disparage, the world in each of these categories. Nietzsche calls this "redemption" (e.g. Z II 20). Redemption from this spiritual flaw of resentment requires strength (power) in each of the following parallel senses:

1. Strength (spiritual capacity or power) not to take revenge on others.
2. Strength to affirm even suffering, illness, pain, and death.
3. Strength to absolutely affirm perpetual change and unending flux.
4. Strength not to lie and not to grasp onto consoling beliefs and illusions.
5. Strength (or creative and imaginative power) to create meaning and value for human life within this context.

Unlike Christianity, which could rely for redemption on what Saint Paul (and Luther following him, citing Galatians 2:15) called "justification by faith alone", Nietzsche could hope for no such divine grace to redeem us from our fallen condition. Yet, like Christianity, he saw the human condition as "fallen" in a certain sense and as requiring "redemption" through a fundamental transformation of our nature. His answer was an

emphasis on spiritual power. Since we had to effect this redemption ourselves, we had to focus on, and develop the power or capacity to, transform ourselves beyond our human nature.

The problem posed by this flaw, which has largely permeated our Western history, is only exacerbated in the modern world since Kant and the advent of enlightenment about the possibility of metaphysics. In realizing that "everything that can be thought is a fiction", the nihilism implicit in Western history becomes explicit and the human situation looks grim indeed. Hence, the ideas represented by categories 4 and 5 of our listing above largely define this special crisis of "truth" in the modern world. On the one hand, we need great strength and power to face the fact that there is no truth and not retreat once more into comfortable religious beliefs and ideals; on the other hand, to face this abysmal truth that there is no truth, although requiring great strength, is not enough: we need in addition the seemingly superhuman power to recreate a meaning and value for human life in spite of this abyss. This is the bottom line in the late Nietzsche's philosophy of power and the reason why power is very often associated with creative energy or capacity. The task is superhuman: to supply a meaning and value to human existence that it seems could only be supplied from a divine source. Nietzsche's philosophy of power centers on the need to develop spiritual power as the only means that he sees for overcoming these problems.

If we move on from the nihilism of resentment which is implicit in our traditional metaphysical values to a consideration of the explicit nihilism of the modern world (the nihilism of metaphysical scepticism with its concomitant feeling of the meaninglessness and valuelessness), then it is possible to formulate another and related list of the ways in which

spiritual and creative power is what human beings need most:

> 1. Power is needed to affirm all existence (including suffering, fate, and death).
> 2. Power is needed to restore the integrity of the phenomena by leaving them, in a certain sense, uninterpreted. That is, our interpretations must be "broken myths" or "truthful illusions" which recognize that all our thoughts are "fictions".
> 3. Seemingly superhuman power is needed to recreate a meaning and value to human life in the face of the terrible fact that there is no truth and no metaphysical grounding to value.
> 4. Hence, since the latter can only come about through transforming ourselves, spiritual power is needed to effect that self-transformation.
> 5. And, since the overman is that transformed being who can create meaning and value in spite of the abyss of truthlessness, power is also a result of that transformation (the result that is indicated in 3).

Each of these points presents a way in which spiritual power is what human beings need most, and the entire list gives us an intimation of how the doctrine of "will to power" functions in Nietzsche's philosophy. Like the other two major doctrines of his final period, it is both a means to the overcoming of nihilism and a symbol of that state of being which has overcome nihilism. The goal of the overman, for example, gives us both a suggestion of the direction we must take to overcome nihilism and is a symbolic designation of the transformed state of being. The eternal recurrence is both a means for confronting nihilism (by articulating it in its "most terrible form") and is a symbol of nihilism overcome (Zarathustra as "the teacher of the eternal recurrence"). Similarly the will to power is a focus and a "will" that is necessary if we are ever to transform our being-in-the-world, and it is a symbol of the creative and spiritual character of that being whose nature is transformed.

Now that we have outlined the way "power" essentially functions in the philosophizing of the late Nietzsche, it should be clear that "will to

power", even in its metaphysical formulation as the essential character of all beings (e.g. WM 636), functions, like the eternal recurrence, as an interpretive myth directed toward the overcoming of nihilism. However, in view of the dozens of attempts to articulate a scientific basis or metaphysical formulation for the doctrine, found in these late writings, two points need to be made. We recall, first, that of the three aspects of Nietzsche's response to nihilism (remaining consciously trapped within it, envisioning a state of being beyond it, and cautious experimentation for a way beyond it), the cautious experimentation, discussed at the close of Chapter One, remained an important mode of philosophizing throughout the late period. Hence the notebooks of this period show a continuous experimenting with one way of looking at the eternal recurrence or the will to power, then another way of regarding them, etc. The inconsistencies among some of the points of view adopted toward these doctrines can only be resolved (that is understood) within the context of this experimentalism which is itself directed toward the overcoming of nihilism. Because of this experimentalism, one cannot expect any systematic philosophy concerning these doctrines: the will to power may be viewed in some aphorisms as a broken myth, in others as a scientific doctrine, still in others as a metaphysical characterization of all beings. The only interpretive strategy that can comprehend this multiplicity is the one emphasized from the beginning of this volume: comprehension of the whole of Nietzsche's writings in terms of their general problematic (nihilism and metaphysical scepticism) and his attempts to grapple with that problematic (the visionary and experimental doctrines of the later philosophy).

The second point to be made with regard to the scientific and

metaphysical renderings of the will to power in the late notebooks is to point out the curiously reflexive and circular nature of the logic which permeates the thinking underlying this doctrine. We have just seen the ways in which "power" is needed for the overcoming of nihilism. And since there are only interpretations, the question becomes what kinds of interpretations shall we adopt or look for? The answer is those that help overcome nihilism and allow us to affirm this world and this life. And what kinds are these? - those interpretations that stress power. Hence power is what is needed, and power is also the criterion for judging our interpretations of the world. Since there is no "truth", Nietzsche comes, in the late philosophy, to equate truth with power: the criterion of truth is now connected with power.[23]

In addition, since the character of power is "the more the better" (since what is needed, after all, is "superhuman" power), then those interpretations of the phenomena that are most encompassing (one might say, most metaphysically general) fulfill this criterion more fully than less encompassing perspectives. Hence, to interpret "everything" as will to power is an interpretation whose content manifests more power (equals "truth") than a more restricted interpretation (limited, say, to human beings). Form and content begin to become inseparable. Thus, metaphysical scepticism, to be endured, requires a philosophy of power, and once adopted, power, in part, becomes the attempt to "master" the world through interpretation, the more encompassing the interpretation, the more complete its spiritual power. The result is a metaphysical doctrine (as for example in WM 1067) that "everything is will to power". But it should be

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23. E.g. WM 534. In the following section this idea will be developed in a somewhat different direction under the heading of "Dionysian truth".

kept in mind that this result comes about because of the context of metaphysical scepticism, a context we have seen Nietzsche repeatedly affirm in his late writings.

This progression (from narrower to more general interpretations) is frequently seen in the late notebooks. Let us take one or two examples of this pattern of thinking. Nietzsche writes:

> If we translate the concept "cause" back to the only sphere known to us, from which we have derived it, we cannot imagine any change that does not involve a will to power....
>
> The will to accumulate force is special to the phenomena of life, to nourishment, procreation, inheritance - to society, state, custom, authority. Should we not be permitted to assume this will as a motive cause in chemistry, too? - and in the cosmic order? (WM 689.)

Nietzsche begins with the "only sphere known to us", human subjectivity, which gives us, he believes, our concept of causality. He calls these causal connections within our subjectivity "will to power". He then generalizes from the subjective dimension to life in general and human society in particular: they all manifest "the will to accumulate force". Finally, he abstracts from this to the realm of all chemical interactions, and (since we have gone this far) why not attribute the will to power to the entire cosmic order? Since all is only interpretation, and what is needed is spiritual power, then the criterion of our interpretations becomes power. But since there is no objective truth which might place a control on our interpretations, we find ourselves in a kind of vicious circle in which the most powerful interpretation becomes the interpretation in which things are interpreted, in the most encompassing way possible, as power itself. The vicious character of this circle is more clearly apparent in the following late note:

> Our values are interpreted into things.
> Is there then any meaning in the in-itself?
> Is meaning not necessarily relative meaning and perspective?
> All meaning is will to power (all relative meaning resolves itself into it). (WM 590.)

The context of metaphysical scepticism is here, as elsewhere, the starting point. Since all human cognitions are interpretation, all that we can say is that our interpretations project "our values" into things. There is no meaning to any "in-itself" because perspectivalism forever removes any such possibility or even any meaning to this idea. Hence, all meanings would seem to be relative, mere perspectives for which there is no external criterion. However, the transition from the third to the fourth statement in this note involves the reflexive logic that we are here trying to indicate. For with the adoption of a philosophy of "power" (precisely because this is needed to endure this metaphysical scepticism) we find ourselves moving out of relativism into a new absolutism. The absolutism (indicated in the fourth statement in this quotation) is not because we have discovered an in-itself (the context, appearing in the first statement, shows this to be impossible). Rather, the absolutism is come upon because of the vicious circle entered upon once "power" is adopted as a criterion of truth. Now the most powerful interpretation is the one which interprets all things as power, and hence, since everything becomes will to power, the doctrine is no longer one relative interpretation among others but rather "all relative meaning resolves itself into it". Why is "everything" will to power? For purely formal reasons, one might say, because "power" is the criterion of truth. If "everything" is will to power, then we have come upon a new absolute, one that does not claim to give us an "in-itself", but is absolute within the totally anthropomorphized (one

might say, almost solipsistic) world in which the one thing which human beings need above all else is spiritual and transformative power and in which there is no objective truth to serve as a control on our interpretations. Nietzsche was certainly correct when he felt that metaphysical scepticism opened up a hideous, yawning abyss, a vortex portending the very distintegration of the world of ordinary certainties and ordinary truths. Part of that abyss is the logical abyss that one enters when all idea of an objective truth is given up and a criterion of spiritual power is adopted in its place: for what is most powerful becomes simultaneously the criterion and the content of one's interpretation.

However, these logical perplexities are ancillary and relatively unimportant in comparison with the predominant thrust of Nietzsche's later philosophy concerning nihilism and the possibility of its overcoming. In addition, in the following section we will look at a more spiritualized and esoteric aspect of Nietzsche's equation of truth and power. But before going on to our interpretation of "Dionysian truth" in the next section, let us develop the idea of "will to power" within the context of this predominant thrust.

It was Nietzsche's view that no "knowledge" was possible regarding the phenomenal world which we face, since every act of "knowing" was an active determining and translating into human terms. We have seen him deny, as well, the idea that there is any "in itself" or "true reality" behind the flux of the phenomena. What, then, is that with which we are faced prior to the interpretation of it? His answer was that it was a phenomenal flux that could not be known or articulated:

> The antithesis of this phenomenal world is not "the true world", but the formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations - another kind of phenomenal world, a kind

"unknowable" for us. (WM 569.)

As he says in Will to Power 604: "There are no facts, everything is in flux, incomprehensible, elusive...." The phenomena which face us cannot be known, even factually, let alone metaphysically. What then is the doctrine of will to power? Nietzsche is explicit, it is "interpretation":

> The value of the world lies in our interpretation - the will to power as overcoming narrower interpretations: there is no truth. (WM 616.)

"There is no truth", only interpretations, and the will to power is one such interpretation. Similarly, when Nietzsche first introduces the idea of "will to power" in the book Beyond Good and Evil (22), he compares himself with the physicists, who read out of nature one "interpretation", while, with his doctrine of will to power, he reads out another "interpretation". And if anyone should object of this doctrine that "this is only interpretation", Nietzsche replies, "well, so much the better". The key to understanding the philosophy of will to power is precisely to see it as an interpretation, the context of the modern world (that there is no truth) requires this.

Nietzsche recognizes the unsayability and unknowability of the phenomenal world. He then interprets this unknowable world as "will to power". This creates a "broken myth" which is directed toward the overcoming of nihilism. Nietzsche was not against interpretations as such (or what he called "lies"): "That lies are necessary in order to live", he says, "is part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence". (WM 853.) For him the question was whether the interpretation logically denied or devalued the phenomena and thus reflected a resentment of, and attempt to escape from, this world, or, on the other hand, whether the

interpretation logically restored the integrity of the phenomena, reflecting an affirmation and love of this world. In his view the doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence reflect the latter. Since there is no "true" interpretation, the criterion of interpretation becomes, in large part, "to what extent is it life affirming"?

Life-denying interpretations reflect our all-too-human weaknesses. They tend, like weakness, to be passive, and traditionally it would seem to have been thought that "truth" was a matter of passively allowing our ideas to conform to the nature of the world. Today, the scientific "ascertaining of facts" retains this general passivity. However, Nietzsche says, philosophers should realize that we have moved beyond this pre-Kantian view: the role of philosophy is now seen to be active interpretation and creation of meaning:

> The ascertaining of "truth" and "untruth", the ascertaining of facts in general, is fundamentally different from creative positing, from forming, shaping, overcoming, willing, such as is the essence of philosophy. To introduce a meaning - this task remains to be done, assuming there is no meaning yet....
>
> On a yet higher level, it is to posit a goal and mold facts according to it; that is active interpretation and not merely conceptual translation. (WM 605.)

Since the context within which modern philosophy operates, according to Nietzsche, is that of the valuelessness and meaninglessness of life and the world, and since there is no "true" interpretation, philosophy becomes a matter of "forming, shaping, overcoming, and willing." On the highest level it is to posit a goal (the overman and the overcoming of nihilism) and "mold facts according to it". This is precisely what the "will to power" as a "scientific" and "metaphysical" doctrine attempts to do: to "mold facts", to interpret, according to a goal.

The idea of will to power, therefore, is a broken myth introduced

within the context of nihilism, an interpretation designed to foster both the means to the self-overcoming of man and symbolize the goal of man overcome in the overman. It also functions as a designation for the interpretive process, the process of shaping and forming, itself. Arthur Danto, in his book Nietzsche as Philosopher, puts the matter in the following way:

> Will-to-power is related to Nihilism, in the mature phase of Nietzsche's philosophy, in much the same way as the Apollonian was related to the Dionysiac in its early phase. Here, as in his conception of art, both forces or concepts are required. Nihilism is needed in order to clear the way for creativity, to make it plain that the world is without significance or form. And Will-to-Power imposes upon that unshaped substance the form or meaning which we cannot live without. There is no specific form or meaning without which we cannot live, however. How we shall live, and what we shall mean, is up to us to say.[24]

Although we would suggest caution in using the word "substance" to designate something to which our interpretations give form, Danto, in his own way, identifies the function of "the will to power". When Danto says that nihilism is needed to "make plain that the world is without significance or form" this refers, in our language, to Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism, the belief that there is no truth. The notion of will to power arises within this context; it designates the shaping and giving form character of all interpretations of the world. As a cosmological doctrine, it is a broken myth created in the face of a nihilism in which one thing above all else is needed if we are to become such beings who can totally affirm this world and restore a meaning to this life - power: superhuman creativity and spritual overfulness.

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24. New York: Macmillan, 1965, p.228.

We have seen in this section, then, that Nietzsche's philosophy of power and will to power must be comprehended within the context of nihilism. The entire crisis of the modern world can be attributed, in one form or another, to weakness and impotency in the sense of our inability to affirm all of existence. The metaphysical denial of this world which characterized historical nihilism was primarily due to that weakness in the face of reality which generates resentment and the desire for revenge. On top of this basic flaw in our human nature came the modern world's metaphysical scepticism concerning all "truths" and all traditional values: modern nihilism says these are all merely interpretive illusions. To overcome both of these, our resentment and our scepticism, great spiritual power is necessary: we must literally transform ourselves beyond human nature as it has hitherto been known. The doctrine of "will to power" fits into this context in the same way. It is an interpretive myth which functions both as a means to the overcoming of nihilism and as a symbol of the relation to the world of that being beyond nihilism. Like the eternal recurrence, it will be a doctrine "believed in" or "held by" the overman, just as both doctrines are taught by Nietzsche's character Zarathustra.

With the three basic conceptions of Nietzsche's mature philosophy (overman, will to power, and eternal recurrence) thus considered, we are now in a position to complete our discussion of the various senses in which Nietzsche uses the word "truth". It will be recalled that we had postponed this task until a context had been created which could allow appropriate understanding. In Chapter Three, section iii, we identified "art as truthful illusion" and "Dionysian truth" as uses of the word specifically connected with Nietzsche's mature philosophy and the attempt to overcome nihilism.

Both of these senses are related to one another and will be discussed together. Both are also related to the doctrine of will to power: itself, we have seen, directed to the overcoming of nihilism. In an 1888 note, Nietzsche writes: "The "will to truth":....is not a moral force, but a form of the will to power." (WM 583c.) And that same year (or slightly before) he wrote into his notebook the single statement: "The criterion of truth resides in the enhancement of the feeling of power". (WM 534.) To understand fully this use of the word "truth", where "truth" and the "criterion of truth" are equated with "power", is to understand what we are calling his "Dionysian" usage of the word. It is to this topic that we now turn. Within the context of our discussions so far in this chapter, the investigation will hopefully illuminate one of the more esoteric, yet fundamental, aspects of Nietzsche's philosophizing.

iv. Artistic and Dionysian Truth

The will to power is both that which is necessary for the transfiguring of ourselves into beings capable of affirming all of life and a mythic name for the shaping and forming process through which all beings encounter the world. It is, with overman and eternal recurrence, part of a vision of a transformed mode of being-in-the-world, a mode of being beyond nihilism. Yet this vision is not a pure one, for we have seen that Nietzsche's thinking was still caught in nihilism and hence still struggling with the dialectical opposition of "truth versus life". There is a need for a great affirmation of life beyond resentment and the death of God, yet such an affirmation is vitiated by Nietzsche's lingering metaphysical assumptions. The thing in itself still haunts him, continually disintegrating the

phenomenal world and the ordinary certainties as "lies", "illusions", and "errors". Error, his says, is among the conditions of life. (e.g. WM 535.)

Yet as a visionary Nietzsche ever and again reaches toward the future, toward a redeemed mode of being-in-the-world. The will to power, like overman and eternal recurrence, becomes a symbol of this vision. It expresses the end of the reign of metaphysical truth through the realization that life is necessarily perspectival and that there is no longer any question of the correspondence of our ideas with the world. Like art, he says, life "depends on the necessity of error". (GT P 5.) Since there is no longer any question of the "truth" of our ideas, a new criterion is needed. Nietzsche formulates this criterion in part by asking "To what extent is it life affirming?" The criterion by which ideas are judged in the later philosophy involves the extent to which they either affirm life or resent, negate, and deny life. But we have seen that total affirmation requires a great spiritual capacity or power which we, in our human all-too-human condition, mostly lack. Hence, the criterion by which ideas (or people) are judged is spiritual power: their power to affirm life or their power to transform us into such beings who are able to affirm life.

This is what we are calling "truth" in its Dionysian sense. In terms of this context, it makes sense for Nietzsche to claim that "The criterion of truth resides in the enhancement of the feeling of power". (WM 534.) In terms of his understanding of the end of the traditional role of philosophers (as metaphysicians) he now calls "genuine philosophers" those who have the creative capacity to move us toward a new mode of valuing:

> Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators.... With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is creating, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is - will to

power. (J 211.)

These relatively tame metaphors concerning the "truth" that "genuine philosophers" are concerned with are multiplied to the nth degree when Nietzsche in Ecce Homo describes his vision of a transformed mode of being-in-the-world. Speaking of his book Thus Spoke Zarathustra, he says:

> My concept of the "Dionysian" here becomes a supreme deed.... Dante is, compared with Zarathustra, merely a believer and not one who first creates truth....
>
> Till then one does not know what is height, what depth; one knows even less what truth is.... Here man has been overcome at every moment; the concept of the "overman" has here become the greatest reality - whatever was so far considered great in man lies beneath him at an infinite distance. (EH Z 6.)

The concept "Dionysian" becomes realized in one who "creates truth". The overman will be one who creates truth and the criterion of truth (which is almost a definition of the overman) is to what extent is it life-affirming? What kind of creative and affirmative power is expressed in it? There is no truth in the traditional sense any longer, Nietzsche believes, so this honorific word is transferred to the creations and ideas of those manifesting great affirmative power, and falsehood, by contrast, would apply to the creations and ideas of those whose weakness and impotence manifests negation, denial, and devaluation of the world. Both the strong and the weak only create interpretations, and hence "illusions", but the illusions created by the strong can be called "true" (since they see and admit and affirm this very interpretive character of "reality"), while those created by the weak are merely falsehood and deception (including self-deception, since they tend to deny and negate this interpretive character).

Nietzsche's uses of the word "truth" in connection with art, in the

later writings, is often closely related to this Dionysian sense of the word. But even in his early writings he sometimes connects art and truth:

> How is it that art is only possible as a lie?... Art treats illusion as illusion: therefore it does not wish to deceive; it is true. (DB p.96.)

> Truth cannot be recognized. Everything which is knowable is illusion. The significance of art as truthful illusion. (DB p.97.)

In such reflections as these we have the seeds of a revalued use of the word "truth". Art gives us something "true" in its good and honest will to illusion, unlike non-artistic knowledge claims which do not realize that "truth cannot be recognized".

However, the preponderance of Nietzsche's reflections concerning art, through the time of the Gay Science in 1882, see art and its production of the beautiful as ways of aesthetically justifying our existence where the traditional moral justifications (including truth) have been removed:

> If we had not approved of the Arts and invented this sort of cult of the untrue, the insight into the general untruth and falsity of things now given us by science - an insight into delusion and error as conditions of intelligent and sentient existence - would be quite unendurable. Honesty would have disgust and suicide in its train. Now, however, our honesty has a counterpoise which helps us to escape such consequences; - namely Art, as the good-will to illusion.... As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still endurable to us.[25]

With Nietzsche's full awakening to the phenomenon of nihilism and his nearly concomitant vision of a state of being beyond nihilism (which occurred in the years during and immediately following the Gay Science),

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25. FW 107, TC, tr.: Joyful Wisdom (New York: Unger, 1964), pp.145-46. In this case Common's translation seems to capture best the spirit of this passage.

there was a great shift in emphasis from the need to justify the world aesthetically to the need to justify the world, in a certain sense, ethically. With the understanding of nihilism and the full implications of the death of God came the insight that its overcoming would require new, this worldly values which would restore the meaning and value to human existence formerly supplied by metaphysical values.

In this sense Nietzsche's reflections on art moved more and more toward a focus, not on the world as an aesthetic object, but on the transforming and transfiguring potentiality within art and the artist. The transfiguration connected with the act of creativity came to symbolize, for him, the revolutionary potentiality within human life for coming upon a transformed mode of being-in-the-world. He is now often speaking from the point of view of the artist as a perfector of existence:

> In this condition one enriches everything out of one's own abundance: what one sees, what one desires, one sees swollen, pressing, strong, overladen with energy. The man in this condition transforms things until they mirror his power - until they are reflections of his perfection. This compulsion to transform into the perfect is - art. (G IX 9.)

Just as the idea of will to power is part of a symbolism of a transforming potentiality (as well as a transformed mode of existence), so art and "beauty" now come to symbolize the perfecting power of the artist:

> "Beauty" is for the artist something outside all orders of rank, because in beauty opposites are tamed; the highest sign of power, namely power over opposites; moreover, without tension: - that violence is no longer needed: that everything follows, obeys, so easily and so pleasantly - that is what delights the artist's will to power. (WM 803.)

Nietzsche has gone beyond his early delight in the capacity of art to give

us beautiful illusions which justify existence as an aesthetic phenomenon. Now, he says, "we should do wrong if we stopped with its power to lie: it does more than merely imagine; it even transposes values". (WM 821.) Like the other symbols revolving around Nietzsche's vision of the overcoming of nihilism, art is both a symbol of that which has the power to "transpose values" and a symbol of the state of being in which values are already transposed, where existence is felt to be "perfect":

> What is essential in art remains its perfection of existence, its production of perfection and plenitude; art is essentially affirmation, blessing, deification of existence. (WM 821.)

What we have been calling Nietzsche's "Dionysian" use of the word "truth" involves both these uses, where "power" is equated with truth and where "art" or creative fullness is equated with truth. Power as the criterion of truth and artistic truth are both included within the constellation of meanings revolving around Nietzsche's vision of a transforming and transformed mode of being-in-the-world. The truth within creative power is the truth of the highest capacities within man. It is the truth that we are not condemned to a flawed and all-too-human existence but have within us the revolutionary potential to create new values, to transform our mode of being-in-the-world. Dionysian truth replaces a discredited and devalued metaphysical truth. Dionysian truth is the truth of a transfigured human relation to existence.

Let us introduce the word "eschatological" as part of our explication of the notion of Dionysian truth in connection with Nietzsche's visionary symbolism. "Eschatology" here is not simply that "branch of theology dealing with last things", as the dictionary defines it, rather we are using it to indicate those who envision a radical transformation at the end of

human history. If the advent of an overman and a transformed mode of being can be said to mark the end of human all-too-human history, then Nietzsche can be said to share with such religions as Judaism and Christianity an insight into the necessity for such a transformation. The differences, of course, are enormous and include the fact that Nietzsche felt that we must transform ourselves while the religions most often looked for divine interference.[26] Yet Nietzsche can be said to have recognized both the eschatological need and the eschatological potentiality within human existence. He is here close to such figures as Blake and Rilke who also recognized such a need and, like Nietzsche, linked the eschatological potentiality to our creative and artistic capacities.

Blake, for example, sees the possibility of the "redemption" of humanity in the work of the creative imagination, functioning in any artistic mode, and providing us with what is called here an "apocalyptic potentiality":

> ...Blake says far more than that the imagination is one of our valid powers, with its own laws and its own species of knowledge. Imagination is, rather, our whole power, the total functioning interplay of our capacities. The work of the artist is to actualize this innate cooperation as an environment for all men.... That art should be that agency of this rapproachment is not surprising, for it is quite orthodoxly conceived of as a mode of knowing that participates simultaneously in soul and body, a mental work of the senses and feelings. However, Blake finds in the very nature of art, with its distinctly sensuous and affective mode of consciousness, an apocalyptic potentiality.[27]

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26. An exception to this, for example, might be the Christianity of Nicolas Berdyaev where it is precisely the human capacity for creative "subjectivity" which characterizes the eschatological potentiality within history. See Berdyaev's The Beginning and The End (New York: Harper Brothers, 1952), Chapters VI and VII.

27. Frosch, The Awakening of Albion, Op.Cit., p.155.

In this passage describing Blake we see not only the idea of an eschatological or "apocalyptic" potentiality within our humanity but the association of this with art and creativity and a third theme (in common with Nietzsche) which is the affirmation of the body, the need to reconcile the sensual and spiritual if there is ever to be a redeemed mode of human existence. On the other hand, in Rilke (who was strongly influenced by Nietzsche),[28] although we find the same emphasis on the need for eschatological transformation, the emphasis is closer to Nietzsche's idea that we must restore the integrity of the phenomena. And for Rilke, as with Nietzsche, it can only be done through a simultaneous transformation of ourselves. In the ninth Duino Elegy, Rilke says of the phenomena:

> And these things,
> that live only in passing, understand that you praise them;
> fugitive, they look to us, the most fugitive, for rescue.
> They want us entirely to transform them in our invisible
> hearts
> into - oh, infinitely - into us! Whoever we finally are.
>
> Earth, is not this what you want: invisibly
> to arise in us? Is it not your dream
> to become one day invisible? - Earth! invisible!
> What do you charge us with if not transformation?[29]

Nietzsche's insight into the transfiguring potentiality of art is also recognized by Heidegger in his first volume on Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art. Because Heidegger wishes to place Nietzsche within the

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28. For a lengthy discussion of this influence see Eric Heller, The Disinherited Mind (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1959), pp.121-177.

29. The Duino Elegies, S. Garmey and J. Wilson, trs., (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1972), p.67.

history of Western metaphysics at its end (and therefore, perhaps, recognize himself as the first to step out of metaphysics), he does not tend to recognize the eschatological or historical-apocalyptic character of Nietzsche's vision of transformation. Yet he does recognize, in the following gloss on the later Nietzsche's view of art, the transfiguring potentiality of art itself:

> Life is in itself perspectival. It waxes and flourishes with the height and heightening of the world which is brought forward perspectivally to appearance, with the enhancement of the shining, that is, of what brings a thing to scintillate in such a way that life is transfigured. "Art and nothing but art" (WM 853, section II). Art induces reality, which is in itself a shining, to shine most profoundly and supremely in scintillating transfiguration. If "metaphysical" means nothing else than the essence of reality, and if reality consists in shining, we then understand the statement with which the section of art in the Will to Power closes (WM 853): "..."art as the proper task of life, art as its metaphysical activity...."" Art as transfiguration, is more enchancing to life then truth....[30]

If "truth" (not in its Dionysian sense but in its "pragmatic" sense) is the human tendency to carve out of the phenomenal flux certain stable configurations which form the everyday "realities" that we work with, then Heidegger recognizes that, for Nietzsche, art, which has the power of transfiguration, is more enhancing to life. This passage in the late notebooks from which Heidegger twice quotes in this gloss is revealing in calling art "the real task of life", its "metaphysical activity". For with the demise of the traditional metaphysical notion of "reality" and its corresponding sense of "truth", the task of life can no longer be discovering this metaphysical truth. Its task, living in a relation to the world which is characterized by a "sacred Yes" to all existence, involves a

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30. Pp. 216-17.

restoring of the integrity of the phenomena in such a way that their uninterpretable and unsayable character is respected. It is art alone that would seem to have the power to do this.

Art does not harden and solidify the phenomena into new metaphysical determinations. Rather, it deals in "broken myths": myths, images, symbols, and metaphors which can affirm and enhance the presencing of the phenomena in ever new and renewed configurations. As Heidegger says, it "induces reality...to shine...in scintillating transfiguration." Art does not define and determine the phenomena once and for all in something called "truth". Rather, it enhances, through the intensified presencing of the phenomena in the art work, as well as in the creative act, what already characterizes the phenomena: their character as "presence", what Heidegger calls "the shining". In calling art "the real task of life" Nietzsche intimates the possibility of a new relation to the phenomena, a relation in which we have learned to leave them be, on the one hand, in their pristine and unsayable integrity and to transform them, on the other hand, through continually renewed mythic and artistic renderings. The result is a heightened presencing, alive with the dance of life and replete with meaning.

It is in this sense that Nietzsche uses the word "truth" with a revalued designation meaning "Dionysian truth", truth as it arises in a relation to the world sustained by genuine creativity, for it is creativity which respects the malleable and unknowable character of the phenomena while generating meanings through a transformative intensification of that very scintillating-presencing character. It is this which can lead to our "redemption" from nihilism, from resentment, and from the death of metaphysical truth. Again, the passage from which Heidegger quotes above

is revealing in that Nietzsche calls this process "redemption".

Yet the "redemption" here described is still articulated in terms of a struggle between life and truth. Nietzsche has a vision of the eschatological possibilities within our humanity and specifically within our artistic powers. Yet these possibilities always struggle with the abyss over which the modern world hangs, what he calls here "the terrible and questionable character of existence", the ugly truth that there is no truth:

> Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant to life.
>
> Art as the only superior counterforce to all will to denial of life, as that which is anti-Christian, anti-Buddhist, antinihilist par excellence.
>
> Art as the redemption of the man of knowledge - of those who see the terrifying and questionable character of existence, who want to see it, the men of tragic knowledge.
>
> Art as the redemption of the man of action - of those who not only see the terrifying and questionable character of existence but live it, want to live it, the tragic-warlike man, the hero.
>
> Art as the redemption of the sufferer - as the way to states in which suffering is willed, transfigured, deified, where suffering is a form of great delight. (WM 853, II.)

The eschatological possibilities within an artistic relation to life can and should overcome nihilism, and they can and should "transfigure" and "deify" even suffering, for nihilism is only overcome when every aspect of life is affirmed and transformed. Yet as with the other symbolic dimensions of Nietzsche's vision of the overcoming of nihilism (overman, will to power, and eternal recurrence), he tends to amalgamate and interfuse the means and the symbolic end. The "men of tragic knowledge", like Nietzsche himself, who see into "the terrifying and questionable character of existence", see the frightening and ugly truth that there is no truth. In the face of this, Nietzsche tends to see the means for the overcoming of nihilism in somewhat violent terms: great power is needed to "endure"

reality, art is a great "stimulant" in the face of the terror of existence, art redeems "the warrior, the hero". Rarely does he point out that the transfigured form of existence may experience "reality" quite differently. Rarely does he suggest that ""Beauty"...for the artist" can be "without tension: - that violence is no longer needed: that everything follows, obeys, so easily and so pleasantly....". (WM 803.) There are some places where this is recognized, such as the important discourse in Part Two of Zarathustra entitled "On Those Who Are Sublime". Here he recognizes that:

> He must still discard his heroic will: he shall be elevated, not merely sublime: the ether itself should elevate him, the will-less one.

But on the whole it can become an important criticism of Nietzsche's final philosophy that he did not clearly distinguish between the means and the end. As we have seen, overman, eternal recurrence, and will to power all symbolize at once the means for overcoming nihilism and the state of being in which nihilism is overcome. If Nietzsche had separated clearly, in his thinking, that mode of awareness trapped in nihilism and seeking to find a way beyond it from a radically different mode of awareness beyond nihilism, perhaps he might have realized that "the terrifying and questionable character of existence" was itself only a perception of his unredeemed vision. And with this he may have realized that all violent means might have been dropped. But this calls for a separate section of its own: a critical examination of Nietzsche's final philosophy, to which we now turn.

v. Critical Assessment of Nietzsche's Final Philosophy

Our discussion of Nietzsche's final visionary philosophy has led to the insight that a form of eschatological impulse dominates his mature philosophizing. He looked not to a new metaphysics in which to settle down but to a transfiguration of the world and ourselves in an as yet unheard of future. The philosophical tradition, like all traditional values, must be overcome in a new mode of being in which sanctity, and hence value, was found in this world of here and now:

> Overcoming of philosophers through the destruction of the world of being: intermediary period of nihilism: before there is yet present the strength to reverse values and to deify becoming and the apparent world as the only world, and to call them good. (WM 585.)

The idea of eternal recurrence does not contradict this eschatological approach because, as we have seen, the doctrine itself is a symbol of radical spiritual transformation. Indeed, the transformation the doctrine requires is precisely the ability to so affirm the world that one wants nothing different, not backward, not forward, not to all eternity. The goal is to be able to live in the world without goals, in a certain sense, in the fullness of the present. The will to power, we have seen, is not a new designation of "being", not a new metaphysics, but another symbol of transformation and the means of transformation: a doctrine aimed at generating the "spiritual power" necessary both to transform ourselves and to live in the world in a transformed state. It is the eschatological impulse which animates these doctrines and, like the doctrine of the overman, points us towards a new mode of being-in-the-world. In a single note written in 1885-86, Nietzsche sums up what animates his mature philosophy:

> To transform the belief "it is thus and thus" into the will "it shall become thus and thus". (WM 593.)

A sensitive understanding of this note sees in it the seeds of everything discussed thus far in this chapter. The drive for being, to comprehend what is, which animated Western philosophy from the time of Parmenides, is repudiated by Nietzsche in favor of an eschatological impulse which realizes that there is no hard and fast reality which must dictate to us our mode of earthly existence. Our focus must now be on self-transformation. With the realization that we are free from the bonds of a dictorial "it is thus and thus", and with a comprehension of the revolutionary potentiality inherent within our creative capacities, Nietzsche's mature philosophy comprehends itself under the rubric "it shall become thus and thus". Not content to settle down in the world of ordinary human history, a world animated by resentment, pettiness, and mediocrity, Nietzsche directs his creative energies into visionary comprehension of a transformed mode of human existence, a mode in which this world for the first time is deified and sanctified. Not an evolutionary doctrine, nor a doctrine of spiritual "progress", Nietzsche looked, rather, for metamorphosis, a transformation that, if conditions are right, can happen any time, any place. Such a spiritual alchemy was the only means by which nihilism might be overcome, and it was an alchemy which he attempted to practice in his own life, we have seen, as well as present as his gift to humanity. As with Blake, it was his insight that the artistic, visionary, and imaginative aspect of our nature held this eschatological potential, and that this must be intensified to the point where the transforming temperatures ignite the fires of alchemical change, a change transfiguring simultaneously ourselves and the world.

However, we have seen that Nietzsche realized, even very late, that he personally had not overcome nihilism. (e.g. WM 25.) He looked for the transformation right up to the end when the darkness of an organic degeneration of the brain finally began to spread over him in January 1889.[31] When the first changes in consciousness (that were to lead to this darkness and silence Nietzsche's voice forever) came upon him, he mistook them for the long awaited alchemical transformation and wrote to his friend Peter Gast: "To my maestro Pietro. Sing me a new song: the world is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice".[32] But his revolutionary vision remained a vision and awaited, as he said, "better players". (Z III 12 (20).)

His personal existence and his public existence as a philosopher had been intertwined, necessarily intertwined, since nihilism and its overcoming is both a personal spiritual phenomenon and an historical phenomenon of Western humanity. The obligation for transformation informed both. But Nietzsche wished to point to the sickness of Western humanity, and to the possibility of its being overcome, while still encouraging others to address these problems and to address them better than himself. For example, in a letter to Gast in 1879, just before his 35th birthday, Nietzsche writes:

> Once more sincerely: I believe you to be better and more gifted than I am, and consequently also under a greater obligation.... Even now I have the feeling that I am a most miserable beginner; my solitude and my illness have accustomed me somewhat to the impudence of my writings. But others must do everything better, my life as well as my thought. This needs no answer.[33]

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31. For a discussion of this see Kaufmann's Nietzsche, Op.Cit., pp.65ff.

32. Middleton, Op.Cit., p.345.

33. Ibid. p.112, f.8.

It is in this spirit, which is perhaps the true philosophical spirit, that a criticism of Nietzsche's thought must be undertaken. Philosophically speaking, one neither rejects nor accepts any philosopher's thought wholesale. Rather, the project of seeing the human situation deeply and clearly, and the project of a full realization of our potential for being-in-the-world, involves an elucidation of what seems valuable in any philosopher's work and thoughtful criticism of what seems inadequate or ill conceived. To this end let us begin our critical assessment of Nietzsche's final philosophy, marking that assessment in terms of five general and related topics, each of which, while not exclusively critical, is clearly evaluative.

1. Above it was mentioned that there are elements in Nietzsche's mature philosophy which can be associated in one way or another with "mystical awakening" in the "extrovertive", perhaps Zen-Buddhist, sense. This is an especially important connection to make because many mystics who have come upon this "awakening" have spoken, like Nietzsche, of a transformation of their lives and of a "sanctity" which is found in everyday existence. Perhaps Nietzsche was close to an insight which would have had this transforming effect.[34]

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34. For the distinction between "extrovertive" and "introvertive" mysticism see Stace, The Teachings of The Mystics (New York: New American Library, 1960), pp.15ff. Stace defines "the central characteristic in which all fully developed mystical experiences agree" as "the apprehension of an ultimate nonsensuous unity in all things, a oneness or a One to which neither the senses nor the reason can penetrate" (pp.15-16). Of the "transformative" aspect of this "awakening" Stace writes that it need not be associated with any religious dogmas at all: "...He may allow his mystical experience to remain naked without any clothing of creeds or dogmas; but he is likely at the same time to feel that in that experience he has found something sacred. And this feeling of the sacred may be quite properly be called "religious" feeling though it does not clothe itself in any dogmas. And this alone may be enough to uplift his ideals and to revolutionize his life and to give it meaning and purpose." (p.26).

We have seen him claim that there is an aspect to the phenomena that is in some fundamental way unsayable and unknowable, a claim which can be linked with parallel ideas in some mystical traditions. For example, the famous first line of the Tao Te Ching, attributed to Lao Tzu, reads "The Tao that can be spoken of is not the Tao itself".[35] Perhaps the unsayable "ultimate" or Nirvana, which in the Buddhist tradition (as in Taoism) is neither being nor nonbeing, and which is identical with samsara or the ever changing world of phenomena and things,[36] is also touched on by Nietzsche when he points to the unknowable and unsayable aspect of the phenomena as in Will to Power 569: "The antithesis of this phenomenal world is not "the true world", but the formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations - another kind of phenomenal world, a kind "unknowable" for us." However, although Nietzsche may have at times come close to the Buddhist or Taoist insight, he cannot be said to have come upon it. Even though he repudiates the idea of "being", and even though he recognizes an unsayable aspect to the phenomena, he still intimates a certain character for this unformulable world in descriptive predicates taken from ontological language. He thinks of it as "formless", as "chaos", as a "surface" or "appearance", and, in WM 604, as being "in flux": "There are no facts, everything is in flux, incomprehensible,

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35. Chang Chung-yuan, Tao: A New Way of Thinking (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), p.3.

36. See Christmas Humphreys, ed., The Wisdom of Buddhism (London: Michael Joseph, 1960), p.127. For the Tao beyond being or nonbeing see Kuang-ming Wu, Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play (New York: Crossroad, 1982), pp.62-63. For an exposition of the idea of simultaneous fullness-emptiness which includes the Buddhist idea of the non-ultimacy of "being" or the "in-itself" see Ueda Shizuteru, "Emptiness and Fullness - Sunyata in Mahayana Buddhism" in The Eastern Buddhist, Vol. XV No.1, Spring 1982, pp.9-37.

elusive...."

If Nietzsche had come upon the Buddhist awakening, it seems he would have dropped these descriptive predicates as well, for no articulations from "the world of duality" can give us the nature of "The One".[37] The unsayable qua unsayable can have no predicates. Hence, for example, Nārgārjuna says that in "Nirvana" what can be said about the "ultimate" is that it (1) neither exists, (2) nor does not exist, (3) nor exists and does not exist, (4) nor does not exist and does not not exist.[38] A Via Negativa or process of negation of all possibilities and, indeed, impossibilities is perhaps the only possible response in the face of this non-intellectual and non-sensuous insight. Nietzsche focused on impermanence and flux, not only because he retained the ontological language that was no longer appropriate, but because he seemed to have associated the "unknowability" of this phenomenal "world", after the manner of Heraclitus, with perpetual impermanence. But what is unsayable in Buddhism can neither be permanent nor impermanent. As the speaker in the Lotus Sutra asserts:

> ...I am neither for permanence nor for impermanence.... Multiplicities of external existences are not accepted; there is no rising of the elements nor their disappearance, nor their continuation, nor their differentiation;...because of discrimination there evolve the dualistic indications of perceived and perceiving; when it is realized that because of discrimination there is a duality, the discussion concerning the existence and non-existence of the external world ceases....[39]

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37. The term used, for example, by Plotinus, who like the Buddhists, denies that "it" has being: see Elmer O'Brien, ed., The Essential Plotinus (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1964), p.76.

38. See Nāgārjuna's Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikās in Frederick J. Streng, Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p.210. Cf. the Prajna Paramita Sutra in Stace, Op.Cit., p.84.

39. In Humphreys, Op.Cit., p.127.

If Nietzsche had come upon this sort of insight, he certainly would have overcome nihilism in his own existence, for this awareness, as the Buddhists claim, involves a feeling of "salvation" and "bliss" or, as it is put in the Mandukya Upanisad of the Hindu sacred scriptures: it is "beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression.... It is ineffable peace. It is the Supreme Good. It is One without a second."[40] But as we have seen, for Nietzsche existence retained a "terrifying and questionable" character. Existence for him continued to hang over an abyss, not an abyss of "ineffable peace" or "the supreme Good", but one in which existence continued to seem meaningless and valueless.

2. There is another theme in Nietzsche's philosophy which finds occasional expression in the literature of mysticism, the theme of creative play and the symbol of an innocent, game-playing child. Intertwined with this theme of the artist-child in Nietzsche's writings is the theme of the will to power both as animating the creative activities of the artist-child and as a mythic symbol, beyond good and evil, of the world itself. The world as play, or as the play of a "Child-God", is looked at as a "monster of energy" with "the simplest forms striving toward the most complex...and then returning again home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord." (WM 1067.) In Ecce Homo Nietzsche suggests that Heraclitus may have been the only one to have previously taught these doctrines. (EH GT 3.) And if we look to Nietzsche's early writings on Heraclitus, we find the seeds of his will to power in its role as symbol for the cosmic play of the world. In the Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche speaks of the:

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40. In Stace, Op.Cit., p.20. See Humphreys, Op.Cit., pp.168-69.

> ...Dionysiac phenomenon, of that spirit which playfully shatters and rebuilds the teeming world of individuals - much as, in Heracleitus, the plastic power of the universe is compared to a child tossing pebbles or building in a sand pile and then destroying what he has build. (GT XXIV.)

And in Philosophy In The Tragic Age of The Greeks he says of Heraclitus:

> ...He altogether denied being. For this one world which he retained - supported by eternal unwritten laws, flowing upward and downward in a brazen rhythmic beat - nowhere shows a tarrying, an indestructibility, a bulwark in the stream.
>
> For what he invented here is a rarity even in the sphere of mystic incredibilities and unexpected cosmic metaphors. "The world is the game Zeus plays....
>
> What he saw, the teaching of law in becoming and of play in necessity, must be seen from now on in all eternity.[41]

Like Nietzsche, whose mature philosophy "denied being" and developed a cosmic metaphor which saw the world as a "monster of energy", beating rhythmically up and down, Heraclitus saw the world as the divine game of the child-god Zeus, overfull of strength, with cosmically creative and destructive energies. In at least two of his late notes Nietzsche continues to point to his connection with Heraclitus, in the first using a Greek phrase which is a direct reference to the Pre-Socratic thinker:

> "Play", the useless - as the ideal of him who is overfull of strength, as "childlike". The "childlikeness of God, pais paizon. (WM 797.)
>
> That the world is a divine game and beyond good and evil: in this the Vedanta and Heraclitus are my predecessors.[42]

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41. Cowan, tr., pp.51, 58, & 68 respectively.

42. Quoted in Johasses Klein, Die Dichtung Nietzsches (Munich: 1936), p.225, RP, tr.

Nietzsche here recognizes not only Heraclitus, but the Vedanta, as his predecessors. Why the Vedanta? Why the great mystical religion of India? Because one of the cosmic metaphors through which its sacred scriptures characterize the genesis of the world is lila, play. S. Radhakrishnan, speaking of "God" or "Brahman" as "The Supreme", writes that:

> The Supreme is described as kavi, a poet, an artist, a maker or creator, not a mere imitator. Even as art reveals man's wealth of life, so does the world reveal the immensity of God's life. The Brahma Sutra refers to the creation of the world as an act of lila, play, the joy of the poet, eternally young.[43]

Like Nietzsche, Radhakrishnan sees humanity as a bridge and not a goal. The goal is a higher spirituality, a higher state of being:

> The long record of the development of the human race and the great gifts of spiritual men like the Buddha, Socrates, Jesus make out that man has to be transcended by God-man.[44]

And this "God-man", toward which the Upanisads and the Vedanta direct us, according to Radhakrishnan, is that of a creative and innocent child. As in Nietzsche's writings, this state of being is conceived as one that parallels the creative innocence of the Cosmic artist:

> The ethical individual is required to become like a child. The perfect man is a divine child, accepting the divine play, without fear or reserve, care or grief, in utter purity. A child is not entangled with things that seem important to grown-ups, whose occupations are mainly paltry and whose professions petrified. A child's wise incomprehension is linked with living and is more than defensiveness or distain. We cannot return to childhood. We have to gain the state which

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43. The Principal Upanisads (New York: Humanities Press, 1978), p.86.

44. Ibid. p.58.

is unconstricted by temporal purpose, but purposeful, a state in which time and eternity coincide.

> To the free spirit life has no terrors.... He uses the world as the mould and condition for the manifestation of his spiritual freedom.... There will be individualisation without an ego-sense. The play of the individual consciousness can take many forms, assume many aspects and poises. All through, however, he lives in the truth of the cosmic play with no delusion, released from ego, in full control of the manifested being.[45]

Nietzsche's vision of a transformed mode of being in connection with the symbol of "the divine child" would seem to be both profound and illuminating. Included within this symbol, as for Radhakrishnan, is the idea, linked to the concept of "Dionysian truth", of the transfiguring potentiality of creative artistic play. Just as the world is lila, the play of Brahman, eternally creating and destroying with equal vigor and delight, so the play of the artist, freed from slavery to a single apprehension of "reality", is able to transfigure and be transfigured, to allow the possibility of ever new and ever renewed "apprehensions". "Reality" here is alive with layers of meaning and unlimited new possibilities. The phenomena are not forced into the straightjacket of one concept of "truth", corresponding to a one dimensional "reality", but they transmute and are transmuted through a multiplicity of presencings, an ever renewed opening into the possibilities of awareness.

However, unlike Nietzsche's conception of "Dionysian truth", in which the eschatological potentiality of the artistic act was emphasized, the emphasis in the child symbol is on what Nietzsche calls its "innocence and freedom". (Z I 1.) The symbolic child is perhaps uniquely capable of this new mode of existence because of its detachment from the world, because

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45. Ibid. p.127.

of what Radhakrishnan calls its "spiritual freedom" and its "individualisation without an ego sense". Hence, in the same way that the "perfect man" or the "divine child" of the Vedanta "accepts the divine play" of Brahman "without fear or reserve, care or grief", Nietzsche's creator-child also mirrors the play of the cosmos, beyond good and evil, creating and destroying equally, without clinging to its creations in a resentful negation of the "negative" aspects of life. The symbolic child, therefore (as Nietzsche claims) would alone be capable of an "affirmation of all existence".

The metaphor of the artist-child is perhaps the ultimate critique of metaphysics if metaphysics is thought of, in a way influenced by Heidegger, as an attempt to conceptually limit reality within the possibilities of human representation.[46] "Metaphysics", in this regard, might be thought of an an attempt to "dominate" the world through forcing the world to conform to human representations, as, for example, to the concept of an all determining "in itself" or "being". Nietzsche's symbol of the artist-child would seem to stand as a fundamental critique of any such representationalism which tends to deny the revolutionary and eschatological potentialities within the creative act and within the innocent detachment of an ego-free childlike consciousness. Perhaps, Nietzsche might suggest here, it is just such a metaphysical orientation in orthodox Judaism and Christianity which leads to the necessity of Divine interference in order to bring about the Eschaton. If the world contains the eschatological potentiality within it, then no such appeal to

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46. In this connection see the paper by James R. Watson, "The Polemos of Interplay: Speaking and Saying...Today", Procedings of the Heidegger Conference, Seventeenth Annual Meeting, University of New Hampshire, May 13-15, 1983, pp.37-47.

Transcendence is required. It is the focus on art which is the crucial factor here. "It is no accident that metaphysics stakes out its claim in opposition to poetry and myth", says James R. Watson, for metaphysics is "the conceptual commanding of beings".[47] Metaphysics may, in some sense, be the attempt to impose on the world the human picture of an "in itself", a one way we feel "reality" must be, rather than opening ourselves to creative interaction with the dance of the phenomena. It is here that Nietzsche's concept of "Dionysian truth" reciprocally illuminates the metaphor of the artist-child. For a creativity that respects the malleable and unknowable character of the phenomena opens up the possibilities of mutual interaction and mutual transfiguration in a way impossible for the metaphysical view of truth which tends to insist, ultimately, on the conceptual necessity of there being a "reality" which our concepts in some way reflect.

Play, the creative play of the child, is not something "serious", in this sense, the sense of insisting on the imposition of our conceptual presuppositions on the phenomena. Or perhaps, as Nietzsche says, play has a higher seriousness, especially if it is sacred play. (EH Z 2 & II 10.) And perhaps the very possibility of a genuine transformation of our human being-in-the-world requires the transcendence, the "light feet", and the flexibility that can be associated with the poet and artist rather than with the metaphysician. When the tyrannical picture of being itself, of a reality which imposes its concrete conditions on human life and on the human mind, is called into question, then, like our relation to it, "reality" can be transmuted into lila, the divine game of God in which "non-being",

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47. Ibid. p.39

rather than being, becomes the source of the play of the phenomena. There is no longer any one way things are which dictates to the phenomena, but whatever "being" the phenomena have arises as playful manifestations of the creative non-being or "Tao" which transcends both being and nothingness. This is the way Professor Wu articulates the Taoism of Chuang Tzu in his book Chuang Tzu - World Philosopher at Play. He associates the playful character of Chuang Tzu's writing with a transformed relation to the world realized through coming upon the non-being (which is not nothing) at the heart of all things.[48] It is the Western stress on being, he says, which defines our relentless seriousness and prevents us solving the most fundamental problems of life:

> Different viewpoints produce different approaches to life-problems. The Western stress on the primacy of being leads one to tackle the problems with dead seriousness. The harder the problem is, the harder and more complex is the effort to solve it. The tougher the issue, the more determined the mind to solve it. Witness the cognitive contortions that Heidegger expresses in his formidable formulae and no-nonsense jargon. It is the typical one-track mind of a being standpoint.
>
> In contrast, the non-being standpoint produces the mind that is flexible, evocative, and often satirical. Non-being is free of serious one-track logic. It can walk two or more tracks at once, using only metaphorical goblet words and stories that carry two or more meanings at once. The words are simple, yet they are studded with several layers of pointed implications, quite often witty and even hilarious. Cognitive contortion, if any, is to be reveled in, not to be taken as a serious challenge to press harder. For, as Luther quipped, the devil is not to be attacked head on but merely laughed at. Sometimes the problem even requires no-thinking, no-solution[49] to be solved. All this is the freedom of non-being.

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48. Kuang-Ming Wu, Op.Cit. pp.62ff.

49. Ibid. p.83. Unlike Nietzsche, Wu does not focus on "nihilism"; however, see Wu's critique of the modern world and "the machine mind" (pp.45-57). See also his section "Nihilism and Licentiousness" (pp.65-67).

If we were to integrate Wu's terms into Nietzsche's view of nihilism, we might say that the traditional "being standpoint" of Western metaphysics, which was called into question by Kant and modern science, resulted in "metaphysical scepticism" and nihilism precisely because we have not yet given up this "being standpoint", in spite of the fact that we no longer believe in metaphysics. We remain in scepticism and relativism precisely because we have not yet come upon "the freedom of non-being". Hence, in the metaphor of cosmic play which tends to undermine the picture of "being itself" in favor of a creative non-being, and in the metaphor of the artist-child which tends to undermine the picture of some form of correspondence of the mind with "reality" in favor of a more transformative and ecstatic relation to existence, Nietzsche's intuitions would seem to be both insightful and provocative.

However, in the final analysis, Nietzsche's intuitions in this regard remain provocative and suggestive, rather than clear and concrete. For even his vision of a transformed mode of existence in terms of this symbol of an artist-child would seem to remain tainted by nihilism. Therefore, let us now recognize and examine in what ways Nietzsche's vision was <u>not</u> the same as either that of the Vedanta or of Chuang Tzu.

3. The gulf that looms between Nietzsche's vision and a genuinely transformed mode of being-in-the-world is the gulf created by his own continuing immersion in nihilism. His unconsciously retained metaphysical assumptions, which we identified above as epistemological subjectivism, on the one hand, and a concomitant metaphysically inspired super-ordinary doubting, on the other, prevented him from ever fully dropping the idea that something was missing, that something was "gone", with the calling into question of the notion of an "in-itself". We characterized the result as

"metaphysical scepticism", a radical perspectivalism which could only see each perspective as another "fiction" or "lie", retaining the implicit requirement that there should be something there, some reality or in-itself, a requirement which allowed him to call his perspectives "lies".

This epistemological subjectivism, which assumed a knowing subjectivity initially isolated from and over and against a "reality" which it attempts to come to know, involved, we saw, the basically Cartesian subject-object picture, certainly not as a conscious ontological assessment, but rather as an implicit metaphysical assumption. Because of these assumptions Nietzsche's vision of the artist-child does not attain to the ultimate "spiritual freedom" described by Radhakrishnan as the ideal of "the ethical individual" in Vedanta, for Nietzsche retains the assumption of an epistemological subjectivity or "ego" (despite occasional protestations to the contrary). And it is the attainment of an "individualisation without an ego-sense" which is the key to spiritual transformation in the Vedanta. Such spiritual freedom requires that one "live in the truth of the cosmic play with no delusion, released from ego", Radhakrishnan says. But Nietzsche saw such requirements on the part of religions like Buddhism, for example, as themselves a nihilistic denial of "reality" (which was, of course, the reality of his own implicit ontological assumptions). As he writes in an 1888 note: "...Aggressive and defensive egoism are not matters of choice, to say nothing of "free will", but the fatality of life itself." (WM 728.) Spiritual freedom in the Vedanta comes about precisely because the egoistic feeling of being an isolated subjectivity over and against the phenomena is dissolved. The "utter purity" of the "divine child" involves a oneness with the divinely inspired cosmic play in an absolute sense in which the creativity of Brahman and the creativity of the spiritually free

individual are not to be distinguished. Atman (the self) is Brahman (the Supreme).[50] Nietzsche's child symbol, on the other hand, in spite of its character as "innocence and forgetting", that is, in spite of its freedom from resentment, retains the implication that its freedom and creativity can only come through "willing its own will". (Z I 1.) It must be innocent in spite of the amoral cosmic play of perspectives in which every perspective is a "lie" and every creation of the child another "illusion". The metaphysical assumption of a subjectivity opposed to the world, with its inherent egoistic perspectivism, vitiates Nietzsche's vision of a transformed state of being.

Similarly, these retained assumptions prevent Nietzsche's vision from approximating the transformed state of being implicit in Chuang Tzu's writings. If the freedom found in Chuang Tzu is the "freedom of non-being" described by Professor Wu, then the spiritual transformation indicated there is connected with an awareness of "that" (the Tao) which transcends the distinction between being and nothing and is the creative and playful source of both.[51] But although Nietzsche repeatedly denied "being", and repudiated "nothingness" as nihilism, there is nothing in his conception of cosmic play, nor in his conception of the artist-child, which would indicate an awareness of a "non-being" which transcends the distinction between being and nothing. It was again his metaphysical assumptions involved in epistemological subjectivism that barred the way to a genuine transcendence for him. For the idea of a knowing subject facing the world as an object to be known, but which it can never reach,

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50. Radhakrishnan, Op.Cit., pp.77-78.

51. Wu, Op.Cit., p.62.

must result in a scepticism in which we feel that all our perceptions and conceptions involve a "forming and shaping", an imposition of a conceptual "being" on an unknowable and unformulable "reality". Nietzsche writes:

> We have need of lies in order to conquer this reality, this "truth", that is, in order to live - That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence. (WM 853 (1).)
>
> To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power. (WM 617.)[52]

The transcendence of metaphysics for Chuang Tzu (insofar as he came upon the state of "play" described by Professor Wu) did not result in the feeling that something was lacking, the feeling that we were hanging over an abyss of the "terrible and questionable character of existence". For Chuang Tzu, the dissolution of the exclusive logical alternatives of "being or nothing" involved, rather, an awareness of the Tao, the "non-being" which transcends all logic and linear modes of thinking and allows one to respond to the world with a mind that is, in Professor Wu's words, "flexible, evocative", and "metaphorical". The world does not seem like an illusion built over an abyss which must be overcome through creative power. Rather, everything is in its place, everything is "harmonious":

> One is everywhere at home, "fit" and "harmonious", comfortable in the inevitable flow of things. Happiness consists in no rift between what is wanted and desired on the one hand, and what-cannot-be-helped and what-one-cannot-help-but-do-and-be, on the other.[53]

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52. This statement is made specifically in connection with the doctrine of eternal recurrence, but it should be clear from our discussion of will to power that the principle holds, for Nietzsche, for all our forming and shaping of the phenomena into a world in which we can live.

53. Ibid. p.62.

Even though Nietzsche seemed occasionally to suggest that the transfigured state would no longer struggle with the abyss that there was no truth, many of his visionary formulations, we have seen, retain this metaphysical legacy. To say that there is no truth or to deny that there is a thing-in-itself is just as much a metaphysical statement as to assert it. To step out of metaphysics one would have to understand in what way such statements are, in a certain sense, meaningless. Nietzsche said that existence is transfigured when one transfigures oneself (WM 820), but his understanding of the problem of truth retained enough of a metaphysical hangover that he perhaps did not really believe in the eschatological potentialities that he himself had underlined. For if this had been so, then the terrifying, abysmal character of existence might have completely disappeared, at least in terms of his visionary formulations of a state of being beyond nihilism.

He understood, we have seen, that "the alchemist is the great benefactor of mankind". It is not those who have settled down in the interminable nightmare which makes up human history on the quotidian level that are the great benefactors, it is those who see the eschatological potentialities within the everyday. The alchemist does not look to miraculous intervention, but looks for the secret of transforming the base metal of the quotidian into the gold of a transfigured mode of being-in-the-world. There is a brief story in the alchemical literature that might have served Nietzsche well if he had come across it. It is a moral behind the alchemical quest itself:

> A robber, having encountered one of the eighty-four Siddhas (Tantric masters who possess super-powers or siddhis), asked him by what means he might obtain a certain magic sword which would make him invincible and enable him to become master of the whole world. The Siddha prescribed

> him a very arduous saddhana (spiritual and physical discipline) which he had to follow exactly in order to gain the magic sword. This saddhana the robber performed assiduously and fervently, so determined was he to gain the sword. After the prescribed number of years, he went to the appointed spot, a stupa, where he was told the sword would appear. He performed the ritual circumambulations, recited the mantras, and just as promised the sword appeared. As he grasped its handle he was enlightened, and at that very instant he had no more need of the magic sword.[54]

Insofar as Nietzsche's doctrine of "power" meant power to overcome something, perhaps it was a hindrance to transformation, rather than an asset.

4. Some of the most fundamental things that might be dropped, in terms of our criticisms of Nietzsche's conception of truth put forward at the close of Chapter Three, are tacit metaphysical assumptions. Dropping such assumptions would perhaps significantly affect a large portion of Nietzsche's mature philosophy, most clearly the doctrines of will to power and eternal recurrence. Both of these doctrines are directed toward overcoming a nihilism which involved not only the chronic flaw of resentment in the face of concrete existence but a metaphysical scepticism and relativism that saw the everyday world as hanging over an abyss. Will to spiritual power, we saw, was needed to be able to affirm concrete existence on both these counts. In our analyses of "power" (in section iii of this chapter) we saw that power was needed in several ways, each of which was related to this understanding of the human situation. Power was needed to affirm the world, including suffering, fate, and death; it was needed to be able to live in terms of "lies" and "fictions" hanging over the abyss of truthlessness; it was needed to spiritually transform

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54. Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, Alchemy - The Secret Art (New York: Avon Books, 1973), p.21.

ourselves, and, in the transformed state, it was needed to restore meaning and value to human existence in the face of a lack of metaphysical grounding for values. Given the legitimacy of the need for a transformation in terms of the nightmare of human history, the spiritual poison of resentment, and scepticism concerning values in the modern world, the doctrine that spiritual power is needed for (and will be the result of) such a transformation does not necessarily hold up. For the requirement of power is linked, in each case, to Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism which is the result, we saw, of his inability to free himself from all metaphysical assumptions. Hence, he speaks of needing "the strength to reverse values and to deify becoming and the apparent world". (WM 585.) But if the phenomena were genuinely sanctified or deified, this by itself would restore meaning and value to human existence. The sacred, almost by definition, can be equated with the ultimately valuable in human life. If the transformed state of being were to experience the world in this way, then why, we might ask, would "power" be needed to create value in the face of the metaphysical groundlessness of value? Value (non-metaphysically grounded value) would permeate our lives.[55]

From this discovery of sanctity in the phenomena everything would follow. Power would not be needed to affirm suffering, fate, and death, because these are integral parts of the everyday world and, if that world is sanctified, then these too are sanctified. This is exactly what Nietzsche said was needed. Again, with the giving up of these tacit metaphysical

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55. As D.T. Suzuki puts it, for example, "The Buddhist enlightenment...in itself has all the possible values (guna) we humans can conceive". Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist (New York: 1957), p.7: quoted in Reiner Schurmann, Meister Eckhart - Mystic and Philosopher (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p.221.

assumptions which underlie his scepticism, the feeling that "we have need of lies in order to conquer this reality" which is part of "the terrifying and questionable character of existence" might itself disappear. Spiritual power, Nietzsche said, was necessary to live in the face of this terrifying scepticism. But if the scepticism is seen to be itself a "grammatical illusion" generated by a misunderstanding of the human situation, then precisely what Nietzsche said was needed might again take place: a restoration of the integrity of the everyday phenomena, a new affirmation of the everyday and the present moment (which might very well include a restoration of the meaningfulness of the ordinary uses of the word "truth").

Finally, Nietzsche said that power was needed in order to spiritually transform ourselves. We saw that part of what he meant by this was the need to recognize the transformative possibilities within the creative dimension of our nature, and the need to focus on these in such a way that we realized the capacity for such transformation. But another aspect of what he meant by this again included the need for great power to overcome the nihilistic human all-too-human weaknesses of our nature. Only the very few, the strongest, would have the capacity to do this, according to Nietzsche, precisely because doing this required the capacity to face the terrible truth that there is no truth and to transform ourselves into beings who can affirm all of existence in spite of this. As he says in Ecce Homo, it is the weak, those who lack the courage to face reality, who "need the lie", and "strength" is required to face reality honestly. (EH GT 2.) "How much truth does a spirit endure", he asks, "how much truth does it dare?...Error...is not blindness, error is cowardice". (EH P 3.) But perhaps the "truth" that required such great strength and courage to endure, did not involve a seeing clearly of the human situation, but was

itself an illusion generated by tacit metaphysical assumptions. In our examination of Wittgenstein's philosophy, we hope to snow that this is the case. If so, then Nietzsche's philosophy of power, and will to power, would have to be modified across the board, retaining only those aspects of the idea of spiritual power that focus on the transformative potentialities within human creativity. And perhaps even these capacities might be enhanced and animated not through striving and will to power, but through, as Lao Tzu suggests, dropping something, "daily loss", getting rid of excess baggage which now inhibits the transformative possibilities of our being-in-the-world.

A similar criticism would apply to Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. As we saw in section ii of this chapter, this doctrine was meant as an explicit formulation of "the most extreme form of nihilism". (WM 55.) Like the Ouroboros, the alchemical symbol of a serpent biting its own tail, this was simultaneously a symbol of the great cycle of the universe and of the possibility of radical transformation of our nature. By proposing a cosmic myth of eternal meaninglessness, Nietzsche hoped to force mankind to the most basic existential choice: either transform ourselves or despair of existence, either see the eternal recurrence as "the highest formula of affirmation" or see it as a formula of ultimate despair. Yet the nihilism which this doctrine attempted to formulate (eternal cycles of meaningless becoming, without transcendence, progress, or hope) might have been overcome through looking at the human situation in an entirely non-metaphysical way rather than through the "intensification of opposites" in the hope that a sort of dialectical explosion would take place transforming the thought of the doctrine from a "curse" into a "blessing". (FW 341.) The idea of meaningless becoming is immediately

dissolved if one comes upon a "sacred" aspect or dimension within the phenomena themselves. For then all the events of life: birth, suffering, and death, as well as every present moment, has absolute value in and for itself. Again, just what Nietzsche said was necessary. (e.g. WM 1041.)

5. Perhaps the dropping of the metaphysical assumptions behind epistemological subjectivism, which are at the root of the unbridled scepticism which vitiates the integrity of the everyday world, would not only restore the ordinary certainties and everyday uses of the word "truth" but would allow the possibility of coming upon a transformed mode of being-in-the-world which also found sanctity in the everyday. This is a matter which will require further discussion in Parts Two and Three of this study. But the first step on the way must certainly be removing "the terrifying and questionable character of existence" by examining the metaphysical scepticism which is the source of this feeling. For this scepticism, we have seen, has a tendency to devalue the ordinary certainties and everyday truths through its super-ordinary doubting and metaphysical claim that "there is no truth" (just as traditional metaphysics devalued the everyday through positing an absolute "truth" behind the phenomena).

Once this is accomplished, and the everyday loses its character as "lie" and "illusion", then perhaps a second step might be to examine the claims for a unique awareness that come, for example, from some of the great teachers within Taoism, Vedanta, and Buddhism. For some of these claims would seem to restore the sanctity of the everyday, or at least of an aspect of the everyday. We have seen Mahayana Buddhism, for example, claim that "Nirvana is Samsara", the highest blessedness and salvation is identical with the world of becoming, birth, and death. If this

is the case, then nihilism might be overcome through: (1) dropping metaphysical assumptions which devaluate the everyday world, and by (2) coming upon a new awareness or new way of seeing the everyday which finds sanctity and hence value precisely in its presence.

If the word "nihilism" can be used to characterize the multifaceted suicidal problems of the modern world, then it would seem that neither of these steps has yet been accomplished. Perhaps tacit metaphysical assumptions are still commonly held which lead to this relativism and scepticism which permeates modern secular societies. And certainly there is almost no sense of the sanctity or integrity of the phenomena, only technological manipulation, callous disregard, and unthinking busi-ness directed toward forgetting the present in favor of some ill-defined and vaguely hoped for "future". Nietzsche's cry of alarm regarding the consequences of the demise of traditional Western metaphysically grounded values would seem to be on the mark, as were his penetrating analyses of this phenomenon, of resentment, and of the human tendency to devalue the phenomena through metaphysical modes of thinking.

Among the themes connected with Nietzsche's visionary attempt to overcome nihilism which we have investigated in this chapter, there are several, as we have pointed out, which seem most promising. These include his focus on the idea of "overman" (or a transformed mode of being-in-the-world), an idea which is presented in the book Thus Spoke Zarathustra and which encompasses a number of insightful themes, among the most important of which is the paradigm of the "three metamorphoses of the spirit" and the symbol of the artist-child. In addition to this, there are the many promising reflections concerning what we called Nietzsche's "Dionysian conception of "truth"", and his insight into the eschatological

need as well as the eschatological potentialities of the artistic and creative aspects of our nature. We have looked at some of the resonances between his conception of the possibilities of such a transformation, in the form of a playful and artistic mode of human existence, and similar ideas in the literature connected with Vedanta and Taoism. We take these themes to be not only important, but profound and insightful.

Nietzsche was one of the great demythologizers, and his criticisms of traditional values, of traditional metaphysics and religion, are part of a great and long Western tradition which strives to peel off, layer after layer, the myths and illusions which benight and befuddle our hopes to see the world and the human situation clearly. William Butler Yeats well characterized this Western passion in his poem "Meru":

> Civilization is hooped together, brought
> Under a rule, under the semblance of peace
> By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,
> And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
> Ravening through century after century,
> Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
> Into the desolation of reality:
> Egypt and Greece, good-bye, and good-bye, Rome![56]

Nietzsche's criticisms of metaphysics and his insistence on the need to interpret the ultimate character of the world only with "broken myths" make an important contribution to this tradition. But history moves on, as Yeats suggests, and new thinkers come in turn who demythologize the demythologizers. In this spirit we will turn to an examination of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Is there a way of looking at the human situation

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56. Quoted in Schneidau, Op.Cit., p.28.

that drops metaphysical assumptions altogether? In examining Wittgenstein's attempt to discover such a way, we will not only be further illuminating Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism, but further investigating the nihilism of the modern world as well.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF NIHILISM - A STUDY OF METAPHYSICAL TRUTH IN NIETZSCHE AND WITTGENSTEIN

VOLUME TWO

by

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PART TWO

WITTGENSTEIN

CHAPTER FIVE

METAPHYSICS, PRESUPPOSITIONALISM, AND "MYSTICISM" IN THE TRACTATUS

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them.
>
> Wittgenstein[1]

i. Overview

In recent years it has become increasingly clear that we are witnessing a revaluation take place concerning the meaning and spirit of Wittgenstein's philosophical contribution. Philosophers are beginning to see the relationship between Wittgenstein's work in the philosophy of language and his passionate lifelong concern with what "cannot be put into words": "the ethical" (TLP 6.421) and "the mystical" (TLP 6.522). A number of publications over the past two decades have pointed this out and have led us to understand that not only Wittgenstein's method, but his intent, were very much closer to the spirit of Kant's philosophical project than to the tradition that runs through Hume, Moore, and Russell. Janik and Toulmin, for example, have devoted an entire volume to the attempt to document

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1. TLP 6.54.

this contention. They argue that the misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's project occurred because he spent most of his life working and teaching in the British environment of Cambridge even though he was working on "intellectual problems" that he had assimilated from the "neo-Kantian" Viennese environment of his youth:

> If there was an intellectual gulf between us and him, it was not because his philosophical methods, style of exposition and subject matter were (as we supposed) unique and unparalleled. It was a sign, rather, of a culture clash: the clash between a Viennese thinker whose intellectual problems and personal attitudes were formed in the neo-Kantian environment of pre-1914, in which logic and ethics were essentially bound up with each other and with the critique of language (Sprachkritik), and an audience of students whose philosophical questions had been shaped by the neo-Humean (and so pre-Kantian) empiricism of Moore, Russell and their colleagues.[2]

The publication of memoirs and personal recollections, as well as Wittgenstein's own writings in Culture and Value and his various reflections on the question of "solipsism",[3] have tended to corroborate this contention to the point where it is now possible to understand the connection between Wittgenstein's contributions to the philosophy of language and his lifelong desire to show, as he says of the Tractatus, "the limits of language" in order to delimit "the sphere of the ethical from the inside".[4] As with Kant, who undertook his great Critik der reinen Vernunft at least in part to promote clarity concerning ethical and religious matters, so Wittgenstein is performing a Sprachkritik at least in part with similar motivations. In

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2. Allan Janik & Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p.22.

3. For the textual locations of these reflections, see Appendix B.

4. Undated letter to Ficker, quoted in D.L. Phillips, Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.6.

section v of this chapter we will examine what Wittgenstein seems to mean by this expression "the ethical". But for purposes of this "overview" we would like to anticipate the discussion there and say that he uses the word "ethical" in a very wide sense to encompass several "things" which are beyond language, including what he himself calls "the mystical" (TLP 6.44). In trying to show "the limits of language" Wittgenstein is attempting to make clear to us precisely those "dimensions" which are beyond language. For it is "awareness" of these dimensions which he thought of utmost importance in human life. As Wittgenstein's close friend Paul Engelmann was to write:

> A whole generation of disciples was able to take Wittgenstein for a positivist because he has something of enormous importance in common with the positivists: he draws the line between what we can speak about and what we must be silent about. Positivism holds - and this is its essence - that what we can speak about is all that matters in life. Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about.[5]

This is not to say, of course, that his concern with logical questions and his concern to get to the bottom of language were in any way secondary problems for him. On the contrary, his tremendous drive to get clear about the logic of language is manifested in all his writings right up to the end of his life. This is well recognized and needs no defense. But part of our purpose in these next four chapters on Wittgenstein will be to show in what way this tremendous concern to set off "all that really matters in human life" from the sphere of what we can speak about continued to the very end of his career and was just as fundamental to his

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5. Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein - with A Memoir (New York: Horizon Press, 1968), p. 97.

late as to his early philosophy. In this chapter we will examine Wittgenstein's attempt in the Tractatus to set "the ethical" into relief by showing the limits of what can be said. We will see that this attempt was directly connected with the "transcendental" or "presuppositional" method that he seems to have acquired from the European neo-Kantian environment of his youth. In Chapter Six we will then study the "transitional period" of 1929-33 when Wittgenstein returned to philosophy and began laying the foundations of his later thought. We will attempt to show clearly just what aspects of the early philosophy changed in this period and what remained the same. We hope to make clear in what ways Wittgenstein's concern to set into relief "all that really matters in human life" remained fundamental to his later thought. From these first chapters on Wittgenstein we will find emerging a radically non-metaphysical way of looking at the world which will have profound implications for the basic problematic of our study. Finally, in Chapters Seven and Eight we will then be in a position to examine Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language in such a way as to shed entirely new light on "the problem of metaphysical truth", that problem which was a central concern of Nietzsche's philosophical activity and which was at the very heart of modern nihilism as he understood it.

Wittgenstein's later thought takes its stand on the insight that "Human beings are entangled all unknowing in the net of language". (PG p.462.) We do not see the world, nor ourselves, clearly because we are continually misled, and continually entrapped, by our own grammatical illusions. The following chapters will reveal several basic connections between this entanglement in the net of language, as Wittgenstein understood it, and the problem of modern nihilism as it was deeply and penetratingly probed by

Nietzsche. In the end we hope to show, in terms of the later Wittgenstein's understanding of language, that a fundamental movement towards the overcoming of nihilism can be initiated through becoming very clear about the logic and the limits of our language. In Part Three, then, we will undertake not only this philosophic encounter with nihilism but will also attempt to point beyond a philosophical understanding of the logic of language to the possibility of what can be called "a breakthrough", a breakthrough altogether beyond nihilism into a radically different mode of human existence. But first we must examine Wittgenstein's earliest thought in the Tractatus in order to lay bare those philosophical patterns of thinking which we will find fundamental to his entire philosophical career.

ii. The Limits of Language

In this chapter, then, we will focus on the presuppositionalist point of view of the Tractatus (along with its corollary notion of the limits of language) and discuss the relation of these to the metaphysical conclusions of the book. Secondly, we will discuss the meaning of the culminating sections of the book, those pronouncements concerning "the ethical" and "the mystical" (6.4ff) (as well as the reflections on "what is true about solipsism" (5.6-5.641)) and try to show that these are not merely idiosyncratic obiter dicta tacked onto a book about philosophical logic but rather are fundamentally connected with the purpose and meaning of the entire work.

The aim of Wittgenstein's book, if nothing else, was certainly to draw a limit to the expression of thoughts, for he says precisely this in his

preface:

> ...The aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather - not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts.... (TLP P p.3.)

But this is not all, for seeing the limits of language will make us understand simultaneously what cannot be talked about, and this, he says, is the "whole sense" of the book:

> The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence. (TLP P p.3)

A work of philosophy that was simply positivistic might ignore those areas which cannot be talked about, but Wittgenstein underlines those areas by emphasizing silence. We will see that this emphasis is not an accident but is integral to understanding the Tractatus.

This emphasis of the Preface is repeated in the text of the book itself as part of the ten consecutive sections in which the nature of philosophy is described. Here it is not just "this book" but philosophy itself which shows the limits of thought:

> It must set limits to what can be thought; and, in doing so, to what cannot be thought.
> It must set limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought. (4.114.)
> It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said. (4.115.)

Philosophy not only shows the limits of thought, but "signifies" (bedeuten) the unsayable (das Unsagbare) by showing those limits clearly.

The implication here is not simply that Wittgenstein's views about what cannot be gotten into language (the ethical, the mystical, etc.) can

be underlined in the way he is attempting to do with the book. Rather, Wittgenstein implies, if we see the logic (and hence the limits) of language clearly, we will see this as a pointer to those dimensions beyond language. We will become "aware" of them, so to speak, through this process.[6]

"Seeing the limits of language" can be another way of saying that, in a certain sense, metaphysics is impossible. In becoming fully clear about this impossibility, it might be that those dimensions where there is only silence would be underlined. It is therefore precisely in connection with his concluding discussion of these dimensions ("the mystical" and "the problem of life" (6.521, 6.522)) that Wittgenstein brings up "the correct method in philosophy" which would eliminate metaphysical discussion:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science - i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy - and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. (6.53.)

Traditional philosophy has not succeeded in eliminating such discussion and for this reason is full of "fundamental confusions" (3.324), and "most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false

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6. In his chapter on Wittgenstein's Tractatus, entitled "The Limits of Language", in Contemporary Analytic Philosophy (New York: Macmillan, 1981), Professor Milton K. Munitz suggests the use of this term "awareness" in connection with "what Wittgenstein calls 'the mystical' (das Mystische)" (p.217). Drawing on this suggestion, we will occasionally use this term within the appropriate contexts throughout our remaining chapters. See also Professor Munitz's book Existence and Logic (New York: New York University Press, 1974) (especially Chapter 8) for a clearly worked out "negative ontology", similar to Wittgenstein's concern for "the limits of language", which attempts to set into relief the "cognitive inaccessibility of Existence" (p.203).

but nonsensical" (4.003). Hence, in a certain very real sense, most metaphysical problems are not problems at all. They try to get into language what the very logic of language obviates. This, Wittgenstein seems to think, has disastrous consequences since it leads to interminable metaphysical and counter metaphysical points of view and ultimately to scepticism concerning those higher dimensions of which it is so important to be aware. (6.51.) But this aspect of Wittgenstein's point of view will become clearer below. Our present concern is with the impossibility of metaphysics itself.

What, then, is it that militates against metaphysics? Even though we will see that Wittgenstein at this point in his career thought the logic of language necessitated a metaphysics of "objects" and their "possibilities of combination", there is another factor that militates against the idea that such talk (of "objects") makes sense: this is what we are calling his "presuppositionalism". What speaks against the possibility of metaphysics (understood as a knowledge of reality in itself) is that the logic of our language (its "sense" or Sinn) is the presupposition for all human experience and all knowledge. It is this presuppositional way of looking at the human situation that makes Wittgenstein a direct heir of Kant.[7] What we can know is the world (which is in front of us, so to speak, and which is described by science). However, unlike Kant, who allowed discussion, in some sense or other, of a "noumenal realm", for Wittgenstein there is no world (or order of things) beyond what science investigates. Hence, there

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7. As Wittgenstein explicitly recognizes, for example, in L32 pp.73-4. For a well informed discussion of Wittgenstein "as a Kantian philosopher" see Chapter Two of Nicholas F. Gier, Wittgenstein and Phenomenology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981). Gier's book also provides a bibliography on "Kant and Wittgenstein".

is no such thing as "metaphysical knowledge":

> Logic is prior to every experience that something is so. (5.552.)
>
> ...No part of our experience is at the same time a priori.
>
> Whatever we see could be other than it is.
>
> Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is.
>
> There is no a priori order of things. (5.634.)

Logic (which is both the logical structure of language and the world in the Tractatus) must be presupposed in order to have knowledge at all. In order to talk about (or "experience") the world at all we must presuppose logic, that is, meaningful language. Meaningful language is therefore the presupposition of the very possibility of our gaining knowledge of the world. (Although the fact that we do have knowledge indicates that the logical structure of language mirrors the logical structure of the world.)

Perhaps the most fundamental doctrine of the Tractatus is this idea that the sense of a proposition is logically prior to its truth or falsity. Indeed, this point of view had been basic to Wittgenstein's thinking ever since 1912 or 1913 when he began to work seriously on the philosophical ideas that were to result in the Tractatus. In the 1913 "Notes On Logic", a full six years before the Tractatus was completed, we find the following claim:

> What corresponds in reality to a proposition depends upon whether it is true or false. But we must be able to understand a proposition without knowing if it is true or false.
>
> What we know when we understand a proposition is this: We know what is the case if the proposition is true, and what is the case if it is false. But we do not know (necessarily) whether it is true or false. (N p.98.)

And the following year in Norway, Wittgenstein repeated this idea in a

note which he dictated to G.E. Moore:

> That a proposition has a relation (in wide sense) to Reality, other than that of Bedeutung, is shown by the fact that you can understand it when you don't know the Bedeutung, i.e. don't know whether it is true or false. Let us express this by saying "It has sense" (Sinn). (N p.112.)

The internal logical structure of language, which constitutes its sense (Sinn) is presupposed before we consider the reference (Bedeutung) of a proposition, since we can understand the proposition without knowing whether it is true or false.

This idea remained fundamental to Wittgenstein's thought, and is expressed in the Tractatus in a number of places, for example:

> To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true.
> (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true). (4.024.)

> Every proposition must already have a sense: it cannot be given a sense by affirmation. Indeed its sense is just what is affirmed. And the same applies to negation, etc. (4.064.)

"Every proposition must already have a sense". The "must" here is a logical one; it is the "must" of presuppositionalism as indicated by the fact that "already" is underlined in this sentence. Language does not derive its sense by first picturing the world (the totality of existing states of affairs (1.1 & 2)). Rather, it is only possible to picture the world if language is already completely in operation, that is, if it already has sense (which can picture possible states of affairs (2.201)). The spirit here is similar to that of Kant, whose "transcendental" or "critical" method[8] in the First Critique

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8. See, for example, B xxx. This "transcendental method" is, of course, what we are calling Wittgenstein's "presuppositionalism". This simply means that both are asking the question: "What must be logically presupposed if

was designed in part to show "the limitations of human knowledge". Wittgenstein's philosophy in the Tractatus intends to show that truth (and hence knowledge) only arises through comparison of propositions with reality, but for this to be possible the propositions must already make sense:

> What a picture represents it represents independently of its truth or falsity, by means of its pictorial form. (2.22.)
>
> What a picture represents is its sense. (2.221.)
>
> The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity. (2.222.)
>
> In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality. (2.223.)
>
> It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false. (2.224.)
>
> There are no pictures that are true apriori. (2.225.)

Pictures make sense apriori, but are never true apriori. The absolute presuppositional status of their sense makes it possible for there to be any knowledge or experience at all. (5.552.) We have seen Wittgenstein say that the aim of his book is to draw "a limit...to the expression of thoughts", and we have seen him say that metaphysical propositions are without meaning (6.53). The general import of the Tractatus, which takes as one of its fundamental ideas the apriori status of sense, is to make logically clear to us the limits of all language (those limits which are

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knowledge (or experience) is to be possible?" This is intended as a general and broad characterization of their way of approaching philosophical questions and is not to say that there may not be difficulties in understanding their methodological approach in specific instances. Moltke S. Gram, for example, has identified four varying accounts of the "transcendental method" in Kant's First Critique (in Chapter Six of his Kant, Ontology, & the A Priori (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968)). Since Wittgenstein rarely discusses his own general approach to philosophy, it falls to the interpreter to point out the general pattern of his approach.

simultaneously the limits of thought and of the world).

iii. Metaphysics in The Tractatus

The presuppositionalism of Wittgenstein's early work was not only expressed in the simple form just described. He wished, in addition, to give an account of what character the world must have if this situation (that sense is logically prior to truth or falsity) was to obtain. This effort led to the well known doctrines of the Tractatus which are designed to elucidate the "picture theory" of language, doctrines in which his presuppositionalism was to find expression in a metaphysics of its own.

The task in this chapter is, as we have said, not to expound Wittgenstein's complex metaphysics in detail but rather to demonstrate the basic (presuppositional) orientation of the book and show its connection with the ethical and the mystical. For our general thesis concerning Wittgenstein is that this relation between the presuppositional character of sense and what cannot be gotten into language (the ethical and the mystical) holds for all periods of his philosophy: early, middle, and late.

In a metaphysical discussion somewhat reminiscent of Leibniz's argument in the Monadology (sections 43 and 44) that, since possibility is prior to actuality, there must be something "real" in possibility which is not contingent but involved with necessary being, Wittgenstein finds that the substance of the world must logically be prior to the existence of any actual state of affairs. Otherwise sense would not be prior to questions of truth or falsity:

> Each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs. This space I can imagine empty, but I cannot imagine the thing without the space. (2.013.)
>
> Objects contain the possibility of all situations. (2.014.)
>
> Objects make up the substance of the world. (2.021.)
>
> If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true. (2.0211.)
>
> The substance of the world can only determine a form, and not any material properties. For it is only by means of propositions that material properties are represented - only by the configuration of objects that they are produced. (2.0231.)
>
> Substance is what subsists independently of what is the case. (2.024.)

Possibility (which objects "contain") is ontologically prior to the material world, to "what is the case". It is logic that deals with this realm of possibility, because logic (which articulates the innermost structure of ordinary language) deals with all possibilities. Hence a proposition (which has sense) need picture nothing actual in the world but only a possible state of affairs:

> If things can occur in states of affairs, this possibility must be in them from the beginning.
>
> (Nothing in the province of logic can be merely possible. Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts.)
>
> Just as we are quite unable to imagine spatial objects outside space or temporal objects outside time, so too there is no object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others.
>
> If I can imagine objects combined in states of affairs, I cannot imagine them excluded from the possibility of such combinations. (2.0121.)

For logic to deal with all possibilities and be able to picture any possible state of affairs in the world, the substance of the world must be a mirror of the possibilities with which logic deals. (5.4711.) Hence, as we have

seen, the substance of the world must be made up of "objects" and these objects "contain the possibility of all situations". (2.014, 2.0211.)

The propositions of language picture possible states of affairs in the world. For language to be able to picture the world in its propositions, true or false, there must be a structural isomorphism between the constituents of a proposition (which Wittgenstein calls "names" (3.2, 3.202)) and the simple substantial elements of the world (objects). Names are logically simple and cannot be further analyzed into simpler constituents. Particular (logically simple) names refer to or mean (Bedeutung) particular (metaphysically simple) objects. These simple names by themselves lack sense and have, so to speak, only sheer reference to simple objects, and this "only in the nexus of a proposition". (3.3.) The sense of propositions is dependent on the references of the logically simple names composing it to the logically simple objects which provide the possibilities. When objects are "configured" with one another states of affairs are produced (2.0272.) and propositions "represent" these states of affairs (2.0231). Hence, a simple proposition is a concatenation of names mirroring a concatenation of simple objects. For this reason a proposition can have sense, independently of its truth or falsity, for it is a logical picture of possibilities rather than of actuality. (2.203.)

One might almost say that this conceptual articulation of the ontological structure of the world (and the way this is mirrored in the structure of language) was an attempt to explicate what must be assumed if sense was to be prior to truth. Hence the fact that sense in propositions is prior to their truth or falsity necessitates the existence at the heart of language of these simple names in structural combinations which map out the logical space provided by objects and their possibilities

of combination. That sense is prior to truth means that the world, so to speak, must be situated within logical space:

> The facts in logical space are the world. (1.13.)
>
> A proposition determines a place in logical space. The existence of this logical space is guaranteed by the mere existence of the constituents - by the existence of the proposition with a sense. (3.4.)

As Wittgenstein was later to suggest of his own earlier work, in the Tractatus possibility became a sort of shadowy reality.[9] An entire metaphysics was constructed to articulate the way in which propositions could picture a possible state of affairs independently of whether that state of affairs existed (was true or false). It was this very independence of propositions from what is actually the case in the world that indicated the apriori status of sense and suggested to Wittgenstein that sense cannot be derived from the world but ultimately must be prior to every experience that something is or is not the case in the world. (5.552.) Therefore, rather than looking to the world to discover how the sense of our language might have originated in talking about that world, Wittgenstein realized that there is no world that can be talked about unless we presuppose language already in operation with its full capacity for sense. Thus in investigating the essential logic of language we are eo ipso investigating what can be said about the world. And to understand the internal logic of propositions fully is to understand the essence (and hence substance) of the world which they mirror: "To give the essence of a proposition means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world". (5.4711.)

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9. PI 97, cf. PG pp.281 & 283, L35 pp.109-10, PI 194.

But the metaphysics which is at the heart of Wittgenstein's view of language in the Tractatus gives the book an extreme air of paradox. For integral to the book and focused upon in its preface and conclusion, we have seen, is a challenge to metaphysics: an attempt to underline the "limits of language". The correct method in philosophy would be to show that metaphysical terms are empty of content, meaningless. (6.53.) It is the absolute presuppositional character of sense which gives language its limits, and hence the book purports to show that sense cannot be derived from the world and that we can say nothing about the world prior to, or independently of, what we can say with sense in language. However, paradoxically (and simultaneously with this theme) the Tractatus attempts to articulate the way the world must be metaphysically if language is to operate with sense by picturing possible states of affairs, true or false.

To put this another way, human knowledge, in the Tractatus, involves the totality of true propositions and this is equivalent to the "whole of natural science" (4.11.) But none of these true propositions carries any necessity: they simply mirror the contingent facts of the world. (5.634.) Necessity (and whatever is apriori) belongs to the logic of our language. "There is no apriori order of things" (5.634), but everything apriori is now located in language. If we focus on that aspect of the Tractatus which emphasizes the presuppositional, an instructive comparison with Leibniz is possible. For what Leibniz called "truths of reason" are here no longer given an ontological status (in the mind of God or anywhere else) but are located in the logical structure of language itself. Yet again paradoxically, in elucidating this very principle, a metaphysics came about in which a substance for the world was identified, a substance which mirrored the very necessities which we discover in logic, that is "objects,

which contain the possibility of all situations". (2.014.)

This idea of the "necessity" of there being "objects", however, was quite fundamental to the Tractatus and should not be minimized. The very possibility of language referring to the world at all seemed to require the assumption of an ontological structure in the world which allowed such referral. And since what we can say with sense can be either true or false, it cannot be the world (the totality of what is true, the facts) which the sense of a proposition mirrors. It must be possibility itself: what Wittgenstein calls "objects" and their "form". (2.033.)

It should be pointed out, however, that Wittgenstein's reasoning in focusing on the notion of "simple objects" involved another major consideration: the capacity of language to treat complex phenomena as if they were simples. For example, if we state a fact such as "The watch is lying on the table" (N p.70), how is it that language can refer at all to such complex objects in a way that can be true or false? Why is the sense of the proposition not as vague and complex as the complexity of the watch and the table? It seemed to Wittgenstein that our propositions could only have a definite sense which could be true or false if language contained the capacity to treat complex objects as simple objects. Names, which are integral to propositions, referred (bedeutung) to simple objects which had to "exist" in order to allow a proposition describing complex objects (e.g. "The watch" given in a certain relationship to "the table") to be able to treat the complex objects as simples. The simple object seemed to be a logical necessity if we are to be able to speak of complexes with a definite true or false sense. The Notebooks 1914-16 discuss this problem at length (pp.58-71), and at one point Wittgenstein expresses the following as part of his "fundamental thought" about objects:

> What is my fundamental thought when I talk about simple objects?....
>
> It seems that the idea of the SIMPLE is already contained in that of the complex and in the idea of analysis, and in such a way that we come to this idea quite apart from any examples of simple objects, or of propositions which mention them, and we realize the existence of the simple object - a priori - as a logical necessity. (N pp.59-60.)

The idea of "simple objects" seemed to be "logically necessary" and, contained, as it were, in the very possibility of complexity.

Indeed, the vast majority of the philosophical writings in the Notebooks over the six years which resulted in the Tractatus were devoted to the development of this metaphysics of simple objects in order to account for the possibility of propositions referring in such a way that they can be either true or false. Neither Wittgenstein's focus, in this regard, nor his persistent efforts, should be minimized. The "presuppositionalism", however, was also present throughout this period, and the early 1913 "Notes On Logic" (quoted from above) show us that Wittgenstein held his presuppositional point of view almost from the start of his philosophical thought. And it is this presuppositionalism which is often given second place to the ontology in expositions of the Tractatus. And our thesis here is that slighting Wittgenstein's fundamental presuppositional attitude makes it impossible to see clearly the connection between the statements concerning ethics, solipsism, and the mystical, and the rest of the book. Our task here is to show this connection, not to give an exposition of the metaphysical "picture theory" in detail. And in doing this we are focusing on those ideas which to some extent militate against this "picture theory" and which create the paradoxical character of the work: the ideas of presuppositionalism (e.g. 4.061), of the limitations of thought (4.114), of a challenge to metaphysics (6.53), and of the ethical

and the mystical (6.421, 6.522).

iv. Presuppositionalism versus Metaphysics

This "paradoxical" character of the book is explicitly underlined by Wittgenstein in aphorism 6.53. For if "the correct method in philosophy" was applied to the Tractatus, it would show that Wittgenstein's key metaphysical term "objects", was a term without content, that it was meaningless. Wittgenstein certainly realized this, for the aphorism immediately following this identifies his own propositions as nonsensical:

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)
>
> He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright. (6.54.)

At first sight this would seem to vitiate Wittgenstein's entire effort in the Tractatus: a book which wishes, in some sense, to eliminate metaphysics carefully constructs an entire metaphysical superstructure only to conclude by affirming the project to be nonsense. That there must be more to it is indicated by the aphorism itself which states that these nonsensical propositions must be used for a specific purpose, that the propositions must be transcended in order to "see the world aright".

There must be a way of seeing the world aright independently of the nonsensicality of these propositions. More than that, they must actually be useful in this connection. That Wittgenstein in this aphorism in no way intended to deny the truth of what he had to say in his book is also indicated by the two places where he asserts its "truth", in his Preface

itself, and again in the text of the book:

> ...The truth of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems. (Preface, p.4.)
>
> That utterly simple thing, which we have to formulate here, is not a likeness of the truth, but the truth itself in its entirety. (5.5563.)

How is it that Wittgenstein can affirm his thoughts in the Tractatus as "true" even though his metaphysical propositions (as distinct from the perfectly meaningful logical, etc., propositions) are seen as nonsense? Our thesis concerning the presuppositionalist starting point of Wittgenstein's philosophy suggests an answer. What remains when the metaphysics of the Tractatus is seen as nonsense is an insight into the logical character of language: that language with its complete possibilities of sense must be presupposed for there to be any experience or description at all. If we understand why these metaphysical propositions are nonsense, then we will have comprehended the absolutely presuppositional status of sense. We will see that all metaphysics is nonsensical precisely for the same reason that Wittgenstein's metaphysics is nonsensical: there can be no language and no description of any world which does not presuppose a logical structure which makes possible that very description. Hence, all that is apriori is logic, and this logic is the condition of the very possibility of any representation whatever. To try to provide a metaphysical justification for the logic of language (as the Tractatus purports to do) is only to articulate, in a substantializing way, that very logic.

This accounts for the persistent theme of the Tractatus that in articulating the logic of language we are simultaneously articulating the logic of the world: "To give the essence of a proposition means to give

the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world." (5.4711.) There is no way of talking about how language must be related to the world in order to make sense, since any talking already presupposes language related to the world. This is Wittgenstein's meaning in the following:

> Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits.
>
> So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.'
>
> For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well.
>
> We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot say either. (5.61.)

It is for this reason that we cannot say what language and the world have in common which makes language possible: we must already presuppose that harmony between language and the world to be able to talk at all. Thus, even logic has an aspect to it which is 'unsayable': the "logical form" which it has in common with reality. This "shows" itself; it is "mirrored" in propositions, but cannot itself be expressed (4.121):

> Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form. (4.12.)

In this idea we see another implication of the apriori status of sense as opposed to the aposteriori status of truth and falsity: language and the world must be in harmony from the beginning. There is no way to find logical form in the world apart from language and there is no way to find it in language apart from the world. Both have the identical logical form, and in talking about one we are necessarily talking about the other.

Otherwise propositions could not mirror any possible state of affairs in the world, true or false. We must, therefore, see that it is "nonsense" to put into language the way the world is apart from language, yet Wittgenstein was doing this very thing in talking about the "substance" of the world as "objects" and in describing the properties they must have (e.g. that they are metaphysically simple) in order for language to be able to operate as it does. He was trying to show the connection between language and the world: names referring to simple objects.

Therefore, Wittgenstein's metaphysical superstructure in the Tractatus must be seen as nonsense in order to comprehend the main point of the book. And this is why Wittgenstein can legitimately speak of the "truth of the thoughts" contained in his book. The truth contained there is understood through the construction of a metaphysics and its subsequent denial. Without this denial the book would indeed be nonsense, for it would contain internal contradictions, and one of the main points of the book (the absolute presuppositional status of sense, of the internal logic of language) might not be clearly understood.

This point again becomes clearer if we examine exactly what Wittgenstein means by his word "nonsense" as it is used in his concluding aphorism. What is it about his propositions, and all metaphysical propositions, which allows them to be designated as "nonsense"? Clearly they do not violate the logic of ordinary grammar and hence are not nonsense in the ordinary sense of the word. Thus it may be that Wittgenstein is using this word in a very specialized sense, and we shall see (in the remainder of this section) that this is indeed the case.

We have seen that Wittgenstein's goal in the Tractatus (which is also the goal of philosophy (4.114)) was "to draw a limit to thought, or

rather...to the expression of thoughts...." His next paragraph links this idea with the idea of "nonsense":

> It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense. (Preface p.3.)

Here "nonsense" refers to "what lies" on the other side of the limits of language. Propositions which are grammatically correct may seem to be speaking sensibly about what lies on the other side of this limit. Unless we are learners of a new language, our propositions will make grammatical sense because we understand the logical possibilities of the signs we use.[10] Hence the grammatical nonsense, which we find Wittgenstein speaking of in aphorism 5.473, is not the significance of the word "nonsense" as used in the Preface:

> Logic must look after itself.
> If a sign is possible, then it is also capable of signifying. Whatever is possible in logic is also permitted. (The reason why 'Socrates is identical' means nothing is that there is no property called 'identical'. The proposition is nonsensical because we have failed to make an arbitrary determination, and not because the symbol, in itself, would be illegitimate.)
> In a certain sense, we cannot make mistakes in logic. (5.473.)

When it comes to going beyond the limits of language, we are not making ordinary grammatical mistakes because this aspect of logic looks after itself. Rather, it is primarily in philosophy that the particular kind of nonsense arises to which Wittgenstein is referring both at the beginning and the end of his book. This particular kind of nonsense is connected, not with the ungrammatical use of certain signs or symbols, but with a

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10. Perhaps this is part of the meaning of the very first statement of Wittgenstein's Notebooks: "Logic must take care of itself." (p. 2).

failure to understand the logical character of all language. One is then not making mistakes in logic but failing to understand the logic of language itself:

> Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. (4.003.)

It is extremely important for understanding Wittgenstein's meaning here to note that not only propositions in most philosophical works, but questions, are nonsensical. Even grammatically correct questions can be nonsensical if we fail to understand the logic of our language. How can a question or a proposition be nonsensical? If it attempts to state a fact, or ask a question, about something which transcends the presuppositional character of its own sense. If it asks, or makes a claim, about something metaphysical. This is why the final section of the book denies that there can be any questions asked concerning traditional metaphysical subjects such as ethics (6.42), God (6.432), or the meaning of life (6.52), for if "all possible scientific questions have been answered....there are then no questions left". (6.52.) Such questions simply attempt to go beyond the limits of language. The only things that can be said with sense are the facts, that is, scientific questions.

Once more we see that it is the presuppositional character of sense that Wittgenstein wishes to underline. Indeed, metaphysical affirmations or questions have exactly the same nonsensical status as does scepticism regarding metaphysical claims. For both parties ignore the presuppositional character of sense which allows no Archimedian point outside of sense from which we might speak about the ultimate character of the world. In

fact, the very notion of an "ultimate character" is called into question here. Simply nothing can be said. It must be passed over in silence (6.54):

> Scepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no question can be asked.
>
> For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something can be said. (6.51.)

There is no sense to talking about the ultimate character of the world for the same reason that the traditional philosophical attempts to articulate the basis in the world or in experience from which language derives its sense lead to "nonsense". We see now that Wittgenstein is using the word "nonsense" in an extremely specialized sense. "Nonsense" arises from not realizing that the applicability of language to the world must be presupposed in any attempt to ask questions about the "ultimate character of the world", making such an endeavor viciously circular.

This is why Wittgenstein could later express his emphatic respect for traditional metaphysics even though it would qualify as "nonsense" in his specialized sense of the term:

> Don't think I despise metaphysics. I regard some of the great philosophical writings of the past as among the noblest works of the human mind.[11]

We do not have to throw out the works of Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, etc., as being meaningless (as some positivists, influenced by Wittgenstein, later wished to do). Rather, we must take a new attitude toward the human

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11. Quoted by M.O'C. Drury in Rush Rhees, ed., Ludwig Wittgenstein - Personal Recollections (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), p.93.

situation itself, an attitude connected with our new understanding of the limitations of language and of the ultimate "questions" concerning the meaning of life, ethics, etc. with which Wittgenstein concludes the Tractatus. To do this is to see that the great metaphysical writings of the past may still make "sense" in many important ways. We would be speculating if we tried to imagine what Wittgenstein might have accepted as valuable in traditional metaphysics. But one can imagine a justification for Plato's metaphysics, for example, as an intellectual construction designed to articulate the world (as we experience it) more clearly (as, indeed, Wittgenstein's Tractatus attempts to do). Or perhaps metaphysics could be understood as the drive for wholeness, for seeing the world as a whole. We might also imagine a total religious outlook finding expression in metaphysics (for example, in Aquinas). Or one might justify metaphysics as a hermeneutics of certain aspects of the human situation, or perhaps as a total aesthetic engagement of a person with his universe.[12] But Wittgenstein would not allow that any of these could be making "sense" as this is understood in the Tractatus.

Neither would he allow that they had provided us with a knowledge of the character of the world from which the sense of various languages is constituted. Truth and falsity in the Tractatus are strictly aposteriori and can in no way be determined prior to sense. However, there may be important things to be said in connection with the "ultimate character" of the world and man's place in the world which need not be making

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12. After a talk at Hunter College during the Fall of 1982 in which Robert Neville gave a brief exposition of his own metaphysical world view, the present writer asked him whether he thought metaphysics was a knowledge activity. Neville replied that he was not basically concerned about the "truth" of his metaphysics, but that he found great "aesthetic satisfaction" as a whole person in constructing an all-encompassing Weltanschauung.

knowledge claims. The reasons for doing metaphysics may be aesthetic, religious, intellectual, hermeneutic, or even, it should be added, mythic. Indeed, in our study of Nietzsche we saw him developing his doctrines of Overman, Will to Power, and Eternal Recurrence from a consciously mythic, rather than knowledge oriented, point of view. Wittgenstein understands metaphysics as "nonsense" only in the very specialized sense that there can be no "metaphysical truth", for there can be no knowledge that transcends the logic of language which must be presupposed in order to make all knowledge possible. We will see that this was his consistent position throughout his philosophical career, even though, in his later philosophy, the idea of "the logic of language" was transformed from the conception of an innermost structural core at the heart of language into a conception of the "grammar" of ordinary language.

Therefore Wittgenstein's own metaphysical propositions in the Tractatus would also be nonsense only in this restricted sense: that if they purport to say anything sensible about the basis in the world for the logical structure of language, then this is impossible, since it is prohibited by the absolute presuppositional character of sense. However, if these propositions are being used as a mere means for illustrating something about the logic of language - and are making no truth claims - then they are not nonsense, and the over-all meaningfulness of the book itself is in no way compromised. They are called "nonsense" by Wittgenstein only in the limited sense that they speak about the substance of the world (which is beyond the limits of language) as if they were making knowledge claims. But the ultimate purpose of this designation - which is one purpose of the book itself - is to underline as forcefully as possible the presuppositional status of sense.

v. The Ethical and The Mystical

In the Preface to the Tractatus, we have seen, Wittgenstein says that the aim of the book is to draw a limit to the expression of thoughts. And in his letter to Ludwig Ficker, already mentioned, Wittgenstein specifically links the book's concluding remarks concerning "the ethical" with what is written in the rest of the volume. He writes to Ficker that "the point of the book is ethical", and continues with the following:

> ...My work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have not written. And precisely this second part is the important one. For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that, strictly speaking, it can ONLY be delimited in this way.[13]

Within the whole of the Tractatus, but especially in its concluding pages (6.4 to 6.54), Wittgenstein points to a number of things which are beyond "the limits of language" and about which we cannot therefore have knowledge or make factual statements. In this section we will present an overview of all of those things beyond language to which Wittgenstein is pointing, and we will discuss what seems to be a general equation between what he is calling "the ethical" and one of his uses of the phrase "the mystical". The word "mystical", from the Latin mysterium, can be traced back to the Greek word mustes which literally means "closed mouthed".[14]

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13. In C.G. Luckhardt, ed., Wittgenstein - Sources and Perspectives (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.94-5.

14. Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English by Eric Partridge (New York: Greenwich House, 1983).

It can mean, therefore, anything about which we cannot speak. We will argue, on structural and textual grounds, that Wittgenstein's final use of the phrase das Mystische (6.522) carries just this wide sense of anything beyond language and is therefore similar to the way he uses the phrase die Ethik (e.g. 6.42).

In the Tractatus the words "the mystical" (das Mystische) are used three times. The first two uses of the phrase are found one after another within the longer series of remarks with which concludes the book (6.4 to 6.54):

> It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists. (6.44)
>
> To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole - a limited whole.
> Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical. (6.45)

We will discuss aphorism 6.44 in section vii below, but it should be clear here that Wittgenstein is using the words "the mystical" in a fairly specialized sense to indicate the sheer presence of the world, or, as he puts it, its "thatness", "that it exists".

In contradistinction to these first two uses, the third use of the phrase has a unique placement in the structure of these concluding remarks. The final three aphorisms of the Tractatus culminate in the proclamation that what cannot be spoken about must be passed over in silence. These are immediately preceded by the third statement concerning "what is mystical":

> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.

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15. Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische.

(6.522.)[15]

This use of the words "the mystical" (das Mystische) would seem to be nearly equivalent to what Wittgenstein means by the phrase "the ethical" (die Ethik, 4.421). This use is separated from the first two uses (6.44 & 45) by a space of several aphorisms. It is unique in that it is the concluding aphorism in a fairly long list of things preceding it which Wittgenstein has claimed cannot be said. The list begins at aphorism 6.4 where Wittgenstein identifies what can be said ("all propositions", 6.4) and immediately distinguishes this from all "value" which "must lie outside the world" (6.41). All such value, which, like das Mystische, "cannot be put into words" (night aussprechen lasst) is identified in the next aphorism as "the ethical":

> So too it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics.
> Propositions can express nothing that is higher. (6.42)
>
> It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.
> Ethics is transcendental.
> (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.) (6.421.)

What we have, therefore, is a list of ten or eleven items (to be discussed below) that cannot be gotten into language which begins with the generalization that "all value" (the ethical) "cannot be put into words" and ends with the generalization that the "things" that "cannot be put into words...make themselves manifest" and that "they are what is mystical". Therefore, even though one or two of the items on this list of "things" that cannot be gotten into language are also called das Mystische (6.44 & 45), the final use of the phrase would seem to be a much wider use intended to correspond to the generalization at the beginning of the list concerning "the ethical".

If one looks into that early version of the Tractatus called the Prototractatus,[16] this thesis seems to be corroborated in an interesting and unusual way. For this concluding aphorism concerning "the mystical", although still separated by several remarks from one of the other uses of the phrase "the mystical" (which remains in the same place in the sequence of aphorisms), is now found near the very beginning of the list immediately following the initial generalization concerning "the ethical". What we find in the Prototractatus, therefore, is the following:

> It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. (6.421.)
>
> Ethics is transcendental. (6.422.)
>
> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical. (6.43.)
>
> To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole - a limited whole. (6.431.)
>
> Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical. (6.432.)
>
> If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts; not what can be expressed by means of language,... (6.44.)

In this version those "things which cannot be put into words" ("the mystical") would seem to have a nearly equivalent meaning to "the ethical" not because it concludes and sums up a list of what cannot be gotten into language but rather because it is placed in the position of an explication on the immediately preceding remarks about "the ethical". The transfer of idea of "feeling the world as a limited whole" from its place in the Tractatus where it follows the sense of "mystical" defined as "that" the

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16. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1971. (For dating and historical information see the Introduction by G.H. von Wright.)

world exists to this location would seem to contextually alter its meaning as well. For as our quotation from the Prototractatus shows, these two uses of the phase das Mystische here occur immediately between Wittgenstein's generalization about "the ethical", which cannot be gotten into language, and a statement about the ethical "will" which alters "the limits of the world" as a whole. Both these uses of "the mystical" here seem directly connected with "the ethical".

In addition, in the Notebooks 1914-16 (p.73), within a discussion of this same "good and evil willing", Wittgenstein says the following: "The world must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. As if by accession or loss of meaning". The metaphor of seeing the world as a whole in connection with meaning is linked here directly with "the ethical". And as we see, in the Prototractatus these statements about "the mystical" and "feeling the world as a limited whole" are placed immediately between the initial generalization connecting all "value" with "the ethical" and the statement connecting the ethical will with the limits of the world as a whole. The context here points to the idea that Wittgenstein is using the words das Mystische in his aphorism about "things that...make themselves manifest" in a way that is directly connected with his use of the words "the ethical". In the Tractatus a different positioning is chosen for this aphorism. It is now at the very end of Wittgenstein's series of things that cannot be gotten into language and is correlative to the remarks concerning "the ethical" which initiate that series. In both cases, the context would seem to indicate that Wittgenstein is equating "the ethical" and "the mystical" in a general way which is to be distinguished from his more limited and specific use of the phrase das Mystische (in TLP 6.44) to indicate an awareness of the sheer presence of the world: "that it exists".

We will see in our discussion of Wittgenstein's list of those things which cannot be gotten into language that this general equation of "the ethical" and "the mystical" (perhaps both under the heading of what has "value" (6.41)) is especially significant. For it will become clear that his thinking does not draw the usual radical separation between those aspects of "value" around which the so-called "Eastern Religions" (like Buddhism) revolve and those kinds of "value" around which the so-called "Western Religions" (like Judaism or Christianity) revolve. This can also be seen in his 1930 "Lecture on Ethics" which describes "ethics" as "the general enquiry into what is good" in a very broad sense which includes the "essential part of what is generally called Aesthetics". (p.4.) Just as in the Tractatus, Wittgenstein says here that all propositions of fact "are one the same level" (p.6) and that nothing ethical can be found in them, for the ethical, what has "absolute value", cannot be expressed in language. (p.7.) He goes on to give three examples of "absolute or ethical value", and these examples show again that Wittgenstein does not radically separate "Eastern" kinds of value from those associated with the West. Below we will further discuss the distinction between these two kinds of "value", but for the present our concern has been simply to elucidate Wittgenstein's general equation of "the ethical" and "the mystical".

His first example in the "Lecture on Ethics", which he expresses as "how extraordinary that the world should exist", seems to be identical with his narrower use of the word "mystical" in TLP 6.4 where he associates it with the awareness "that" the world exists. This, and the next example of "absolute value", "the experience of feeling absolutely safe" (p.8), are, we shall see, often associated with the "Eastern" sense of value. The third example, that of "feeling guilty" (in the sense that "God disapproves of our

conduct") (p.10) is, of course, usually associated with "Western" religions like Judaism and Christianity. Hence, we see here that, although Wittgenstein does not use the phrase "the mystical" in this lecture, he is not making a radical distinction between the "Western" "ethical" orientation and the "Eastern" "mystical" orientation. If "the ethical", at the beginning of Wittgenstein's discussion in the Tractatus, connotes all the several aspects of "value" that "cannot be gotten into words" so his concluding statement about the "things" that "make themselves manifest" but "cannot be gotten into words" (das Mystische) would seem also to generalize over his entire discussion. Let us look, then, more closely at an itemization of those things which cannot be said. This will serve as an overview preliminary to our discussion of several of these items in greater detail.

Although there may be various ways of listing these things that Wittgenstein has explicitly or implicitly claimed cannot be said, an attempt at a complete list might include all thirteen of the following, listed in the order in which they appear in the Tractatus. We have included here, not only the final concluding remarks about "the ethical" and "the mystical", but those things throughout the whole of the book which Wittgenstein claims cannot be said. A key quotation is given after each one:

1. Logical form (which can be shown but not said: 4.121):

> Propositions...cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form. (4.12.)

2. "What" something is:

> Propositions can only say how things are, not what they are. (3.221, cf. 2.025 & 5.552.)

3. What is true about solipsism:

...What the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest. (5.62.)

4. Ethics and value:

In the world...no value exists.... So too it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics.... It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. (6.41, 6.42, & 6.421.)

5. The will as the bearer of ethical attributes:

It is impossible to speak about the will in so far as it is the bearer of ethical attributes. (6.423.)

6. The nature of happiness:

...The good or bad exercise of the will...can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts - not what can be expressed by means of language. ...It becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole.

The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man. (6.43.)

7. One's own death:

Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death. (6.431.)

8. The timeless present:

If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.

Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits....

The solution to the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time. (6.4311 & 6.4312.)

9. God:

God does not reveal himself in the world. (6.432.)

10. That the world exists:

> It is not how things are in the world that is the mystical, but that it exists....
> Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is the mystical.
> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. (6.44, 6.45, & 6.5.)
> ...That something is:...is not an experience. (5.552.)

11. The problems of life:

> ...Even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course there are then no questions left, and this itself is the answer. (6.52.)

12. The sense of life:

> ...Those who have found...that the sense of life became clear...have been unable to say what constituted that sense. (6.521.)

13. The mystical:

> there are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical. (6.522.)

Of the items on this list, logical form has already been discussed in connection with Wittgenstein's presuppositionalism.[17] And the second item, that we can say how things are but not what they are, will come up in

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17. In a "broad sense", as Milton Munitz points out, philosophy itself is among those things that can't be said. See Contemporary Analytic Philosophy, pp.205-209. Not all the items on this list, of course, would have "absolute value". One would have to exclude logical form, one's own death, and the problems of life (although the last two are connected with what does have absolute value).

terms of our discussion of "what is true about solipsism" in the following section. We have seen that the fourth item, "ethics and value", seems to be used in a very wide sense to include, like Wittgenstein's final use of the word "mystical", nearly everything on the list. With the exception of the first three items listed, therefore, this series of remarks at the end of the Tractatus is introduced with the suggestion that all these items have "value" because they fall "outside the world", since in the world no value exists. (6.41.)

This dual characterization of what cannot be gotten into language as either "the ethical" or "the mystical" reflects the synthetic nature of Wittgenstein's thinking here. For, as we have remarked, these two sets of ideas are often associated with the distinction between so called "Western religion" and "Eastern religion". The former is often said to be characterized by its ethical seriousness in general, its concern with the ethical will, and it focus on a transcendent God. There concerns are, of course, reflected in The Bible with its focus on ethical obedience to God, on the difficulties of fulfilling the commands of God, and on its desire to worship none other than the true God.

Of the items on our list, this "Western" focus would include "the will as the bearer of ethical attributes" (6.423) and the idea of "God" (6.432). In addition, Wittgenstein associates a third factor with these two, "happiness" (6.43), a factor not emphasized in The Bible but which is perhaps found in such religious writings as St. Augustine's Confessions which opens with the statement "our hearts are restless until they find

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18. M.O'C. Drury quotes Wittgenstein as saying that the Confessions is possibly "the most serious book every written" and says that Wittgenstein seemed to know "his way about in the book thoroughly": Ludwig Wittgenstein - Personal Recollections, pp.104-5.

their rest in Thee".[18] On the other hand, the set of ideas often associated with "Eastern religion" (such as Buddhism or Taoism) would include the idea of living in the timeless present (6.4311), the "mystical" idea "that the world exists" (6.44), and "the truth about solipsism". The latter, Wittgenstein says, means that there is no thinking, representing self (5.631), and hence, as we shall see, can be associated with the Buddhist idea of anatta which means no-self or "non-egoity".[19]

Wittgenstein does not distinguish here between these two sets of ideas but seems to find them all equally characterizable either under the heading of "transcendent value" or of "those things which make themselves manifest", "the mystical". For a full understanding of Wittgenstein's ethics it is important to keep this in mind. For our exposition in the remaining sections of this chapter will largely ignore the "Western" aspects of this list of things having an absolute value (which cannot be gotten into language) in order to focus more fully of those ideas that can be associated with "Eastern" religion: the ideas of "what is true about solipsism", the timeless present, and that the world exists. For our thesis is that these ideas, although often unrecognized by commentators, are still fundamental to Wittgenstein's later philosophy. And we will find that it is the "awareness" pointed to by these ideas that is absolutely fundamental to coming to grips with the phenomenon of nihilism and with "the problem of metaphysical truth" as it was articulated in Nietzsche's philosophy. With this overview of Wittgenstein's ideas concerning "the ethical" and "the mystical" in mind, then, let us turn to a specific examination of one aspect of that which has "absolute value".

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19. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Buddha and The Gospel of Buddhism (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p.91, cf. pp.98-101.

vi. What Is True About Solipsism and Buddhist Anatta

Three points made in connection with our discussion of presuppositionalism and metaphysics in the Tractatus can illuminate Wittgenstein's remarks about the "mystical" in the culminating sections of the book:

1. That philosophy not only shows the limits of language but also "signifies the unsayable". (4.114 & 4.115.)
2. That by combating metaphysics he is attacking the possibility of metaphysical scepticism. (6.51.)
3. That Wittgenstein's attack on metaphysics is not calling for any form of positivism but for a new attitude toward the human situation itself.

Indeed, what the first two points here indicate about the final 12 aphorisms of the series numbered "5" in the Tractatus, and the final 21 aphorisms of the series numbered "6", seems to constitute a way of looking at the human situation which is largely without precedent, especially if one takes them (as we have here) as an attempt to underline the dimension of the ethical and the unsayable.

For one of the key quotations used above to emphasize Wittgenstein's presuppositional point of view (as well as his focus on the limits of language and concomitant "challenge to metaphysics") is used by him to introduce his discussion of "what is true about solipsism":

> Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also

its limits.

So we cannot say in logic, "The world has this in it, and this, but not that."

For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well.

We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot say either. (5.61.)

This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism.

For what the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest. (5.62.)

Why is it precisely an understanding of this remark about the logic of language which provides the key to something that "cannot be said but makes itself manifest"? Logic, we have seen, deals not with the actual world but with "all possibilities", so Wittgenstein is saying here that the boundaries of the world are, as Max Black puts it, "the boundaries of the possible".[13] What we can say about the world, therefore, has a formal structural character. Structured combinations of names in propositions map isomorphically the structural possibilities provided by objects and their form. What does not enter into language (and what is not required for language to be able to function) is the so called "experiencing subject". Understanding the purely structural character of language "...wird das Unsagbare bedeuten...." (4.115), and what is signified but cannot be said is the world as I experience it: "my world". (5.62.)

"The world is my world" because the public world of form and structure which language mirrors is precisely that which is experienced. There is only one world. But experience qua experience cannot be gotten into language. Since all reference involves naming objects (3.203), a purely

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13. A Companion To Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus' (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p.308.

formal affair, sheer experience cannot be referred to.

What is it, then, that the solipsist means, and why is it correct? The article in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy by C.D. Rollins entitled "Solipsism" describes what traditional solipsism means in the following way:

> The reasoning behind the doctrine may be put as follows. Every claim concerning the existence or nonexistence of anything is grounded in experience and could not possibly go beyond it. An existential claim which seemed to reach beyond experience could have no basis or reference; it would apparently be unintelligible and not strictly a claim at all. But experience is essentially immediate; in itself it is never mistaken (only inferences from it can be mistaken), and it is had by one person only and is private to him. Hence, existential claims can never truly, and perhaps never with full intelligibility, claim more than the existence of the experiencing self and its states....[14]

What is true about solipsism, as reflected in this passage, is that "experience is essentially immediate". What is not true, for Wittgenstein, would be the idea that this immediacy could be connected with existential claims, that it could be private, or that it has to do with an "experiencing self and its states". What distinguishes the former from the latter is the realization that this immediacy cannot be gotten into language in any way. Once this is understood (through understanding the nature and limits of language in the Tractatus), then it becomes clear that no claims can be made about it in any way, neither that "it exists", nor that it is "private", nor that it is connected with a "self and its states".

What the solipsist means is connected with the "unique" status of human consciousness or experience which might be put (nonsensically, from Wittgenstein's point of view) as follows: "The entire world exists for me only as my consciousness". What the solipsist means is this pervasiveness

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14. Volume Seven, p.488.

of experience as experience: the impossibility of transcending experience, for consciousness or mind, as Descartes said, is the absolute condition of there being any objects at all, including "earth, sky, stars and all other objects which I apprehended by means of the senses".[15]

Since sheer experience coincides with the sayable world, Wittgenstein could write "The world is my world". (5.62.) However, the traditional solipsist lacks the new understanding of the human situation that the Tractatus is setting forth, an understanding connected with Wittgenstein's way of comprehending the logic of language. For language, like what it mirrors in the world, is purely formal and structural. No reference is possible to experience qua experience. Experience is, so to speak, assumed by language, as when we ask someone what colors they see or what sounds they hear, but the reference, in these cases, is not to the sheer qualitative experience of blue, for example, but to the purely structural "forms of objects" (2.0251) which make possible "the logical structure of colour" (6.3751).

The entire world as my world, as sheer experience, "makes itself manifest". Indeed, what could be more manifest than the overwhelming immediacy of sights, sounds, smells, touches, and tastes? But all this is absolutely unsayable. We can metaphorically point towards this unsayability in two ways, both implicit in our discussion so far. First, we can focus on consciousness qua consciousness and realize that what makes itself manifest "from the side of the subject", so to speak, is unsayable in this way. Secondly, by understanding the structural and formal character of language, and by realizing that the possibility of our talk about "blue",

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15. Margaret D. Wilson, ed., The Essential Descartes (New York: Mentor Books, 1969), p.180.

for example, presupposes "the logical structure of colour", we may see that the sheer qualitative content of the world which we experience is also unsayable.[16] However, this separation is merely heuristic, for ultimately sheer consciousness, and the content of consciousness, are one. Hence, Wittgenstein can say "I am my world" (5.63). I am identical with, and not other than, the content of my experience.

From Wittgenstein's point of view, a long misunderstanding of the human situation is terminated with his book, a misunderstanding reflected in the attempt, since Descartes, to ground language epistemologically in one way or another in qualitative experience. His book, he believes, shows the impossibility of this, and suggests a new way of seeing the human situation which has very radical implications. The first of these implications, we have just seen, is the absolute unsayability of sheer experience as experience.

The second implication is that:

> There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas.
>
> If I wrote a book called The World as I found it, I should have to include a report on my body, and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my will and which were not, etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it

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16. The unsayable content of the world which we experience may be what is identified at TLP 2.025 when Wittgenstein says objects have "form and content". The logic of language mirrors the "form" of objects but the "content" (sheer qualitative "blue", for example) shows itself but cannot be said. This may be what is referred to in 3.221 and again in 5.552 in the idea that "Logic is....prior to the question "How?", not prior to the question "What?""

This unsayability of content or "what" is another possible way of interpreting Wittgenstein's final remark about "the mystical" as "those things that cannot be put into words" (6.522), a way suggested to the present writer by Professor H.L. Finch. Rather than being equivalent to "the ethical" the "things" referred to here may be the unsayable content (the "what") of the world.

alone could not be mentioned in that book.-- (5.631.)

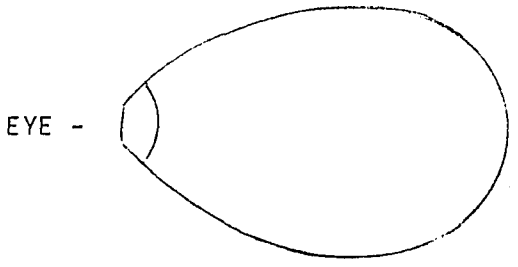
The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world. (5.632.)

Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be found?

You will say that this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do not see the eye.

And nothing in the visual field allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.

For the form of the visual field is surely not like this



(5.6331.)

Just as the unsayable content of experience is not necessary for language to represent negative or positive facts in the world, so neither is a thinking or representing subject.[17] Language, to be language at all, takes care of all necessary representation and sense. And if we examine carefully "the world as we find it", so to speak: that is, if we stick simply to the facts, then no thinking self is to be found in the world.

This line of reasoning has a Humean note to it (although Hume's notion that every "idea" must be derived from a sense impression would be, for Wittgenstein, confusing the content of experience with the sayable aspects of the world). Hence, although Hume is not looking at "facts" but

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17. It should be noted, however, that there is some ambiguity in this because Wittgenstein at this point still requires a thinking subject to "think the sense" of a proposition (3.11). For a discussion of this, and in what way it was later dropped, see H.L. Finch, Wittgenstein - The Later Philosophy (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1977), Chapter 2.

rather at sense impressions, he is still enumerating everything we can say about ourselves and finds that no "self" can be included in such a list:

> It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea.[18]

"In an important sense", Wittgenstein says, "there is no subject". But for Wittgenstein this has tremendous spiritual significance. Hume did not seem to see the "truth" of solipsism: what the solipsist means but cannot say. Hence, he did not see that the world is, in one sense, all subject and that "I am my world": something connected with sheer qualitative experience which "cannot be said". Nor did he see that, in a corresponding way, there is no subject, since the world is simply the collection of facts and even my body or psychological phenomena would be just more facts. If Hume had seen clearly the limits of language, instead of confusing sheer experience with what can be said (form and structure), he might have made this distinction. On the one hand, I am all the content of the world, for I am, in an unsayable way, all subject. On the other hand, the world, including all psychological phenomena, is all object. What we can say is the objective, the facts as described by propositions in the public world of form and structure, and this world of form and

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18. D.G.C. Macnabb, ed., A Treatise on Human Nature (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), p.301.

structure, i.e., the world of language, can handle psychological phenomena as well.

Psychological phenomena are no more connected with any supposed self (as Hume also points out) than any other phenomena. The subject functions merely as "a limit of the world". The unsayable character of sheer experience (which is equivalent to the world) is enough for individuation:

> All experience is world and does not need the subject....
> Is not my world adequate for individuation? (N p.89.)

Wittgenstein symbolizes this individuating "myness" of the world with his notion of the "metaphysical subject". It is, he says, "a point without extension" (5.64), that is, it has no characteristics whatsoever. The philosophical or metaphysical self is not a "thing" of any sort but is simply a way of symbolizing the unsayable "myness" of the world (which is what is true about solipsism):

> Thus there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way.
> What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world'.
> The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world - not a part of it. (5.641.)

This is simply a way of speaking symbolically about what is true in solipsism (a way which is dropped in Wittgenstein's middle and later periods). "The self of solipsism", he says, "shrinks to a point without extension". (5.64.) Therefore, this is another way of saying that "in an important sense, there is no subject". It is logically required, one might say, by the "myness" of experience, but the idea only refers to a logical

point (without extension) and is therefore without content.

Just as we have seen a certain resemblance between Wittgenstein's idea that there is no thinking self and one aspect of Hume's philosophy, so there is a partial resemblance between Wittgenstein's "metaphysical subject" and one aspect of Kant's philosophy. The metaphysical subject of the Tractatus has a certain resemblance to Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception" in the Critique of Pure Reason (if one excludes the epistemological and synthetical functions of Kant's notion and leaves only the pure unity or "myness" of apperception: the "I think" which accompanies any act of apperception). However, unlike Wittgenstein, in Kant's philosophy it would seem that there is a self "behind", so to speak, the transcendental unity of apperception, a "behind" which is the unknowable noumenal self, the self "as I am in myself":

> ...Only in so far as I can grasp the manifold of the representations in one consciousness, do I call them one and all mine. For otherwise I should have as many-coloured and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself. (B 134.)[19]

> I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am....
>
> Accordingly I have no knowledge of myself as I am.... The consciousness of self is thus very far from being a knowledge of the self.... (B 157 & 158.)

Wittgenstein's metaphysical self is not a hidden, noumenal reality of which there can be no knowledge. It is a contentless point at "the limit of the world" required only because of the unsayable "myness" of the world. Just as the eye is at the limit of the visual field and no inferences concerning the eye can be made from what appears in the field,

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19. Norman Kemp Smith, tr., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

so nothing can be said about the metaphysical self. It is nonsense, for Wittgenstein, to speak of any order of things that transcends the world since what can be said with sense is only the world, i.e., the totality of facts. (1.1.) This is why in the very center of his discussion of what is true about solipsism we find his affirmation that "there is no a priori order of things". (5.634, emphasis added.) Thus the idea of a "noumenal realm" having some sort of unknowable content would be nonsense for Wittgenstein. As we have seen, his attack on metaphysics was an attempt to combat metaphysical beliefs as well as metaphysical scepticism. As will become clear, this is why Wittgenstein's philosophy would seem to come closer to the Buddhist idea of "nothingness" or "emptiness" than would Kant's.

However, at least one commentator, T.R.V. Murti, has connected Kant's noumenon with precisely this "emptiness" or "nothingness" of Buddhist thought. (Just as similar connections have been made with both the earlier and later Wittgenstein.[20]) Our suggestion here, however, is that Wittgenstein's philosophy in the Tractatus avoids the danger of implying a hypostatization of "what" is beyond the limits of language more thoroughly than does Kant's.[21] Therefore, the connection with Buddhism seems even clearer in the case of Wittgenstein. Chris Gudmunsen, in his book Wittgenstein and Buddhism, believes this to be the case. He refers, by way of contrast, to Murti's book The Central Philosophy of Buddhism

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20. See the books and articles on this topic listed in the bibliography.

21. Of course, in another area the Tractatus hypostatizes in a clearly metaphysical way (in terms of the picture theory which requires metaphysical objects and their possibilities of combination). The tension here is connected with the paradoxical aspects of the book already discussed.

(1955):

> Murti has already interpreted the Madhyamika in a Kantian way, and Wittgenstein and Kant are in certain respects similar.... Wittgenstein's work can be seen as the "second wave of critical philosophy", doing a job with language similar to the job Kant did with thoughts - finding the limits of what can be said (or thought) by an examination of language (or thought) itself. Both Kant and Wittgenstein make necessity and universality dependent on people's patterns of thought (or language). Both reject speculative metaphysics as the taking of thought (or language) on an illicit holiday beyond the limits of what can validly be thought (or said)....
>
> The problem with using Kantian ideas to interpret the Madhyamika is that they give it a distastefully Absolutist flavour. For Murti, the term "emptiness" refers to something - to an indescribable reality behind what we experience, to the Kantian Noumenon in fact....
>
> Once emptiness is made into a hidden reality, the essential idea of it has been lost....
>
> A Kantian approach to emptiness leads to just such an "absolute ground". A Wittgensteinian approach shows that the freedom which emptiness gives is the freedom from assumptions about objects - assumptions based on a certain view of language.[22]

One basic aspect of the Buddhist doctrine of "emptiness" involves the theme we have been discussing: Wittgenstein's idea that "there is no subject". For in enumerating all the elements of the world we discover nothing but facts. Even psychological phenomena are part of this enumeration; nothing is left over: and, as we saw, the nothing that is left over can be termed either the unsayable "true self", i.e., the metaphysical self, or that there is no self. Compare John Blofeld's description of Mahayana Buddhist thinking concerning the self:

> When Buddhists speak of finding one's true self, they mean finding the no-self which is a universal possession sometimes called in English the Self. Yet this does not imply that a sentient being is a lump of flesh animated by a life-force that is snuffed out at death; it points to the

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22. London: Macmillan, 1977, pp.50-52.

> profound truth that lies between the erroneous concepts of eternal existence and annihilation. Just as there is no part of a teapot, for example, which can be described as the real self of the pot, no essence of teapot independent of its substance, shape, colour, age, condition, and function, so do gods, men and animals have nothing which can be divorced from the constantly shifting physical and mental characteristics of their beings. The seeming individuality of each is a bundle of transient qualities, all ephemeral and unstable, all dependent for their fleeting existence on innumerable interlocking factors to which billions of causes, prior and concurrent, have contributed. Take away all these qualities and what remains is indivisible from the own-nature (or own-non-nature) of all other entities. There can be no individual soul for, when the transient qualities are removed, what is left is the immaculate non-substance that neither exists nor is non-existent, in which there is no duality, let alone plurality.[23]

This passage contains several interesting features that are comparable to Wittgenstein's thinking in the Tractatus:

1. The dual possibilities, just discussed, of characterizing the subject as either "true self" or "not self" (anatta).
2. An enumeration of the elements of the world, similar to Wittgenstein's method in 5.631, to the point of finding nothing left over.
3. A way of characterizing "the self" as neither existing nor as not existing.
4. Finally, a deep sense of Buddhist (or one might almost say Humean) realism.

The first two of these features have already been discussed. The third point might serve as a way of characterizing the "status" of Wittgenstein's "metaphysical self". For it would be nonsense, for

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23. The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet (New York: Causeway Books, 1974), p.53.

Wittgenstein, to ask whether this "point without extension", which functions as "the limit of the world", exists. What "exists" is the world (TLP 1 & 2), and there is no order of things beyond the world. (5.634.)[24] Therefore, once we have enumerated "the world as I found it" and have shown that "in an important sense there is no subject" (only this unsayable "myness") we might very well characterize the result in the language of Buddhism:

> ...What is left is the immaculate non-substance that neither exists nor is non-existent, in which there is no duality, let alone plurality.

The insistence on taking this world at its face value, just as we find it, is the characteristic of Buddhism referred to in the fourth point listed here. This kind of realism has a direct parallel in Wittgenstein's philosophy. For Wittgenstein says that when what is true about solipsism is fully understood what is left is simply "pure realism":

> Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it. (5.64.)

This thought is spelled out more fully in the Notebooks:

> This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side nothing is left over, and on the other side, as unique, the world. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out. (p.85.)

The "point without extension", in the Tractatus formulation, parallels "the

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24. In our discussion below of Wittgenstein's remark "that the world exists", we will come upon another use of the word "existence", a use which is merely a pointer to one aspect of what "cannot be said".

nothing" that is left over in the Notebook version. And in the former, "the reality coordinated" with the self parallels, in the latter, what if left alone "as unique, the world". On the one side, a nothingness "which neither exists nor does not exist", and on the other the public world of language, other people, and things. What the solipsist "means" has been preserved (the uniqueness of "sheer experience"), but the result is a far cry from the "private world" of the traditional solipsist. There is no Cartesian "metaphysical privacy" here. Wittgenstein's world in the Tractatus is one of "pure realism".

The three points emphasized at the beginning of the present discussion are now perhaps clearer in connection with Wittgenstein's view of solipsism. The force of the first point, that scepticism is "nonsensical when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked", is evident in connection with Wittgenstein's view of the self. What questions could possibly be asked about a point without extension? What could be asked about an absolutely unsayable "myness" which constitutes the world as "sheer experience", about a "something" which the Notebooks characterize as "nothing"? The metaphysical scepticism which was so fundamental to Nietzsche's philosophy cannot exist here. Once the limits of language are seen very clearly, such questions, like all of metaphysics, lose their point and only silence remains.

By the same token the force of the second point becomes apparent: seeing the limits of language, Wittgenstein says, "signifies the unsayable". Seeing that only structure and form are available to language points to what is most overwhelmingly present but cannot be said: sheer experience, the "myness" of the world.

The third point emphasized in connection with Wittgenstein's

presuppositionalism and focus on the limits of language was that he is calling not for positivism but for a new understanding of the human situation. This new way of looking is reflected not only in his views on solipsism but in the whole of the Tractatus. And perhaps its newness is most fundamentally reflected in the parallelism between seeing clearly the limits of language and what "makes itself manifest". For it is this "seeing clearly" which is the link between Wittgenstein's tremendous drive to get to the bottom of the logic of language, on the one hand, and the idea of an awareness, on the other hand, of those "dimensions" that cannot be gotten into language.

It should be clear that these three points lose none of their force in terms of any of the other aspects of what "cannot be said" in the Tractatus. What has "absolute value", what is manifest but cannot be said ("the ethical", "the mystical") is just as overwhelmingly present as the sheer qualitative content of our experience. Yet no scepticism is possible here, only a kind of "breakthrough" into a new awareness of that which is right in front of our eyes. This is also true of those two further aspects of what cannot be said which we have yet to discuss: the present moment, and that the world exists.

vii. The Present Moment, and That The World Exists

Time, in the Tractatus functions as simply another form of description of the world. What one can say with sense is given by the possibility of combinations of various objects. And one form of objects is time: "Space,

time, and colour (being coloured) are forms of objects". (2.0251.) Unlike Kant, who gives a special status to time as "the form of inner sense", Wittgenstein gives no special status to time other than seeing it as one more logic (like those of space and color) which must be presupposed if we are to speak at all about the facts which make up the world. And temporal description can be used in connection with psychological events in just the same way that it can be used with regard to physical events. As we have seen, one cannot think beyond what cannot be said, for sense is the presupposition of there being any true or false propositions at all. Hence, as with Kant, time has a presuppositional status, but not as part of any transcendental apparatus of the mind: rather, as one more aspect of the logic of our language. Therefore, Wittgenstein can affirm that: "we cannot imagine temporal objects outside time". (2.0121.)

However, we have also seen that, in an absolutely unsayable way, we are confronted with manifest "dimensions" not within the space-time world: what is true about solipsism involves the sense of a metaphysical subject which is "not a part" of the world. (5.641.) It is in this way that timelessness or "eternity" comes into human life. To be aware of the unsayable immediacy which cannot be gotten into the purely formal and structural calculus which is language is already to be living in the timeless present.

This is why Wittgenstein can use the same simile for his remarks about the timeless present as he does for his remarks about the metaphysical self.

> Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death.
>
> If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.

> Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits.... (6.4311.)
>
> The solution to the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time. (6.4312.)

Just as the eye is outside the visual field, so the outside of "life" is here and now. The metaphysical self - and the timeless present in which it lives - are not part of the space-time world at all. To look at something sub specie aeternitatis, Wittgenstein says, is to view the object "together with space and time instead of in space and time". (N p.83.)

With this way of looking at things comes happiness and the dissolution of the problems connected with the idea of one's own death. For in this way of looking at things one is literally free of the world. One sees one's body and various psychological characteristics as merely facts in a world which are not connected to that metaphysical subject and timeless present which transcend the world. "Whoever realizes this", Wittgenstein says, "will not want to procure a pre-eminent place for his own body or for the human body". (N p.82.)

Brian McGuinness, in his discussion of this timeless present in his article on "The Mysticism of The Tractatus", emphasizes in somewhat different words precisely this "freedom from the world":

> The Notebooks make clear that both the realization that the world is my world (pp.82, par.9; 85) and the ability to "live in the present" (p.74, par.20) are essential parts of happiness. The insight which Wittgenstein expresses by the words "I am my world" is in part a refusal to identify oneself with one part of the world rather than another (pp.82, pars.8-9; 84, pars.2,9). One who has this insight does not identify himself with the physiological or psychological peculiarities and life of a particular individual human being. The higher or metaphysical self feels itself identical with the whole world (p.80, pars.11-12), and its happiness is the goodness - the expansion - of the whole world. Naturally, fear or hope are remote from such a self (from the self with such an insight), since it has no particular concern with the future of any individual....

> I think it is fairly obvious that Wittgenstein quite justly speaks of "timelessness" (6.4311) with regard to such an attitude of mind. Where there is neither fear nor hope, there is no real concept of past or future. It is only the empirical self which is attached to a particular position in time: for the metaphysical self, space and time are ingredients of the world it contemplates and accepts.[25]

It is in large measure this being free of the world that Wittgenstein means when he speaks of "being happy". For if I am free of the world I will no longer be struggling "from within", so to speak, and this very non-attachment to anything within the world is equivalent to being in agreement with the world. I can only be in complete harmony with the world if I am free of it in this way. Otherwise, if one views oneself as part of the world, there is always the threat of destruction by other elements within the world. Hence, there is always fear and no true happiness, since the happy person, for Wittgenstein, has no fear. All of these ideas are brought together on two consecutive pages of the Notebooks:

> But is it possible for one so to live that life stops being problematic? That one is living in eternity and not in time?
>
> A man who is happy must have no fear....
> Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy.
> For life in the present there is no death....
> In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what "being happy" means. (pp.74-75.)

Hence being "in agreement with the world", and "being happy" are the same, for Wittgenstein, as being free of the world. As McGuinness says, it is "a refusal to identify oneself with one part of the world rather than another". And all three of these notions involve living "not in time but in

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25. Philosophical Review, LXXV, July 66,3, pp.318-319.

the present".

Just as we have seen that the awareness of "the timeless present" was inseparable from what is true about solipsism, so the awareness "that the world exists" is inseparable from both of these. In dividing up things under these headings (as Wittgenstein does), he is simply pointing to three aspects of one and the same awareness of what "cannot be said, but makes itself manifest". (5.62.)

We should remind ourselves at this point that our entire discussion of these matters would be "nonsense", for Wittgenstein (in the limited sense of that word described in section iv above), just as his own presentation of these matters in the Tractatus would also be "nonsense" in this way. We are certainly not engaged in any "knowledge" activity when these matters are discussed since the Tractatus insists that the very presuppositional nature of language prevents there being any facts which are not simply a mirroring by propositions of structures of objects in the world.

However, Wittgenstein points out that philosophy itself is not a factual activity, that it is an "activity" which consists of "elucidations", that is, in "the logical clarification of thoughts" (4.112), and that its "place is above or below the natural sciences, not beside them". (4.111.) Therefore we might say that by bringing up these matters at the end of his book, Wittgenstein is aiming at the logical clarification of our human situation itself; he is trying to get clear not only about language and its limits but about the relation of human beings to language and its limits. To do this, we have seen, philosophy may be required to "signify what cannot be said". (4.115.) Wittgenstein in these aphorisms is pointing to aspects of our human situation which "make themselves manifest" but which cannot be said.

It is important to realize, therefore, that the word we have adopted in connection with "the timeless present", the word "awareness",[26] is not to be taken as describing a factual state of affairs, a factual psychological "experience" of some kind. Rather, it functions in these discussions in the same way that many of Wittgenstein's own statements function: as a mere pointer, a "ladder" which we may climb up and "throw away" behind us (6.54), as a kind of poetic use of language which philosophy may use as a tool for clarifying the human situation. Of course, insofar as such words appear within propositional language and appear to be making factual claims they are, for Wittgenstein, nonsensical.

Wittgenstein makes a similar point in connection with what we are here calling the "awareness" that the world exists. He says there is something presupposed even by logic which is simply the existence of something: that there be something at all, a world. But since logic is the presupposition of all facts, and hence there can be no experience of any fact or of any something being so prior to logic, the existence of that something which must be presupposed by logic cannot itself be an "experience":

> The 'experience' that we need in order to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something is: that, however, is not an experience.
>
> Logic is prior to every experience - that something is so. (5.552.)

When we are trying to clarify the human situation in regard to language, which requires that we sometimes point at what is beyond language, we may, like Wittgenstein, run into paradoxical sounding talk.

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26. Following the suggestion of Milton Munitz in Contemporary Analytic Philosophy, see above, section ii.

For this "awareness" that the world exists, he is saying here, can only be called an "experience" which is not an experience.[27] Perhaps this is why Wittgenstein reserves a second, narrower, use of the word "mystical" for the thatness of the world. (6.44.) Even though we have already seen him use the word for the whole range of "things" which, he claims, "cannot be put into words" (6.522), he also uses it in this more specific sense:

> It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists. (6.44.)
>
> To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole - a limited whole.
> Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical. (6.45.)
>
> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words.
> The riddle does not exist.
> If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it. (6.5)

Why is there no question that can be put into words regarding the sheer presence or sheer thatness of the world? Traditional Western philosophy and theology frequently asked questions like "Why was the world created?", or "Where did the world come from?", or in the well known Leibnizian formulation: "Why is there something rather than nothing?" Wittgenstein's objection to such questions would seem to be connected with

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27. For an interesting discussion of the relation of language to religious insight in connection to both Christian Neo-Orthodox theology and Zen Buddhism see Hsueh-Li Cheng, "Zen, Wittgenstein, and Neo-Orthodox Theology: The Problem of Communicating Truth in Zen Buddhism" (Religious Studies, Je 82, 18,133-149). Chen points out that some Zen Masters freely make use of metaphysical language and suggests that Wittgenstein's anti-metaphysical philosophy is therefore not very close to Zen. What Cheng does not realize is that Wittgenstein's primary objection is not to metaphysical language per se but rather to a metaphysical point of view which obscures the limits of language and hence an awareness of what cannot be said but "makes itself manifest".

the same reason that one cannot speak of the sheer presence of the world (or of anything at all) as an "experience" and hence must resort to paradoxical formulations such as "it is an experience which is not an experience". Since the logic of language (its sense) is prior to any true or false statement about the world, any meaningful questions or answers necessarily concern only how things are in the world; they ask about what is so, the facts. But, we have seen, the sheer existence of the world is prior even to logic. When we wish to ask a question in this regard, we are misunderstanding language and hence are not clear about our human situation in connection with language. Our problem is the same as when we wish to claim that we "experience" the sheer presence of the world. If we are clear about our human situation in relation to language (and hence the limits of language), we realize that this word, and ultimately all words, are inappropriate. Because this "awareness" (which is not an awareness) carries absolute value for us, we may use all kinds of poetic and metaphorical language in an attempt to point others towards what is so absolutely important in human life. But in the last analysis, we can only stand in silence (6.54) before the unsayable: the sheer existence, the overwhelming presence, of the world.

viii. Non-duality

Philosophy, Wittgenstein says, "signifies the unsayable" by making clear the limits of what can be said. It should now be apparent that this activity of philosophy includes, for Wittgenstein, not only "what is true about solipsism", but those several things said to be "beyond language" with which the Tractatus concludes. The fundamental thesis of this chapter is

that we are seeing in every case a direct relationship between Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, especially his radical presuppositionalism, and his aphorisms regarding solipsism, "the ethical", and "the mystical". Seeing this connection is fundamental to understanding the book. It is the deep study of the nature and limits of language itself which can bring us to clarity about the human situation, about those "aspects" of the human situation that are beyond language, and about the confusions involved in an attitude of "metaphysical scepticism". All three of these insights, for Wittgenstein, are included in the philosophical "elucidations" which make up the Tractatus.

In this concluding section it is also important to make clear that the three notions discussed in the last two sections (the metaphysical subject, the timeless present, and that the world exists) have been articulated as separate ideas primarily for the purposes of philosophical clarification (as, to a certain extent, Wittgenstein himself does). Ultimately, however, these would all seem to be integral to a unitary and absolutely unsayable immediacy which transcends anything we might call "awareness" or "consciousness" and is perhaps what the Buddhists are getting at in their notion of tathata or "suchness".[28]

Perhaps Wittgenstein "experienced" some such state in his early life.[29] McGuinness suggests as much when, after quoting a number of classical examples of "mystical experiences", he concludes that "...There is

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28. Although differing interpretations of what is meant by this term are possible, the quotations we cite point towards the idea of "non-duality". Our point here is not to debate an issue Buddhist scholarship, but simply draw attention to this important idea of "non-duality" in connection with "the mystical".

29. For one possibility see Malcolm's Memoir, p.70.

a common enough mystical state which has little to do with religion, as that term is normally understood, but which agrees with the feelings described by Wittgenstein"[30] We suggest the term "suchness" because in Buddhism this often connotes the absolute unity and unsayability of the mystical state. John Blofeld describes the use of this term in a way which emphasizes this unsayable and "non-dual" quality:

> Since reality transcends the categories of existence and non-existence, it cannot be conveyed by any epithets or concepts whatsoever. Phrases like 'the Absolute', 'Ultimate Reality' and so on are all inappropriate because each of them has an opposite or counterpart and therefore limits what it describes - hence the useful term 'Suchness'.[31]

If this suggestion is correct, then the distinction between a metaphysical self, on the one hand (which is ultimately "nothing"), and the sheer presence of the world, on the other (including the sheer qualitative content of the world), would ultimately have to be discarded in favor of the absolute unity of what is beyond language and thought. The Buddhist "emptiness" or "nothingness" (sunyata)[32] which we discussed in connection with what is true about solipsism (no private self) would be seen to be the "same" emptiness manifested in the sheer presence of the world (which is literally no-thing). And this emptiness, beyond space and time, confronts the individual living in the timeless present. Shinjin-No-Mei, a fifth century Chinese Zen Master, focused on this unity of suchness in his poem "On Believing in Mind": It is empty (or "void"), and non-dual. He calls it "Suchness":

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30. "The Mysticism of The 'Tractatus'", p.326.

31. The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet, p.241.

32. See, e.g., Coomaraswamy, Buddha and The Gospel of Buddhism, p.318.

All is void, lucid, and self-illuminating;
There is no exertion, no waste of energy -
This is where thinking never attains,
This is where the imagination fails to measure.

In the higher realm of true Suchness
There is neither "self" nor "other":
When direct identification is sought,
We can only say, "Not two".[33]

Someone coming upon this timeless state of perfect unity and harmony would certainly be spiritually transformed. This person would be, as Wittgenstein says, beyond death and beyond fear. He or she would have come upon a kind of "eternal life" (6.4311) in which all the problems of life and death would have vanished, and he would then need no "purpose except to live". (N p.73.) In this way we could say that "the sense of life had become clear" to this person, but this sense would be beyond language and certainly not communicable to others in the propositions of ordinary language. The final item on our list of things that could not be said was precisely this "sense of life":

> The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem.
>
> (Is not this the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?)
>
> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical. (6.522.)

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33. In D.T. Suzuki, An Introduction to Zen Buddhism (New York: Causeway Books, 1974), p.81.

One can understand, then, what Eric Gutkind meant when he summed up Wittgenstein's Tractatus with the following words:

> Let me say a few words about a philosopher of our time, one of the greatest of geniuses, Ludwig Wittgenstein. He published during his lifetime only one small book, a book we can compare to the profound classics of humanity. It can even be compared to the "Tao Te King", the great book of Taoism. This is by no means a superficial comparison. Wittgenstein's book is guided by the principles that remind us of Taoism. He too was absolutely overwhelmed by the fact that what is the greatest insight we cannot say.[34]

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34. The Body of God (New York: Horizon Press, 1969), p.89.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER PHILOSOPHY

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition. It must, as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future or past. For I was thereby revealing myself as someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do.
>
> Wittgenstein[1]

> In logic....you can't get behind the rules, because there isn't any behind.
>
> Wittgenstein[2]

i. Overview

When Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge and to philosophy in 1929, he had not yet formulated a new philosophy. Although, as we shall see, various influences may have led him to recognize the need of rethinking his early views, the writings of these years still embody to some extent

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1. CV p.24.

2. PG p.244.

the "picture theory of language" which was to disappear entirely from his writings after 1933.[3]

Our examination of the Tractatus focused on two fundamental orientations of the book which, as we saw, were to a large extent incompatible. On the one hand, there was what we have called Wittgenstein's "presuppositionalism", the idea that sense is logically prior to truth and falsity. On the other hand, somewhat paradoxically, Wittgenstein had developed a metaphysics, a doctrine concerning "the substance of the world", which attempted to articulate what must be the nature of this substance if language is to operate with sense by picturing possible states of affairs, true or false.

As we shall see, it was the conflict between these two sets of ideas which had to be worked out during these transitional years. This process can be traced in one form or another in each book or document relating to these years: the conversations recorded by Waismann in Ludwig Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle (1929-31), the Philosophical Remarks (1929-30), Wittgenstein's Lectures - Cambridge, 1930-32, the Philosophical Grammar (written 1930-33), and G.E. Moore's Lecture Notes for 1930-33. One other document of this period, the 1930 "Lecture on Ethics", does not explicitly bring in these ideas but does draw on the notion of language having "limits" beyond which we can only talk nonsense, a notion, as we have seen, itself basic to the Tractatus point of view concerning ethics and "the mystical". By the time of the Blue Book (1933-34) and the notes found in Wittgenstein's Lectures - Cambridge, 1932-35 a fundamental

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3. G.H. Von Wright calls the writings of this period (prior to the Blue Book of 1933-34) a "transitional stage in Wittgenstein's development", Ludwig Wittgenstein - A Memoir, p.14.

change has taken place and the picture theory, along with the ontological way of speaking which accompanied it, has largely been dropped. In this chapter, however, for convenience sake, we shall include the notes of the 1932-35 lectures since the time span of these lectures bridges the end of the "transitional period" and the beginning of Wittgenstein's later point of view.

Because of the transitional nature of this period we can make no attempt to trace a fully coherent philosophy in this material but simply to indicate the change that did take place and to demonstrate what is crucial to the focus of this essay: that the aspect of his early philosophy which challenged metaphysics, namely his presuppositionalism, and his attitude toward the mission of philosophy were in no way dropped during this period. On the contrary, if anything, both were intensified and carried over into his later philosophical work. In Chapter Seven we will investigate the nature of "truth" in Wittgenstein's later philosophy and in Chapter Eight his assessment of the complex relations between the apriori and aposteriori in ordinary language. At that point we will be in a position to return to the question of modern nihilism raised in Chapters One through Four and to examine in the light of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language the possibility of overcoming this nihilism.

In addition to what changed, and to what remained the same, a striking and significant new philosophical preoccupation shows up in these years, right from the beginning in the early Philosophical Remarks. This is the investigation of 'expecting', 'intending', and 'meaning' (meaning something). We will discuss the significance of this development in the following chapter. But first, before going on to the basic change in Wittgenstein's philosophy, it will be worth our while to review briefly the

influences that may have stimulated Wittgenstein to begin rethinking his early point of view.

ii. The Return to Philosophy

The influences and motives which led Wittgenstein to return to philosophy after a decade of absence are not well known. A comparison of Wittgenstein's letters over this period shows a striking change in his attitude towards his own capacity to do philosophical work. In a 1924 letter to Keynes, Wittgenstein states that he has nothing more to say, that his "spring has run dry":

> You ask in your letter whether you could do anything to make it possible for me to return to scientific work. The answer is, No: there's nothing that can be done in that way, because I myself no longer have any strong inner drive towards that sort of activity. Everything that I really had to say, I have said, and so the spring has run dry. That sounds queer, but its how things are.[4]

However, by 1929, after Wittgenstein had returned to Cambridge, Wittgenstein's letter to Moore requesting a grant so that he can continue his "research work" contains all the optimism of someone for whom the spring is once again flowing steadily:

> I am in the middle of a bit of research work which I don't want to break off as it seems to me hopeful....I therefore ask the College to grant me say 50 pounds which would enable me to go on with my philosophical work till, at least, Xmas. If it should turn out, that in this time I have been able to produce good work - as judged by anybody the College would consider an expert in the matter - and if,

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4. G.H. von Wright, ed., Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p.116.

> further, I should feel capable of continuing my work with success, then I propose to ask the College again for some sort of subvention.[5]

Von Wright states, in his "Biographical Sketch", that "Wittgenstein said that he returned to philosophy because he felt that he could again do creative work",[6] and Moore suggests that he chose Cambridge in order to be able to have frequent discussions with F.P. Ramsey.[7]

What is not well understood is the extent to which a change in Wittgenstein's thinking about the "truth" of the thoughts put forth in the Tractatus had already taken place during the period of Wittgenstein's sojourn first as a schoolteacher in small Austrian villages and then as an architect in Vienna for his sister Margarete Stonborough.[8]

Wittgenstein's own testimony in the Preface to the Philosophical Investigations seems to suggest that he has "been forced to recognize grave mistakes" in what he wrote in the Tractatus due to conversations with Frank Ramsey and P. Straffa which took place since his return to Cambridge in 1929.[9] However, some commentators have pointed to certain events which occurred during the 1920s (and perhaps as early as 1919) which may have stimulated Wittgenstein to reexamine the ideas of the Tractatus. For example, Von Wright has pointed to the 1923 and 1924 visits by Frank Ramsey to the Austrian villages where Wittgenstein was a school teacher, to the contact with Wittgenstein later made by Moritz

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5. Ibid., p.152.

6. In Malcolm, pp.12-13.

7. Moore Lecture Notes, quoted in Fann, ed., Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1978), p.40.

8. Bartley, pp.92-95.

9. PI, p.vi.

Schlick and Friedrich Waismann of the Vienna Circle, and to the 1928 lecture in Vienna by the Dutch mathematician E.L.J. Brouwer which was "rumoured" to have "stirred him to take up philosophy again".[10]

In addition, the period of Wittgenstein's schoolteaching years has been examined in some detail by W.W. Bartley III in his book Wittgenstein. Although Bartley agrees that "just how and precisely when Wittgenstein changed his philosophical approach provides a historical puzzle that probably cannot be solved",[11] he shows suggestive parallels between the philosophy behind the Austrian school reform movement (which had trained Wittgenstein as a teacher and of which he was a part) and Wittgenstein's own later ideas. Perhaps, as Bartley suggests, Wittgenstein's observations as a teacher, together with the theoretical ideas of Karl Beuhler (1879-1963) and the Gestalt Psychologists, (which were behind the school reform movement) showed Wittgenstein the inadequacy of his early conception of language.[12]

Bartley's description of Beuhler's basic ideas bears such a striking resemblance to some of Wittgenstein's later ideas that it is worth quoting here. For if this was indeed an influence on his later philosophy, then Wittgenstein had been rethinking his ideas from as early as 1919 when he was enrolled in the Lehrerbildungsanstalt in Vienna![13]

> Beuhler's work, particularly his Geistige Entwicklung des Kindes (1918) ...influenced the school-reform movement and was introduced almost at once as a textbook in pedagogy in

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10. In Malcolm, pp.12-13.

11. Bartley, p.103.

12. Ibid., pp.103-120.

13. Ibid., p.23.

the new teacher training colleges....

> Beuhler began to develop a theory called 'imageless thought'.... The idea of imageless thought, as presented by Keulpe and Beuhler, stressed that in the intentional act of representing, the particular image or model used, if any, need bear no 'imaginal' resemblance to that which it represented. Abstract words, it was claimed, are used conventionally, and neither can be, nor need be, reduced to atoms or elements, including sense impressions. Such a view was, like those put forward by the Gestalt psychologists, radically opposed to positivism and to any number of related philosophical and psychological doctrines, whether they be called associationism, reductionism, behaviorism, or logical atomism....
>
> Beuhler insisted that his arguments against psychological atomism also defeat epistemological and philosophical atomism....
>
> Although his name appears in no list of Beuhler's students, it appears that among the most eminent of those who learned from Beuhler was Wittgenstein.[14]

If these ideas did influence Wittgenstein, however, they certainly did not seem to have an immediate effect. For we have seen him declare to Keynes as late as 1924 that "everything that I really had to say, I have said."

Whatever the influences that showed Wittgenstein the need for rethinking his early philosophy, it may be that his motive was connected with the failure of the Tractatus to achieve its stated purposes. For if, as we saw in the last chapter, a large part of what Wittgenstein had to say was connected with the attempt to underline the ethical and the mystical, perhaps he realized that insofar as the other doctrines of the Tractatus were misleading, he had failed in his purpose of putting everything firmly into place by "remaining silent about it".[15]

Janik and Toulmin suggest much the same as the primary reason for Wittgenstein's return to philosophy:

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14. Ibid., pp.105-6.

15. Luckhardt, ed., Letter to Ficker, p.95.

> ...The writing of the Tractatus had not, after all, completed Wittgenstein's philosophical task. His earlier solution of the "transcendental" problem - that is, his earlier account of the scope and limits of language - had been given in terms of a "picturing" relation which (as he now saw all too clearly) had been at best a helpful metaphor. Now he was faced with a complementary task, of showing how any linguistic expression - whether "pictorial" or not - acquires a linguistic significance, by being given a use in human life....
>
> Yet, for all this shift of focus, the deeper preoccupation of his later years remained the same as that of his youth: to complete the logical and ethical tasks begun by Kant and Schopenhauer....
>
> Wittgenstein had entered philosophy with both intellectual and ethicoreligious preoccupations, the former derived from the transcendental inquiries of Kant and Schopenhauer, the latter inherited from Tolstoy and kept alive by Kierkegaard. The two groups of preoccupations together focused his attention on the scope and limits of linguistic expression....
>
> The final solution of Wittgenstein's initial "transcendental" problem then consists in coming to recognize all the multifarious ways in which "forms of life" create legitimate contexts for "language games," and how these in turn delimit the scope and boundaries of the sayable.[16]

We shall see in this and subsequent chapters that whatever Wittgenstein's motive was for returning to philosophy, this gives a fairly adequate summary account of what he finally did achieve. We have studied the connection between the closing passages in the Tractatus (in which the "correct method of philosophy" would be to show the meaninglessness of metaphysical claims) and the immediately preceding passages concerning those "things that cannot be put into words", the ethical and the mystical. In 1931 Wittgenstein says that his concern is now with "grammar", with making "grammar clear" and he goes on to say that:

> I once wrote, The only correct method of doing philosophy consists in not saying anything and leaving it to

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16. Janik & Toulmin, pp.223-25.

> another person to make a claim. That is the method I now adhere to. (VC p.183.)

It would seem reasonable that the dual mission suggested by Janik and Toulmin, the "transcendental" attempt to show the limits of language on the one hand and and the attempt to underline the ethical dimension on the other hand, still animated Wittgenstein's thought. We will see that this was the case. With this in mind, then, let us examine the ideas that actually emerged, and those that began to disappear, when Wittgenstein finally did return to philosophical work in 1929.

iii. The Initial Philosophical Situation

During the years 1929-31 Wittgenstein occasionally speaks in a voice that is strongly reminiscent of the Tractatus. He still seems to think, at times, in terms of the picture theory, the idea that there must be a structural isomorphism between language and reality if we are going to be able to describe the world truly or falsely.

> Language consists of propositions (excluding for the moment so-called mathematical propositions). A proposition is a picture of reality, and we compare proposition with reality. We give prescriptions for action in propositions, and these prescriptions must have some picture-pictured relation with reality. (L32 p.1.)

And this picturing capacity of propositions would seem to imply (as in the Tractatus) that the logic of language in some way "mirrors" the ontological structure of reality. Now, however, Wittgenstein tends to use the word "grammar" in place of the word "logic": "True propositions describe reality. Grammar is a mirror of reality. Grammar enables us to express true and false propositions...." (L32 pp.9-10.)

Some of Wittgenstein's arguments are strikingly similar to those of the Tractatus: he moves from this idea that grammar mirrors reality to the notion that what "language and reality" have in common is "logical form":

> But in order that propositions may be able to represent at all something further is needed which is the same both in language and reality. For example, a picture can represent a scene rightly or wrongly....
>
> Thought must have the logical form of reality if it is to be thought at all.
>
> Grammar is not the expression of what is the case but of what is possible. There is a sense therefore in which possibility is logical form. (L32 p.10.)

Statements such as these are relatively rare in comparison to the volume of material connected with this period, and they are not put forward in the systematic and dogmatic style of the Tractatus. However, it is clear that Wittgenstein had not yet abandoned his "picture theory" nor the ontological way of speaking connected with this. As late as the academic year 1931-32, we find him making the following statement:

> ...The proposition does not work by suggestion, but as a picture or projection of reality; and since a fact can either be a fact or not, there must be the same possibility in the picture or projection. (L32 p.93.)

The language of the Tractatus is thus still in evidence, not only in specific doctrinal statements such as these but in a way of speaking which draws on that earlier ontological background: for example, Wittgenstein often uses such phrases as "the representation of reality by propositions". (PR p.113.)

However, the reader with this background in mind is struck, in the notes and writings of these years, by a glaring omission of what was at the very heart of the ontology of the Tractatus: there is no doctrine of "objects". In the last chapter we saw that it was most likely the doctrine

of "objects" that would be condemned as "nonsense" by the Tractatus' own concluding remarks. Wittgenstein, it would seem, was beginning to take this designation (of "nonsense") seriously and was realizing more clearly the role which this key word had played for him:

> It only makes sense to give the length of an object if I have a method for finding the object - since otherwise I cannot apply a yardstick to it.
>
> What I once called 'objects', simples, were simply what I could refer to without running the risk of their possible non-existence; i.e. that for which there is neither existence nor non-existence, and that means: what we can speak about no matter what may be the case. (PR p.72.)

Two assumptions behind the Tractatus had seemingly been synthesized to create this doctrine of objects. The first was that there must be some sort of substantiality to possibility since we can use language with sense "no matter what may be the case", and the second was that the meaning of words was connected with these words somehow corresponding to "things" in the world. These two assumptions combined, it would seem, produced the doctrine that all language had meaning because it could refer to, not ordinary things, since language can say what is false, but "objects" which "contain the possibility of all situations" (TLP 2.014). Wittgenstein has now recognized these assumptions and has seen that, first, there are other ways of speaking about "possibilities" without creating an ontology around them, and second, that there are other ways of looking at meaning (for example, as use) without requiring a correspondence relation between word and thing. The Moore Lecture Notes quote Wittgenstein as stating that "the meaning of a word is no longer for us an object corresponding to it", (p.261) and in the Philosophical Grammar Wittgenstein says "It is one of the most deep rooted mistakes in philosophy to see possibility as a

shadow of reality".[17]

Although we have seen Wittgenstein still sometimes thinking in terms of the model of language being a "picture of reality", by about 1930 he seems to have realized that this model may easily give rise to a metaphysical mythology, and it would seem that he has realized that the doctrine of "objects" and of "names naming objects" was just such a mythology:

> In philosophy one is constantly tempted to invent a mythology of symbolism or of psychology, instead of saying what we know.
>
> The concept of meaning I adopted in my philosophical discussions originates in a primitive philosophy of language.
>
> The German word for "meaning" is derived from the German word for "pointing".
>
> When Augustine talks about the learning of language he talks about how we attach names to things, or understand the names of things. Naming here appears as the foundation, the be all and the end all of language. (PG p.56.)

Naming, names naming objects, is now seen as a "primitive philosophy of language", and this passage goes on to discuss Augustine's view of language in a way similar, in many respects, to the discussion in the opening pages of the Philosophical Investigations.

With the omission from his philosophy of the early doctrine of "objects", two other highly technical ideas connected with this doctrine also disappeared: the idea that, in its innermost structure, language was composed of simple signs or names which named these simple objects and the idea of elementary propositions, combinations of simple names representing objects in states of affairs. (TLP 4.21,4.22.) All three of these technical ideas connected with the metaphysics of the Tractatus are absent in this transitional period. Except when he is criticizing his former

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17. PR p.283, cf. p.281 & p.58.

doctrines (as above), Wittgenstein now looks at these words from the point of view of ordinary language, especially from the point of view of an expanded conception of the role of sense in ordinary language:

> The connection between "language and reality" is made by the definitions of words, and these belong to grammar, so that language remains self-contained and autonomous....
>
> The correlation between objects and names is simply the one set up by a chart, by ostensive gestures and simultaneous uttering of the name, etc. It is part of the symbolism. Giving an object a name is essentially the same kind of thing as hanging a label on it. (PG p.97.)

Hence, in terms of this new emphasis on ordinary language and the role of sense within it: "The concept of an "elementary proposition" now loses all of its earlier significance". (PR p.111.)

The idea of an ideal language, more refined than ordinary language, to which philosophy aspires has now largely been replaced by the idea that philosophy "clarifies" particular misunderstandings within ordinary language. There are certain exceptions in this transitional period, as we have seen, for Wittgenstein has not yet dropped completely the ontological way of speaking which was integral to the Tractatus. Nevertheless, his dominant focus is now on ordinary language. Indeed, one way of understanding the fundamental idea which was to result in the later philosophy would be in terms of progressively seeing things more and more clearly from the point of view of ordinary language:

> ...The task of philosophy is not to create a new, ideal language, but to clarify the use of our language, the existing language.[18]

Wittgenstein had never wanted to create a new and ideal language as did

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18. PG p.115, cf. PG pp.121 & 210-11, & VC pp.45-46 & 48.

some philosophers of the time. The Tractatus had been concerned to understand the grammar of language itself, all language. However, it had conceived of this task as penetrating beneath the ambiguous surface of language to discover its inner structural core which made all representation possible. Now more and more Wittgenstein has stopped trying to penetrate to a supposed logical core of language and is looking at the actual grammar of ordinary language as it operates in the variety of situations within everyday life. Therefore, he can now say that the task of philosophy is "to clarify the use of our language, the existing language".

iv. Presuppositionalism

There is another way of describing the fundamental nature of the change that characterized these transitional years, a way perhaps more basic than the focus on ordinary language. For this focus was itself the result of a seeing ever more clearly the implications of a view that Wittgenstein had held from the start. This is Wittgenstein's view that sense is logically prior to truth and falsity, what we have been calling his "presuppositional" or "Kantian" starting point.

The last chapter tried to show just how fundamental this idea had been in the Tractatus. There it had been characterized primarily in terms of the idea of "logic" (which Wittgenstein had taken to be the innermost structural core of language and the carrier of sense which had to be presupposed in any designation of the facts): "Logic is prior to every experience that something is so". (TLP 5.552.) What this meant was that meaningful language is the presupposition of the very possibility of our gaining knowledge of the world. We must begin with meaningful language,

and hence there is no way of justifying the logic of language, that is, its correspondence with the world. Although we examined the paradox resulting from Wittgenstein's simultaneous attempt to justify, in some sense, the logic of language metaphysically, the presuppositionalism of the Tractatus held that what the world and language have in common - logical form - must be presupposed and cannot itself be said:

> Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form. (TLP 4.12.)

Although Wittgenstein no longer uses the phrase "logical form" in this regard, this basic idea, that sense ("grammar") must be presupposed before we can speak of truth or falsity (and hence that we cannot use facts to justify the relation between grammar and the world) is repeated dozens of times during the writings and lectures of these four years. This theme is repeated so many times, in fact, that it may be designated as the fundamental motif of this transitional period.[19] In the Moore Lecture Notes, Moore calls it "a question to which he returned again and again". (MLN p.277.) Sometimes this idea is phrased in a way strikingly reminiscent of the Tractatus, for example in the following:

> Language can express one method of projection as opposed to another. It cannot express what cannot be otherwise. We never arrive at fundamental propositions in the course of our investigations; we get to the boundary of language which stops us from asking further questions.... What is essential to the world cannot be said about the world; for then it could be otherwise, as any proposition can be

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19. See, for example, VC pp.213-14, 104-5, 210, 220; PR pp.53, 54, 55, 65, 125; L32 pp.12-13, 22, 34, 37, 44, 49, 86, 87, 94-5, 103, 104, 112, 114-15; PG pp.40, 88, 94, 97, 101, 109-10, 126-27, 143, 162, 184-86, 244, 304, 313; MLN pp.258, 277-78; L35 pp.1, 4, 65, 195.

negated. (L32 p.34.)

Many other times, however, Wittgenstein's presuppositionalism is couched not in the older language of "projections", "fundamental propositions", and the idea of an "essence" to the world, but in the later language of "conventions", "grammar", and "rules". In either case, it is the same basic idea that is being emphasized:

> If I could describe the point of grammatical conventions by saying they are made necessary by certain properties of the colours (say), then that would make the conventions superfluous, since in that case I would be able to say precisely that which the conventions exclude my saying. Conversely, if the conventions were necessary, i.e. if certain combinations of words had to be excluded as nonsensical, then for that very reason I cannot cite a property of colours that makes the conventions necessary, since it would then be conceivable that the colours should not have this property, and I could only express that by violating the conventions....
>
> ...Any kind of explanation of a language presupposes a language already....I cannot use language to get outside language.
>
> Grammatical conventions cannot be justified by describing what is represented. Any such description already presupposes the grammatical rules. (PR pp.53-55.)

The distinction between apriori sense and aposteriori factual matters is absolute in Wittgenstein's philosophy. To try to point out some characteristic of the world as a justification for the grammar of language is to obliterate this distinction. It is the attempt to "use language to get outside language" in order to justify grammar. But the bottom line of this distinction is that:

> You cannot justify grammar. For such a justification would have to be in the form of a description of the world and such a description might be otherwise, and the propositions expressing this different description would have to be false. But grammar requires them to be senseless. (L32 p.49.)

It is this idea, repeated again and again in various forms during these

years, which was one of the key factors leading Wittgenstein away from the metaphysical views of the Tractatus. For when the full implications of the immanence of meaning (sense) within language began to sink in, Wittgenstein was forced to make good on the "correct method in philosophy" spoken about at the end of the Tractatus (6.53). He was forced to begin giving up all metaphysical talk as "nonsense".

v. The Basic Change

Having been influenced initially by Frege's distinction between sense and reference, Wittgenstein had developed a theory of language which had included both of these as essential elements. On the one hand, language must refer to the world in a non-ambiguous way (simple names naming simple objects), but on the other hand, since it is possible to make sense independently of whether a proposition is true or false, the syntactic dimension of language must have a certain autonomy: sense must be prior to ordinary reference. The metaphysics of simple names naming metaphysically simple objects was not concerned with ordinary reference, however, except by analogy. It was constructed around the picture, which Wittgenstein held at that time, of structural mapping, a picture important to the mechanics of Boltzmann and Hertz, both of whom had influenced him strongly.[20] It seemed to be a logical requirement that language refer to the world, for how else could a proposition have a determinant sense which can be either true or false?

Wittgenstein's remarks at the close of the Tractatus make clear that

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20. See Janik and Toulman, pp.139-146.

he saw the conflict between these two aspects of his theory of language, for the second aspect, that sense is logically prior to reference, ultimately prohibits any saying of how the world must be if language is to be able to refer to the world. Yet the idea of structural picturing (the picture theory) was so compelling that it seemed logically the only possible way language could operate. Therefore, Wittgenstein's metaphysics of names, objects, and elementary propositions was in no way empirically derived (nor does he claim this), but had been arrived at through a kind of metaphysical deduction from the fact that propositions have sense and can represent the world truly or falsely.

Two realizations took place which forced him away from these views. The first is the one we have been discussing: he realized the implications of his own presuppositionalism. If one must presuppose meaning (sense) in order to talk about or refer to the world at all, then there is no way that we can develop a "theory of meaning" which involves naming, since before we can talk about naming (or referral of any sort, including pointing) we must always already presuppose the grammar of the language. Meaning cannot involve reference since there is no way to get outside of the meanings we have (language in operation) to see how the world might be (somehow in itself) and show the correlation between the way the world is (in itself) and these meanings. Any pointing or naming must already presuppose meaning and hence can never be the grounds or justification for meaning. As we have seen, this idea is emphasized many times during Wittgenstein's transitional period. It is an idea which excludes the possibility of any metaphysical deductions, including the one that had resulted in the Tractatus doctrine of objects. It is a realization of the autonomy of meaning within language.

This first realization, one might say, was a factor in Wittgenstein's turn toward ordinary language instead of searching for an ideal, innermost structure of language which was the real carrier of sense. For any such investigation would have to presuppose the sense already found in ordinary language. And this turning to ordinary language involved other consequences such as abandoning the picture of an ideal exactness at the heart of language. This led to the second realization that was involved in Wittgenstein's transition toward the later philosophy. With the curtailment of the notion of reference as essential to sense, Wittgenstein was forced to keep enlarging his conception of sense until ultimately it included all of the possibilities of speaking meaningfully in langage (rather than simply the picture relation). Ordinary language, in all its variety and vagueness, is the language and all specialized or technical languages are dependent on it. This second realization can be said to include three related aspects. First, there is no primary language (or primary words) that is more fundamental than ordinary language. Second, all language and all words are more or less vague and involve a variety of overlapping meanings, none of which is the meaning. Third, every projection or picture can be interpreted (or applied) in more than one way. The three of these together break the conceptual hold of the Tractatus idea of one ultimately correct picture, one final structural mapping of the elements of language onto the metaphysical elements of the world.

Because there is no language more basic than ordinary language, the task of philosophy is now the clarification of ordinary grammar, and this clarification does not add anything to the sense of ordinary propositions:

> ...Logical analysis does not have to add anything to the sense present in my propositions in order to arrive at complete clarity. So that even the most unclear seeming

> proposition retains its previous content intact after the analysis and all that happens is that its grammar is made clear. (PR p.188.)

To believe that one can add sense to propositions by adding clarity gained through analysis is to be seduced into thinking we can somehow transcend ordinary grammar and get at the abstract "entity" beneath it, forgetting that we must always presuppose that very grammar:

> In reflecting on language and meaning we can easily get into a position where we think that in philosophy we are not talking of words and sentences in a quite common-or-garden sense, but in a sublimated and abstract sense. - As if a particular proposition wasn't really the thing that some person utters, but an ideal entity....
>
> When I talk about language (words, sentences, etc.) I must speak the language of every day. Is this language somehow too course and material for what we want to say? Then how is another one to be constructed? - And how strange that we should be able to do anything at all with the one we have! (PG p.121, cf. p.211.)

Since "we must talk the language of everyday" we must realize that certain traditional philosophical words do not go deeper than any other words; they all have only ordinary meanings:

> ...I once thought that certain words could be distinguished according to their philosophical importance: "grammar", "logic", "mathematics". I should like to destroy this appearance of importance. (L32 p.13.)

In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein now points out, when he had said that "propositions are 'pictures'": "he had not at that time noticed that the word 'picture' was vague". (MLN p.263.) He now realizes that all words are vague and can be used meaningfully in different senses without one sense being the primary or "real" meaning. According to the Moore notes, even the words used by logicians and mathematicians have this character:

> ...People constantly commit the fallacy of supposing that

'true', 'problem', 'looking for', 'proof', always mean the same, whereas in fact these words 'mean entirely different things' in different cases.[21]

But perhaps the most fundamental aspect of this second basic realization was that no picture carries with it a determinant application or projection. Every picture has to be applied in a variety of ways. Hence, the notion that "a proposition is a picture of reality" breaks down. Any projection can be applied in a different way:

> What gives us the idea that there is a kind of agreement between thought and reality? - Instead of "agreement" here one might say with a clear conscience "pictorial character".
>
> But is this pictorial character an agreement? In the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus I said something like: it is an agreement of form. But that is an error.
>
> First of all, "picture" here is ambiguous....
>
> We might now express ourselves thus: the method of projection mediates between the drawing and the object, it reaches from the drawing to the artifact. Here we are comparing the method of projection with projection lines which go from one figure to another....This comparison conceals the fact that the picture plus the projection lines leaves open various methods of application; it makes it look as if what is depicted, even if it does not exist in fact, is determined by the picture and the projection lines in an ethereal manner; every bit as determined, that is to say, as if it did exist. (PG pp.212-13.)

To say that a proposition is "true" if it "agrees with reality", Wittgenstein says, can lead us into nonsensical discussions. "For the expression 'agrees with' is used in all sorts of different ways". The same thing applies to the notions of "truth" and "projection". (L35 pp.106-7.) All of these terms are vague and can have different meanings in different contexts. And the idea that we could somehow transcend the grammar of ordinary language to achieve an Archimedian point outside of sense in order to discover the "true" relation between language and the world, as

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21. MLN, p.301; cf. p274 & L35 pp.67 & 106-7.

we have seen, is now soundly rejected. Not only can we not transcend grammar, but, Wittgenstein now sees, the idea of a "true" relation between language and the world is itself merely a metaphysical picture, a mere "phantasm". (PG p.121.)

> ...Any kind of explanation of a language presupposes a language already.... I cannot use language to get outside of language. (PR p.54.)

We saw in Chapter Five that one of the fundamental purposes behind the writing of the Tractatus was to "delimit the sphere of the Ethical from within" by showing the limits of language. If, as we have suggested, Wittgenstein's return to philosophy involved the realization that, insofar as he had been unsuccessful in presenting a clear view of the nature and functioning of language, he had also been unsuccessful in making clear to people the dimension of "the ethical" and "the mystical", then he would need to attempt this again within a new approach. If, in addition, his new approach was faithful to the final maxim of the Tractatus which spoke of philosophy as avoiding all metaphysical talk, then pointing to those dimensions beyond language would be proportionally more difficult. However, there is one metaphor, which became central to Wittgenstein's later philosophy, which seems to carry much of the burden of this task, and which we will be developing throughout the rest of this volume. This is the metaphor of "groundlessness". Wittgenstein's "basic change" involved the dropping of metaphysical talk altogether. We will argue, therefore, that rather than speaking of "the ethical" or "the mystical" in a metaphysical way as if they were some sort of ontological "sphere" that was beyond the limits of language, Wittgenstein now tried to make this apparent to people through revealing what we will call "the groundlessness

of the human situation". And even in this early "transitional period" it will become clear that Wittgenstein is attempting to reveal an aspect of this "groundless human situation": what can be called "the groundlessness of language".

vi. The Groundlessness of Language

When the idea that language mirrors reality began to dissolve during this period, no new philosophy immediately emerged. As we have seen, this period presents no coherent point of view but involves a slow and uneven process of overcoming the Tractatus point of view and the ontological way of speaking that went with it. But out of this period, and in connection with its dominant presuppositionalist thought, there emerged a theme which became fundamental to Wittgenstein's later philosophy right into his final writings in On Certainty. As a tool for explicating this theme we will draw on a metaphor which Wittgenstein uses several times in his latest philosophical writings in On Certainty. There Wittgenstein writes: "The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing". (OC 166.) It is this metaphor of "groundlessness" that can be used to extrapolate perhaps the most essential philosophical insights arising from Wittgenstein's presuppositionalist point of view. Although we will see this metaphor ultimately evolve into an insight concerning what we are calling "the groundlessness of the human situation", the writings of the transitional period center on the idea of the "groundlessness of language".

In the Tractatus Wittgenstein had believed that the grammar of propositions involved a structural picturing of reality. Grammar (or "logic" as he then put it) was ultimately based on the way things were, on the

nature of things, the "substance", as he put it, "of the world". (TLP 2.0231.) He now believes that his idea is itself a metaphysical picture generated by misunderstanding the grammar of our language. If one takes the presuppositional status of sense seriously (as he was more and more beginning to do in this period), then there is no way to transcend sense in order to justify the grammar of the language we do have. In speaking of the application of geometry to the world, Wittgenstein makes the following observation:

> There isn't any question here of a connection with reality which keeps grammar on the rails. The "connection of language with reality", by means of ostensive definitions and the like, doesn't make the grammar inevitable or provide a justification for the grammar. The grammar remains a free-floating calculus which can only be extended and never supported. (PG p.313.)

It is this idea that is suggested by the metaphor of the "groundlessness of language". There is no question of "a connection with reality" which makes the grammar we have the correct one. Rather, it is "free-floating" and can never be "supported". In this conception, language, so to speak, "surrounds us" in such a way that there can be no meaningful talk of a "grounding" for it.

This idea of groundlessness applies not only to the whole of language and to particular calculi (such as geometry) but to individual grammatical rules as well:

> ...It is impossible to 'justify' any grammatical rule.... It cannot be because of a 'quality' in reality that I use 'sweet' in such a way that 'sweeter' has meaning, but 'identical' in such a way that 'more identical' has none.... If it were because of a 'quality' in reality, it must be possible to say that reality hasn't got this quality, which grammar forbids.... I can't say what reality would have to be like, in order that what makes nonsense should make sense, because in order to do so I should have to use this new grammar. (MLN pp.277-78.)

To say that reality hasn't got the qualities that our grammar asserts of it would require a different grammar from the one we have. But any such different grammar would be nonsense. It would be a meaningless series of sounds or words. There is no way to contradict our grammar except by either using that same grammar (in which case we are not contradicting it) or by going outside of grammar (in which case we would be speaking meaningless nonsense). To understand this is to see that there is no way of meaningfully talking about any connection between language and reality:

> In the Tractatus logical analysis and ostensive definitions were unclear to me. At that time I thought that there was 'a connection between language and reality'. (VC pp.209-10.)

At a number of places in these writings and lectures, Wittgenstein analyzes specific examples to try to show that neither individual rules, the rules of calculi within language, nor the whole of language can be said to be grounded. We have already seen him speaking of the grammar of qualities (such as "sweetness"), but he also makes this point in terms of the grammars of mathematics (PG p.184; L35 p.4), of measurement (PG p.185), of logic (PG pp.244, 304), of geometry (PG p.313), and of the "rules of grammar" in general (PG pp.110-11, 304). His point in all these cases is that:

> Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning...." (PG p.184.)

We must begin, Wittgenstein says, "with the distinction between sense and nonsense". And since this distinction is required to have language at all, we cannot get outside of it to give it a foundation. (PG pp.126-27.)

This would seem to be true even in connection with science, where new ways of speaking about the world continually arise. All these new ways of speaking about the world, however, must conform to, or be extensions of, the grammar of the language we already have. But they could never serve as a ground for that language itself:

> Compare four-dimensional geometry when someone finds time as the fourth. He has not found something new, and can't say "Now I have got it". He has it already in language. It has all the reality it will ever have; it can be connected up with the larger calculi of our language. You can't rest it on anything; the calculus does not rest on reality. (L32 p.103.)

The metaphor of the "groundlessness of language" is an attempt to summarize what Wittgenstein is driving at in these quoted passages and in many more.[22] It is a way of talking about the impossibility of metaphysics and, indeed, is a metaphor perhaps consciously opposing the metaphysical tradition, including the Tractatus insofar as that continued in this tradition. For the metaphysical tradition in the West has long been concerned with grounds and with searching for grounds, especially in terms of the notion of "substance", the fundamental reality. This has been true generally from the time of Plato and Aristotle right down to the Tractatus which was looking for "the substance of the world" (Die Substanz der Welt). (TLP 2.0231.) It is the idea that something must "stand under" the everyday, that there must be a "reality" behind the appearances. Indeed, the root meaning of the word "substance", the Oxford English Dictionary points out, is "to stand under". To give one example (out of many that

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22. See VC pp.104-5, 210; PR p.54; L32 pp.44, 87, 103, 104, 114; PG pp.40, 94, 97, 101, 109-10, 126-27, 184-6, 244, 304, 313. These are, of course, a subset of the references on presuppositionalism.

could be given), Locke, in the Essay On Human Understanding, is looking for some "support" for the qualities of sense, for we cannot imagine that they can exist "without something to support them" (to which he gives the name "substance").[23] By insisting that language (and hence all meaning) is not supported, Wittgenstein's approach serves a heuristic purpose of opposing the longing for grounds that has so characterized the Western tradition. The grammar of our language, Wittgenstein would perhaps say, generates for us the metaphysical picture that something "must" stand under; perhaps the grammatical form requiring an "object" to have "properties" forces this picture on us.[24]

However, Wittgenstein is aware of the fact that this idea (that language is not supported) is itself a metaphor whose meaning draws on the meaning of the ontological idea of grounding or support. He uses this idea to oppose the overwhelming tendency to believe that our grammar is somehow supported by the nature of reality. But the idea remains a metaphor meant merely to capture the radical import of his presuppositionalism:

> We try to cover up the beginning of our reasoning; but actually reasoning never started. To say that the earth is not supported is exactly similar to saying that language is not supported.... The whole chain of our reasoning is not supported any more than the earth is supported; the whole of grammar is not supported in the sense that a sentence is supported by reality. You can't in fact call language or grammar unsupported because there is no question of its being supported. But the rules of grammar are not a deduction from the nature of reality. (L32 p.104.)

The metaphor of "unsupportedness" or "groundlessness" can be a useful one

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23. Book II, Chap. xiii, sec. 1.

24. See PR p.121 & PG pp.205-6.

because it can tell us something essential about Wittgenstein's philosophy, especially in what way it differs from the ontological orientation of traditional Western philosophy. But ultimately, we see here, one would have to say that language is neither supported nor unsupported, neither grounded nor groundless, for these metaphors themselves derive from a metaphysical use of language. The ordinary meaning of these words could never apply to language as a whole. Language as a whole is neither supported nor unsupported, for such questions, Wittgenstein is now beginning to stress, are metaphysical ones and hence, in a certain sense, meaningless.

Yet this idea of the unsupportedness or groundlessness of language is stressed again and again during these transitional years. Perhaps, before moving fully to his final view that such anti-metaphysical metaphors are themselves a metaphysical use of language which should also be avoided, Wittgenstein felt the need to devise an orientation diametrically opposed to one of the fundamental themes of the Tractatus: the idea that the logic of our language must be supported by the ontological structure of reality. What he now says of mathematics can be applied to the whole of language: "You can't get behind the rules, because there isn't any behind". (PG p.244.)

In view of some of the interpretations of Wittgenstein's later philosophy which have appeared in recent years, perhaps Wittgenstein should have written somewhere what Nietzsche wrote in his 1887 Preface to the Genealogy of Morals:

> If this book is incomprehensible to anyone and jars on his ears, the fault, it seems to me, is not necessarily mine. It is clear enough, assuming, as I do assume, that one has read my earlier writings and not spared some trouble in doing so: for they are, indeed, not easy to penetrate. (GM P 8, WK p.22.)

For several key ideas of Wittgenstein's later philosophy are developed explicitly during this period and are not again emphasized in the Philosophical Investigations but seem to be assumed. One such idea, discussed often during these years, was the question of what truth there is in solipsism (see Appendix B). But another such idea is the "groundless" character of language which is a direct consequence of Wittgenstein's radical presuppositionalism. In the Investigations Wittgenstein writes:

> Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it.
> For it cannot give it any foundation either. (PI 124.)

This might just be, as Nietzsche says, "incomprehensible" without a study of these transitional writings.

vii. Another Look at Wittgenstein's Personal Task

We have seen that a fundamental part of Wittgenstein's purpose in writing the Tractatus was to "delimit the ethical from within". We have also seen Wittgenstein use the words "the Ethical" to cover a whole range of 'things' which are beyond language and which can, for him, also be called "the Mystical" in the broad sense of this term. There is a great deal of evidence that Wittgenstein continued with this orientation right through his later writings and that, properly understood, his later writings could be characterized as he himself characterized the task of philosophy in the Tractatus:

> It must set limits to what can be thought; and, in doing

so, to what cannot be thought....
It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said. (TLP 4.114,4.115.)

As Janik and Toulmin point out, it may have been partly because the positivists misunderstood Wittgenstein and claimed him as one of their own that this particular orientation of his philosophy was ignored, and misconstrued.[25] What was ignored, however, was what Wittgenstein thought most important. Toulmin and Janik emphasize this in the following way:

> Wittgenstein's silence in the face of the "unutterable" was not a mocking silence like that of the positivists, but rather a respectful one. Having decided that "value-neutral" facts alone can be expressed in regular propositional form, he exhorted his readers to turn their eyes away from factual propositions to the things of true value - which cannot be gesagt but only gezeigt.[26]

Wittgenstein even "exhorted" this of the members of the Vienna Circle in his meetings with them during the 1920s and early 30s. Since the ethical dimension cannot be said but only shown, he did not make ethical claims to them but, at some of their gatherings, refused to discuss his book, turning, instead, his back on them and reading out loud from the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. (VC p.15.) Perhaps their misunderstanding of the Tractatus would have been alleviated if they had followed up the suggestion and looked into this poetry. For the poetry of Tagore is animated by an awareness of the very "ethical dimension" which animated Wittgenstein's own work of showing the limits of language. In his book The Religion of Man Tagore describes his early "religious experience" which

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25. Janik and Toulmin, pp.212-22.

26. Janik & Toulmin, p.220.

became the guiding vision behind all of his later work:

> When I was eighteen, a sudden spring breeze of religious experience for the first time came to my life and passed away, leaving in my memory a direct message of spiritual reality. One day while I stood watching at early dawn the sun sending out its rays from behind the trees, I suddenly felt as if some ancient mist had in a moment lifted from my sight and the morning light on the face of the world revealed an inner radiance. The invisible screen of the commonplace was removed from all things and all men, and their ultimate significance was intensified in my mind.... The unmeaning fragments lost their individual isolation and my mind revelled in the unity of vision....
>
> I felt that I had found my religion at last, the religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and my co-operation.[27]

One can see certain resonances with this experience, for example, in Wittgenstein's own description of his experiences of "absolute value" in his 1930 "Lecture on Ethics" or with some of his reflections in Culture and Value. This contact with the Vienna Circle was taking place a decade and more after the Tractatus was completed, yet Wittgenstein is still speaking and behaving in terms of his vision that the limits of language must be shown in order to delimit and point to the "things of true value", which themselves cannot be said.

What changed in Wittgenstein's philosophy and what had to be given up was not this vision but rather metaphysics, the metaphysics involved in the picture theory of language. This change involved what can be described as a philosophical "Copernican Revolution" analogous to the one Kant had undertaken in the Critique of Pure Reason.

For Kant claimed to have placed man back at the center of things in

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27. Quoted in Later Poems of Rabindranath Tagore (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1976), p.18.

a reversal of the work Copernicus who had shifted the earth (and hence man) from its pre-eminent place at the center of the cosmos. Kant claimed to have reversed the traditional assumption "that all our knowledge must conform to objects" by placing us again at a center in which now "objects must conform to our knowledge".[28] Wittgenstein, of course, focused on language rather than, like Kant, on the traditional ideas of perception and conception. Yet the radical presuppositionalism (which he had held from the beginning, but the implications of which were now coming to the fore during this transitional period) made all objects, the entire world, so to speak, "conform" to the grammar of human language, since there is no way to transcend that grammar in order to describe what the world might be like independently of that grammar.

Although this way of putting the matter seems to imply the idea of an "in itself" in very much the way Kant believed an "in itself" was implied, we will see that Wittgenstein eventually drops even this idea. In this period, however, Wittgenstein often seems to retain such an idea in statements like: "What is essential to the world cannot be said about the world....". (L32 p.34.) Later he dropped as meaningless any talk about the world having an "essential character".

Again like Kant, Wittgenstein's own "Copernican Revolution" did not lead to a one dimensional positivism which faced the unutterable with a "mocking silence", but rather was connected with an insight into the "depths" of things. Just as Kant's own revolution was intended, in one sense, to allow "faith" (glaube) in God, freedom, and immortality[29] so

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28. Critique of Pure Reason (BXVI), Norman Kemp Smith, tr., p.18.

29. The First Critique (BXXX), Cf. Lewis White Beck, tr., Critique of Practical Reason (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), p.137.

Wittgenstein's "Copernican Revolution" was still a way of showing the "limits of language" and hence allowing the possibility of an awareness of "the ethical dimension" beyond language. As with the Kantian world, Wittgenstein's world had great depth to it. As we saw in our exposition of the Tractatus, Wittgenstein is pointing to "dimensions" that cannot be gotten into language.

viii. The Limits of Language

Wittgenstein does not use the phrase "the limits of language" very often during this transitional period. But he does use this and related phrases, such as "the boundary of language",[30] or the ideas of an "inside" (L32 p.62) or an "outside" (PG p.54; L32 p.64) to language, often enough to make us realize that he still finds this metaphor useful in his attempt to think clearly about the human situation. Several times it is used in connection with ethics and religion as in the statement "this running up against the limits of language is ethics".[31] But other times it is used in a Kantian or presuppositionalist sense:

> The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact which corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence.
> (This has to do with the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy.) (CV p.10.)

Here the phrase "die Grenze der Sprache" is simply another metaphor for the idea (discussed above) of the impossibility of transcending grammar in

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30. L32 p.34; LE pp.11-12,13-14; PG p.189.

31. VC p.68 (cf. VC p.93, 117-18; LE pp.11-12,13-14).

order to justify grammar and is related to the idea of "the groundlessness of language" which we introduced to symbolize a main import of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein says:

> The meaning of a word is given if you describe language by all its rules. All explanations take place inside language. They would only transcend language if they made assertions of fact, which they do not. The meanings of the words are part of language....
>
> Meaning is fixed inside language, by explanations. (L32 p.62.)

Perhaps the use of the phrase "the limits of language" in the Tractatus (5.6, 5.62) had something slightly literal about it, drawing on the visual or spacial associations of the word "limits" (die Grenzen) and making one think of a transcendental "realm" similar to what is sometimes called Kant's "noumenal realm". But this need not be the case. The phrase can be used (and indeed in the transitional period is often used) as a purely metaphorical pointing to a crucial philosophical understanding. Just as we have seen Wittgenstein speak repeatedly of the idea that the rules of language are "unsupported" or "groundless", while realizing that, literally speaking, it makes no sense to speak of them as being either supported or unsupported, so in this period he is willing to speak of the "limits of language" while realizing that, literally, we cannot speak of a "limit" to either language or experience:

> You can describe the experience of learning a particular language, but you can't describe the experience of learning to use language because you would then have to be able to think what it was like to have no language at all - i.e. to think what it would be like not to think.
>
> At the primary level experience hasn't a beginning. Visual image, sentences on paper, spoken sentence, picture - all are on exactly the same level.
>
> We can't talk about the limit of experience, because we should have to experience both sides of the limit. (L32 pp.85-6.)

Here, in a passage making a point in some respects similar to Tractatus 5.552 which states that "Logic is prior to every experience - that something is so", Wittgenstein is saying that, on a literal level, one cannot talk about limits to language or experience. To do this we would have to be able to think what the world is like without language, and, indeed, without experience, for our experience is inseparable from our having language. Writing, picturing, speaking, and visual images are all on the same level. Since these things are integral to what it means to experience, we cannot speak of their "limits" as if we had somehow transcended our own experience.

Yet at the same time this metaphor can be useful for making us realize that not everything we are "aware" of can be gotten into language. For such purposes the metaphor can have a positive use, rather than a negative and limiting one:

> My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk about Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. (LE pp.11-12.)
>
> Man has the urge to thrust against the limits of language. Think for instance about one's astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question and there is no answer to it... This thrust against the limits of language is ethics. (LE pp.12-13.)[32]

Perhaps if Wittgenstein were a poet like Tagore, or a writer of fiction, like Tolstoy, he would have written a great deal more in this regard. He would have been able to poetically "point to" the unsayable rather than merely contenting himself primarily with the negative role of drawing the limits of language from within. At any rate, this is a tempting conjecture

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32. See also VC pp.68, 93, 117-18.

given the pervasive ethical and religious concerns of his life and given the following aphorism which he recorded in 1933-34:

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition. It must, as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future, or past. For I was thereby revealing myself as someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do. (CV p.24.)

One might say that, for Wittgenstein, insofar as philosophy is written as prose it is largely limited to the negative role of showing the limits of language from within by exposing as nonsense the myths and illusions in which human beings are entangled. Its goal is clarity, seeing clearly the human situation through understanding the confusions generated by language.[33] The idea of a "boundary" to language is now a metaphor useful in our efforts to get clear about language. For we exclude from language (as "nonsense") those mythological and metaphysical ways of speaking which continue to prevent us from seeing our human situation clearly. This is the value of philosophy: it helps us to get clear about what can and cannot be said and hence about the human situation itself:

> To say "This combination of words makes no sense" excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language. But when one draws a boundary it may be for various kinds of reasons. (PG p.189.)

> The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery.

This last quotation is from the Philosophical Investigations (119).

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33. See VC pp.182-83; L32 p.21; PG p.462

Wittgenstein apparently still believes he can speak meaningfully of the "limits of language", not as some metaphysical boundary, but because it is useful for the philosophical effort to achieve clarity.[34] And the chief factor in our unclarity, in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, is that we are continually seduced by language into metaphysical ways of thinking. So the task of philosophy becomes almost equivalent to the attempt to rid ourselves of the entanglements of metaphysical thought, a task which, we shall see, has tremendous, indeed, world-historical implications. The attempt to see the limits of language is therefore linked to the task of philosophy itself, perhaps not only in the negative way of eliminating metaphysical "nonsense" but perhaps on occasion also in the positive way of delimiting the limits of language from within and through exhorting one's "readers to turn their eyes...to the things of true value". For philosophy is ultimately concerned with solving the problems of life, and "the problems of life", Wittgenstein says, "are insoluble on the surface and can only be solved in depth. They are insoluble in surface dimensions"[35] With this in mind, then, let us examine this task of philosophy as it emerged in Wittgenstein's transitional writings.

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34. Garth Hallett (A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977)) writes of PI 119: "the Tractatus aimed to set limits to language...but W. later rejected its doctrine of limits..; so what are these words doing here...?" (p.209.) But he does not go on to answer this question. Rather, he states that W. "finally saw the error in his whole idea" for there is "no apriori criterion with which to draw limits to sense". (p.210.) What Hallett does not seem to realize is that one does not need an "apriori criterion" to realize the presuppositionalist point that meaning conditions are immanent in the grammar of our languages and hence always function in an apriori role in any use of language.

35. CV p.74, emphasis added.

ix. The Task of Philosophy

From some of the many things which Wittgenstein says about philosophy in his later writings it is possible to get the idea that philosophy is a specialized and relatively narrow kind of linguistic analysis that has repudiated the great world-historical tasks of traditional philosophy. For example, Wittgenstein repeatedly speaks of philosophy as connected with "trivialities" as he does in the Moore Lecture Notes:

> He said...that the "new subject"....would only tell us 'trivial' things - 'things which we all know already';...and that our 'intellectual discomfort' can only be removed by a synopsis of <u>many</u> trivialities.... (MLN p.323.)

It may seem as if the philosopher is a kind of grammarian, not interested in developing a <u>Weltanschauung</u> like the traditional great thinkers but only in analyzing language from a certain narrow point of view, perhaps as an adjunct to a subsection of the small, secondary science of linguistics.

> ...The task of philosophy is not to create a new, ideal language, but to clarify the use of our language, the existing language. Its aim is to remove particular misunderstandings; not to produce a real understanding for the first time. (PG p.115.)

But Wittgenstein speaks this way primarily for heuristic, even polemical reasons, since the task of philosophy has now become nearly equivalent to the elimination of metaphysical myths and illusions from human understanding. He emphasizes again and again that philosophy is <u>not a knowledge activity</u> but rather an attempt to get clear about what is right in front of our eyes. (CV p.63.) Whereas traditional metaphysics,

including the Tractatus, seemed to be attempting to tell us about the "nature of reality", Wittgenstein's own "Copernican Revolution" has realized the misguided direction of this entire project. Philosophy will give us nothing new, no theories, (CV p.183) no facts; it will only discuss in terms of what we already know. (L32 p.35.) For this reason, in its polemic against metaphysics, we can say that it deals with "trivialities".

However, because we can say that philosophy does not "produce a real understanding for the first time" does not mean that its goal is no longer clarity about the human situation as a whole. It will not give us a new Weltanschauung, but it can lead to a clearing of fundamental confusions about our human situation:

> The answers which philosophy gives to our questions must be fundamental to everyday life and to science. They must be independent of the experimental findings of science. Science builds a house with bricks which, once laid, are not touched again. Philosophy tidies up a room and so has to handle things many times. The essence of its procedure is that it starts with a mess; we don't mind being hazy so long as the haze gradually clears. (L32 p.42.)

To "tidy up a room" again sounds trivial until we realize that the clarity philosophy aims for must be "fundamental to everyday life and to science". If the results of philosophy can be this fundamental, then there is again a connection with the great traditional role of philosophy which, if anything, was trying to get clear about what was most fundamental to human life and to science.

This can become clearer if we look at the entire quotation from the Moore Lecture Notes where, at first sight, it seemed as if philosophy were merely a "synopsis of trivialities":

> He said that what he was doing was a 'new subject', and not merely a stage in a 'continuous development'; that there

> was now, in philosophy, a 'kink' in the 'development of human thought', comparable to that which occurred when Galileo and his contemporaries invented dynamics; that a 'new method' had been discovered, as had happened when 'chemistry was developed out of alchemy'; and that it was now possible for the first time that there should be 'skillful' philosophers, though of course there had in the past been 'great' philosophers....
>
> In answer to the question why this 'new subject' should be called 'philosophy' he said...that though what he was doing was certainly different from what, e.g., Plato or Berkeley had done, yet people might feel that it 'takes the place of' what they had done - might be inclined to say 'This is what I really wanted' and to identify it with what they had done, though it is really different, just as...a person who had been trying to trisect an angle by rule and compasses might, when shown the proof that this is impossible, be inclined to say that this impossible thing was the very thing he had been trying to do, though what he had been trying to do was really different. But...he had also said the 'new subject' did really resemble what had been traditionally called 'philosophy' in the three respects that (1) it was very general, (2) it was fundamental both to ordinary life and to the sciences, and (3) it was independent of any special results of science; that therefore the application to it of the word 'philosophy' was not purely arbitrary....
>
> He said...that the 'new subject' consisted in 'something like putting in order our notions as to what can be said about the world'....
>
> He held that though the 'new subject' must say a great deal about language, it was only necessary for it to deal with those points about language which have led, or are likely to lead, to definite philosophical puzzles or errors. I think he certainly thought that some philosophers nowadays have been misled into dealing with linguistic points which have no bearing, and the discussion of which therefore, in his view, forms no part of the proper business of a philosopher. (MLN pp.322-24.)

This passage makes several points which are quite fundamental to understanding the role of philosophy for Wittgenstein. Let us list some of these points and then examine each of them in turn:

1. This 'new subject' is a response to a kink in the development of human thought comparable to that which resulted in the invention of dynamics or chemistry.
2. One could say it "takes the place" of what Plato or Berkeley had

done, even that this is what they "really wanted".

3. The new subject allows us to get clear about "what can be said about the world".
4. The subject matter is not language but certain points about language that are likely to lead to philosophical errors.

1. Wittgenstein's first point places his thought in a world-historical context. He compares the 'new subject' that he had invented with nothing less than the discovery of the scientific method which brought chemistry out of alchemy. He says he has given us another such step in "the development of human thought". He is not merely giving us new insights into linguistics or grammar, he is creating, this says, nothing less than a revolution in human thought. What is the character of this revolution? Apparently Wittgenstein has understood something so fundamental that it will forever alter our understanding of the human situation. This is hinted at in the following:

> I read "...philosophers are no nearer to the meaning of 'Reality' than Plato got,...". What a strange situation. How extraordinary that Plato could have got even as far as he did! Or that we could not get any further! Was it because Plato was so extremely clever? (CV p.15.)
>
> ...Language has remained the same and keeps seducing us into asking the same questions. As long as there continues to be a verb 'to be' that looks as if it functions in the same way as 'to eat' and 'to drink', as long as we still have the adjectives 'identical', 'true', 'false', 'possible', as long as we continue to talk of a river of time, of an expanse of space, etc. etc., people will keep stumbling over the same puzzling difficulties and find themselves staring at something which no explanation seems capable of clearing up. (CV p.15.)

The next step in the development of human thought is to see that, in a certain sense, there is no reality to get to. 'Reality' is a word on exactly the same level as every other word in ordinary language. And no

'explanation' seems capable of clearing up our philosophical entanglements because we still orient ourselves metaphysically, trying to figure out the "paradoxes of time" or the "nature of truth", etc., rather than realizing that all words are on exactly the same level.

Wittgenstein's own "Copernican Revolution" is one in which we realize fully for the first time that there is no grounding for language and that the grammar of our language keeps seducing us into mythological-metaphysical ways of thinking. Or to put it more succinctly, the metaphysical orientation is itself simply another myth.[36] Indeed, in one place Wittgenstein even calls metaphysics "a form of magic",[37] perhaps seeing it as an attempt to manipulate or to grasp the world conceptually instead of leaving everything simply as it is. Whatever explicit definition he might give of the metaphysical orientation (for his criticisms, while pervasive, remain largely implicit) one thing is clear: for Wittgenstein human beings are mired in mythologies generated by their misunderstanding of language. As he succinctly puts it: "Human beings are entangled all unknowing in the net of language".[38] Wittgenstein's "new method" is a method for getting clear of this entanglement. It would seem that, from his point of view, there is at this moment the possibility

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36. See PG pp.56 & 256. We will continue to see in subsequent chapters that Wittgenstein is focusing on metaphysics as a purported knowledge or factual activity, not on other possible kinds of metaphysics.

37. Rush Rhees, "Wittgenstein On Language and Ritual" in Wittgenstein and His Times (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.75. This idea of a magical relation to the world can perhaps be correlated with Heidegger's notion that representational (metaphysical) thinking is a manipulative relation to the world. See Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology" in The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, Trans. W. Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

38. PG p462, emphasis added.

of passing to a new age in "the development of human thought" since, for the first time, there is the possibility of freeing ourselves from metaphysical ("magical") thinking.

2. Wittgenstein's idea that his thinking represents a new stage in the development of human thought can serve as a useful background for understanding the other points which he makes about 'philosophy' in the Moore Notes.[39] For example, it should help make clear how Wittgenstein's 'new subject' can 'take the place' of what Plato or Berkeley had done, how they might even recognize it as what they 'really wanted'. For it should be clear now that Wittgenstein's task is apiece with the great task of human liberation that occupied many traditional philosophers: Socrates, in the Apology: trying to 'wake up' his fellow citizens, Plato: leading mankind out of the cave of ignorance, Aristotle: synthesizing all human knowledge, Augustine: wishing to know nothing less than "God and the soul", Descartes: creating a universal foundation for the sciences, Spinoza: leading men from bondage to freedom and 'blessedness', Locke: looking for the foundations of human understanding, Kant: placing men back at the spiritual center of the universe, Nietzsche: attempting the revaluation of all values, and Wittgenstein: attempting to free us from entanglement in the net of language and the metaphysical orientation towards existence.

What Plato and Berkeley really wanted was human liberation: moving mankind out of the cave of ignorance through getting clear about the human situation. But just as giving a proof of the impossibility of trisecting an angle by rule and compasses might lead a person to realize

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39. Wittgenstein told Moore that he was glad to have Moore there taking notes, since if anything were to happen to him there would be some record of the results of his thinking (MLN p.255).

that this is what they really wanted (this clarity of understanding) so showing the mistaken entanglement of human beings in metaphysical illusions might be just what the philosophers wanted (clarity about the human situation).[40]

But such clarity does not give up the 'depth' which Plato and Berkeley also knew. Wittgenstein thought much of Plato (one of the few philosophers that he read extensively) and said that the Parmenides was "among the most profound of Plato's writings",[41] and that in the Theaetetus Plato was working on problems similar to his own.[42] He also seems to have read Berkeley and some of Kant, calling both of them "very deep thinkers".[43] But how, one might ask, can Wittgenstein be said to be doing something that would satisfy Plato, that Plato might also consider deep? One of Plato's fundamental tasks could be said to be an attempt to combat ethical relativism through finding a ground or foundation for our understanding of ethical concepts; yet Wittgenstein would consider such an attempt to involve metaphysical nonsense.[44] Upon reflection, however, Wittgenstein's task can be seen to be very much the same. In his early

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40. It should be kept in mind that this general clarity discussed here comes about, for Wittgenstein, through careful attention to individual grammatical cases. "In philosophy", he says, "matters are not simple enough for us to say "Let's get a rough idea", for we do not know the country except by knowing the connections between the roads." (L35 p.43.) This metaphor includes the above concept of "general clarity" (knowing the country) as well as attention to individual cases (knowing the connections).

41. Rhees, Personal Recollections, p.172.

42. Ibid. p.163.

43. Ibid. p.95.

44. This generalization might not, however, apply to Plato's "Form of The Good" itself: see Republic 509b where the Good is said to be beyond knowing because it is "beyond being" (hyperousia).

philosophy he clearly wanted to combat relativism through making clear the limits of language so that those things which "cannot be said" can "make themselves manifest". And he explicitly seems to be holding to this task as late his 1930 lecture on ethics:

> I regard it as very important to put an end to all the chatter in ethics - whether there is knowledge in ethics, whether there are values, whether the Good can be defined, etc. In ethics, one constantly tries to say something that does not concern and can never concern the essence of the matter.... But the tendency, the thrust, points to something. (p.13.)

Perhaps Plato would agree, if he could be convinced of the nonsensical character of metaphysics, that this is what he really wanted, that metaphysics itself leads to ethical relativism and not the reverse. And if Wittgenstein's later philosophy in the Investigations can be said to be dropping any notion of an "in itself" that, since Kant, we seem unable to get to in our desire to give ethical matters a foundation, perhaps this very development can be seen as part of Wittgenstein's attempt to overcome relativism. For the idea that there is an "in itself", a ground or foundation that we never seem quite to be able to get to, is perhaps the real source of our growing (and chronic) ethical relativism.

From a slightly different point of view, one might say that what Plato and Berkeley had in common - and what they both wanted - was a new way of looking at things, in each case very different from the common sense attitude. What then about Wittgenstein's focus on the everyday, the ordinary, and common sense? Here again Wittgenstein might be able to say that this way of looking at things would be what they really wanted. For Wittgenstein's "common sense" is quite different from ordinary common sense.

In order to see this let us recall that our study of the Tractatus showed that, for the early Wittgenstein, the activity of philosophy was connected with the discovery of a depth of spiritual insight, those insights recorded in connection with "what is true about solipsism", "the ethical", and "the mystical". Wittgenstein there finally arrived at a "realism" which our study there connected with the insights of Buddhism. In his early Notebooks, we have seen, he calls this movement "the way I have traveled":

> This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side nothing is left over, and on the other side, as unique, the world. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out. (p.85, cf. TLP 5.64.)

This "realism" became, in the later philosophy, the focus on common sense, on the "simple and familiar". (PI 129.) Similarly, there is no retreat from the idea that philosophy requires a spiritual odyssey, a movement to a different way of looking at things. Wittgenstein's final "realism" or "common sense" is not the one dimensional common sense of the positivist:

> Philosophy may start from common sense but it cannot remain in common sense. As a matter of fact philosophy cannot start from common sense because the business of philosophy is to rid one of those puzzles which do not arise for common sense. No philosopher lacks common sense in ordinary life. So philosophers should not attempt to present the idealistic or solipsistic positions, for example, as though they were absurd.... You must not try to avoid a philosophical problem by appealing to common sense; instead, present it as it arises with most power. You must allow yourself to be dragged into the mire, and get out of it. Philosophy can be said to consist of three activities: to see the commonsense answer, to get yourself so deeply into the problem that the commonsense answer is unbearable, and to get from that situation back to the commonsense answer. But the commonsense answer in itself is no solution; everyone knows it. One must not in philosophy attempt to short-circuit problems. (L35 pp.108-9.)

The everyday language and the ordinary certainties which the philosopher finally accepts are only the result of a spiritual journey "so deeply into the problem that the commonsense answer is unbearable". Indeed, it involves a complete solution of those puzzles which do not even arise for ordinary common sense. The clarity achieved from this odyssey (freedom from the myths and illusions in which human beings are entangled) can only be in some fundamental way a transformed common sense, a commonsense so different that it could be called "a new way of seeing". Perhaps Plato or Berkeley would say this is what they really wanted.[45]

3. The third point that Wittgenstein made in the Moore quotation was that "the 'new subject' consisted in 'something like putting in order our notions as to what can be said about the world'". Our discussion of his phrase "the limits of language" has already to some extent explicated the meaning of this statement. We saw that in the later philosophy the metaphor of "limits" has various meanings (depending on its use), one of which is to point to "nonsense" as beyond the boundaries of language: "Philosophy describes what it has sense to say and what it has no sense to say". (L32 p.66.) And this is connected with the "kink in the development of human thought" which is part of our "tangled understanding" (PR p.52), our not seeing the illusions generated by grammar and hence not being clear about the human situation:

> What we are in fact doing is to tidy up our notions, to make clear what can be said about the world. We are in a muddle about what can be said, and are trying to clear up that muddle. (L32 p.21.)

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45. Cf. L35 pp.27-28.

The "we" here does not refer only to isolated philosophers; it refers to human beings, to a needed next step in the development of human thought. For as late as 1946 (five years before his death), Wittgenstein is still speaking of his work in terms of a world-historical task, of a "new way of thinking" that he is trying hard to establish:

> Getting hold of the difficulty down deep is what is hard. Because if it is grasped near the surface it simply remains the difficulty it was. It has to be pulled out by the roots; and that involves our beginning to think about these things in a new way. The change is as decisive as, for example, that from the alchemical to the chemical way of thinking. The new way of thinking is what is so hard to establish.
>
> Once the new way of thinking has been established, the old problems vanish; indeed they become hard to recapture. For they go with our way of expressing ourselves and, if we clothe ourselves in a new form of expression, the old problems are discarded along with the old garment. (CV p.48.)

4. Wittgenstein's final point from the Moore Lecture Notes was that the subject matter of philosophy is not language but certain points about language that are likely to lead to philosophical errors. But we have seen that these philosophical errors are not merely errors unique to philosophy as an isolated discipline. Rather, Wittgenstein's drive toward clarity is part of the drive for clarity on the part of human thought itself. For this reason our aims, Wittgenstein says, are very different from those of the grammarian: "We are pulling ordinary grammar to bits". (L35 p.31.) Our ultimate goal is freedom from the mythologies generated by language which dominate our lives, mythologies such as our belief in the Cartesian ego (which we will examine in Chapter Nine). All of these illusions are connected with metaphysical thinking which is at the heart of the tremendous "confusion" generated by language. (PR p.133; VC p.183.) The focus of philosophy, therefore, is not language itself but is connected with

the desire to become clear about our human situation. Such "general clarity" requires a "synoptic view" of language and the grammar of language. We want to construct "a map" in order to see "the geography" of our grammar. (L35 p.43.) Hence we can see that, for Wittgenstein, the point of this map making activity is not primarily a "scientific" or linguistic one at all. The goal is freeing ourselves from the cave of metaphysical thinking which means, we have seen, to learn if possible, to think and live in a new way. And this new way of thinking and living will be connected with a new way of speaking, "a sort of rearrangement of the whole of language":

> Human beings are deeply embedded in philosophical - i.e. grammatical confusions. Freeing them from these presupposes tearing them away from the enormous number of connecting links that hold them fast. A sort of rearrangement of the whole of language is needed. - But of course that language has developed the way it has because some human beings felt - and still feel - inclined to think that way. So the tearing away will succeed only with those in whose life there already is an instinctive revolt against the language in question and not with those whose whole instinct is for life in the very herd which created that language as its proper expression.[46]

Here again we see that the task of philosophy for Wittgenstein is an integral part of the movement toward human liberation which characterized much of traditional philosophy. Philosophical confusions are grammatical confusions and "human beings" are entangled in these, not just philosophers.

At first sight this might seem to conflict with Wittgenstein's many statements that "our language is completely in order". (VC p.46.) For here he is speaking of a "rearrangement of language", just as above we

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46. Quoted in McGuinness, Wittgenstein and His Times, p.113.

saw him speaking of clothing ourselves "in a new form of expression". But it is not language itself which is amiss: rather, Wittgenstein suggests, it is what might be called our "metaphysical orientation to life" which is our sickness. This phrase suggests itself because we have seen him equate grammatical confusions almost exclusively with metaphysical confusions. And it is these which comprise at once the "kink" in the development of human thought and "the sickness of our time". If this metaphysical orientation were dropped, many of our language games, he implies, would spontaneously change of themselves: a "new way of thinking" would be equivalent to a new way of speaking.

The above quotation was written in the early 1930s,[47] about the same time as the Lecture on Ethics in which ethical language "points to something", as the definition of "philosophy" in the Moore Lecture Notes, and as his recurrent use of the phrase "the limits of language". We have discussed all of these and seen some of the connections among them. Finally, we have seen included in this concatenation of ideas the idea that "a new way of thinking" and a "new form of expression" is needed. These ideas together define the task of philosophy which emerged from this transitional period to form the background of Wittgenstein's later work.

Just as his claim that "a rearrangement of the whole of language" is needed dated from the early 1930s, so we have seen his call for "a new way of thinking" dated in 1946. Wittgenstein in no way changed his conception of the task of philosophy during his later years. Again, in his late writings on The Foundations of Mathematics Wittgenstein is still performing his concrete analyses (even in connection with mathematics!)

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47. Wittgenstein and His Times, p.113.

under the auspices of his primary concern which is "a changed mode of thought and of life" for human beings in general:

> The sickness of a time is cured by an alteration in the mode of life of human beings, and it was possible for the sickness of philosophical problems to get cured only through a changed mode of thought and of life, not through the medicine invented by an individual. - Suppose the use of the motor-car produces or encourages certain illnesses, and mankind is plagued by such illness until, from some cause or other, as the result of some development or other, it abandons the habit of driving. (RFM p.57.)

The habit which must be abandoned if "the sickness of a time" is to be cured is what we have been calling "the metaphysical orientation towards existence". Perhaps only when we abandon our attempt to manipulate and grasp the world conceptually, which the grammar of our language misleads us into thinking we can do, will philosophical problems "completely disappear". Only then will we find ourselves in a new way of thinking and living in which we will be faced with the unsayable depths of things, depths which were there all along but which our conceptual grasping prevented us from seeing. The subject matter of philosophy is indeed not language: it is the attempt to gain clarity about the human situation itself, about what can be said and what cannot be said.

Let us turn now, in Chapters Seven and Eight, to an examination of Wittgenstein's later philosophy with an eye to the meaning of the word "truth" and to the possibility of "metaphysical truth". This will provide a philosophical underpinning for the claim that metaphysics must be entirely dropped in favor of a "new way of thinking". With this underpinning in place, we will then be in a position (in Chapter Nine) to examine some of the implications of this non-metaphysical way of thinking in connection with the possibility of overcoming nihilism.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NATURE OF "TRUTH" IN WITTGENSTEIN'S MATURE PHILOSOPHY

> We went sleepwalking along the road between abysses. - But even if we now say: "Now we are awake", - can we be certain that we shall not wake up one day? (And then say: - so we were asleep again.)
>
> Can we be certain that there are not abysses now that we do not see?
>
> But suppose I were to say: The abysses in a calculus are not there if I don't see them!
>
> Is no demon deceiving us at present? Well, if he is, it doesn't matter. What the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve over.
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> Wittgenstein[1]

> The limits of empiricism are not assumptions unguaranteed, or intuitively known to be correct: they are ways in which we make comparisons and in which we act.
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> Wittgenstein[2]

i. Overview

In Part One of our study, we saw that Nietzsche's perceptive insight into the feeling of valuelessness and meaninglessness which characterizes much of the modern world - which he called "nihilism" - was directly

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1. RFM p.101.

2. RFM p.177.

connected with the "problem of truth". Nietzsche's analysis of this nihilism, which involved the main thrust of his later philosophizing, focused on what he took to be the sceptical implications of the philosophical revolution effected by Kant's First Critique. Nietzsche's own scepticism was absolute, we saw, and was summed up by him in the statement that "there is no truth". He fully realized the nihilistic implications of his epistemological views in this connection and set as his final task the attempt find a way beyond nihilism that did not sacrifice the intellectual integrity which he took to be absolutely essential to human life.

We have now reached the point in our study where we can begin to explicate Wittgenstein's conception of "truth" as it emerged within the context of his later philosophizing. Once this has been made sufficiently clear, and its relation to the presuppositional and apriori aspects of language understood, we will have achieved a philosophical understanding of the concept of "truth" which will give us a critical perspective with which to systematically address Nietzsche's scepticism and its concomitant problem of nihilism. In our Chapter Three discussion of Nietzsche's "metaphysical scepticism" we engaged in a preliminary critical assessment of this aspect of his philosophy which pointed in the direction of Wittgenstein's work and which set the controlling themes for our explication of the basic motifs within this work. In Chapters Five and Six we developed these basic motifs and laid the groundwork for our present explication of the notion of "truth" in Wittgenstein's mature thought. Once this is done we will see emerge a view of "truth" seemingly unique in the history of Western philosophy, a view with which we will then be able, in Part Three, to grapple, perhaps in a fresh way, with the problem of nihilism and scepticism in the modern world.

In our study of the foundations of Wittgenstein's mature philosophy in

the last chapter we saw him progressively realizing the danger of inventing "a mythology of symbolism" in philosophy. (PG p.56.) We saw him criticizing the Tractatus for having created just such a mythology, saying that "the concept of meaning" there "originates in a primitive philosophy of language". (PG p.56.) Wittgenstein is now beginning to look at language entirely from the point of view of ordinary language and from an expanded conception of the role of sense in ordinary language. Grammar, the grammar of language-games and the human activities with which they are intertwined, now constitutes the whole of sense within language. It is no longer "propositions" which carry sense and which are "laid against reality like a yardstick", but a whole "system" of propositions (an entire grammatical system and the language-games connected with it) which gives sense to individual statements.[3]

We also traced the continuity of Wittgenstein's presuppositionalism between the early and later philosophies, along with an evolution in the way he expressed that presuppositionalism. It was no longer expressed in terms of the idea of logic taking care of itself and of an essence to language connected with the possibility of pictures and projections, rather, it was now expressed in the language of conventions, grammar, and rules. In connection with this radical Kantian point of view we saw a progressive withdrawal from the metaphysics of the Tractatus and a dropping of the doctrine of "objects" which had been the ultimate basis for the logic of language. Wittgenstein now realizes that "you cannot justify grammar" (L32 p.49) by pointing to any facts in the world, for sense (meaning) is logically prior to all reference and hence to all discussion of facts.[4]

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3. See e.g., PR p.317 & VC p.63.

4. See above Chapter Six, sections iv and v.

Wittgenstein now emphasizes in his writing something that was to become a foundational thought in his later philosophizing, an idea which we called "the groundlessness of language": it is misguided to speak of a basis in reality for the grammar of language. He says of his thought in the Tractatus that "at that time I thought there was a connection between language and reality" (VC pp.209-210), and in the context of his later point of view: "there isn't any question here of a connection with reality which keeps grammar on the rails". (PG p.313.) We will see this general idea become very important in our examination of Wittgenstein's conception of "truth".

What basically changed, therefore, between the Tractatus and the later philosophy was the picture theory of language along with the metaphysics of "objects" which had supported it. What did not change, and what remained the controlling methodological element throughout, was the presuppositional approach: the approach that asked what must logically be presupposed if language is to be able to do all the things that it does in our everyday lives. It is an approach that looked at language in terms of the possibilities of sense rather than what was somehow secondary to the actuality of the world.

Our last chapter also examined another element in Wittgenstein's approach to his philosophizing which did not change: the idea of an ethical dimension to his concern with getting clear about language. He was still concerned, as he put it with reference to the Tractatus, to make the ethical (and mystical) clear by "delimiting" these "from within" - by showing clearly the limits of language. We saw him saying something like this in his behavior as well: turning his back on the members of the Vienna Circle and reading out loud from the poetry of Tagore. Even though he eventually dropped this way of speaking about "limits" or "boundaries"

to language, the ethical task: to make clear what can be said and what cannot be said so that the "ethical dimension" will become apparent, remained a fundamental motivation..[5] Charles H. Cox, in his article on "Wittgenstein's Later Mysticism"[6] sees this dimension in Wittgenstein as having a dual character: first, that the world is ineffable and "holy" and, secondly, that human beings are sacred beings:

> The mysticism of the Tractatus comes down to this: first, that the world is unexplainable or ineffable, essentially mysterious and therefore awesome and holy; and second, that human beings are souls, are sacred beings when seen correctly.
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> The second of these teachings, that man is sacred, is retained almost verbatim in Wittgenstein's later work. The first of these teachings, that the world is ineffable, is hinted at but not said, true to his own dictum of not saying what could not be said....[7]

Connected with this we saw that the task of philosophy for Wittgenstein can be seen as part of the great task of human liberation which animated much traditional philosophy. Although Wittgenstein believes his work is creating a revolution in philosophy, a revolution which he compares to the emergence of chemistry out of alchemy (and one which is trying to "establish a new way of thinking" (CV p.48)), still his work is connected with the great liberative task of traditional philosophy in that it is looking to cure "the sickness of a time" (RFM p.57) and desires a

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5. Wittgenstein explicitly emphasizes the ethical as "the point" of the Tractatus in an undated letter to Ficker (Reprinted in Luckhardt, ed., Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives, pp.94-95) but mentioning only "the Ethical". However, our point from Chapter Five, section B-i, should be recalled that Wittgenstein uses "the Ethical" in the Tractatus in such a way that it can be included in one of the senses in which he uses the word "mystical".

6. Religious Humanism (Spring 79), pp.50-55.

7. Ibid. p.55.

change in the way people live". (CV p.61.)

All this is part of the ethical task which is continuous between the earlier and later philosophies. And the possibility of transformation applies to the philosopher as well, Wittgenstein says, for the philosopher must leave common sense and go so deeply into the problems that the common sense answer becomes intolerable - and only from there move back to the common sense answer, for "the common sense answer in itself is no solution; everyone knows it". (L35 p.109.) Wittgenstein's late work is pointing the philosopher to a transformed common sense, just as it is pointing our civilization toward a "change in the way people live" and "a change in the way things are perceived". (CV p.61.) It is important to underline this as part of the foundations of Wittgenstein's later philosophizing because it signals a parallel with Nietzsche and with Nietzsche's philosophical task which will be developed in Chapter Nine below. Just as what we called Nietzsche's "eschatological orientation" signals the need for a transformed relation to life and a transformed mode of being in the world so Wittgenstein's call is also for a change in the way people live and perceive. Our Nineth chapter must consider whether Wittgenstein's idea of "a transformed common sense" satisfies any of Nietzsche's requirements for moving beyond the nihilism of our time. Let us turn first, however, in this chapter to an examination of the notion of "truth" in Wittgenstein's later philosophy and then in Chapter Eight to a study of the complex role of apriori propositions in everyday discourse.

ii. "Truth" In The Early Philosophy

In his Notebooks of 1914-16 (where he was reflecting on problems

which would eventually result in the Tractatus) Wittgenstein writes: "My whole task consists in explaining the nature of the proposition. That is to say, in giving the nature of all facts, whose picture the proposition is"[8] If Wittgenstein could explain the nature of a proposition he would be explaining how it is that a proposition, a series of linguistic signs, manages to represent or picture facts in the world and do this in such a way that it may be false (misrepresent these facts). As these notes make clear, this philosophical task is nearly equivalent to the task of explaining the nature of truth. Wittgenstein had written earlier:

> The question how a correlation of relations is possible is identical with the problem of truth.
>
> For the latter is identical with the question how the correlation of situations is possible (one that signifies and one that is signified).
>
> It is only possible by means of the correlation of the components; the correlation between names and things named gives an example. (N p.6.)

A fact in the world, for example, a watch lying on a table[9] involves certain definite relations between the watch and the table. If I state the proposition "The watch is lying on the table", the relations expressed by this concatenation of linguistic signs must, if the proposition is true, be in a certain correlation with the situation in the world: the elements that comprise the signifier must be in correlation with the elements of the situation that is signified if the statement is to be true.

However, the statement may be said with sense even if it is not true:

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8. P.39: Meine ganze Aufgabe besteht darin, das Wesen des Satzes zu erklaren.

9. The example used at N p.70.

what is expressed in the proposition may not accurately represent a state of affairs in the world. Hence, a proposition expresses a state of affairs in the world "experimentally" as it were:

> The general concept of the proposition carries with it a quite general concept of the co-ordination of proposition and situation...
>
> In the proposition a world is as it were put together experimentally. (As when in the law-court in Paris a motor-car accident is represented by means of dolls, etc.)
>
> This must yield the nature of truth straight away (if I were not blind):... The proposition in the picture-writing can be true and false. It has a sense independent of its truth or falsehood. It must be possible to demonstrate everything essential by considering this case. (N p.7.)

To show how a proposition can sensibly picture a situation in the world, whether truly or falsely, is to show simultaneously the nature of truth (what it means to picture the world truly), for "the words "true" and "false"", Wittgenstein says, "refer to the relation of the proposition to the world". (N p.59.) Since any propositions can be negated, he says, "this shews that "true" and "false" mean the same for all propositions". (N p.21.)

It is this early task and this problem that led to the doctrines of the Tractatus discussed in Chapter Five. Wittgenstein explained the nature of a proposition (and hence the nature of truth) in terms of the idea of logically simple elements within a proposition naming metaphysically simple "objects" which make up the "substance" of the world. (TLP 2.013-2.024.) A proposition is a concatenation of names which pictures a concatenation of objects. Since objects "contain the possibility of all situations" (2.014) the fact that a proposition can sensibly give us a picture of the world, whether or not that picture happens to be true, seems to be explained. Hence, Wittgenstein can say: "If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was

true." (2.0211.) The nature of a proposition, hence the nature of the possibility of picturing the world truly or falsely, seemed to him to be explained by these doctrines of the Tractatus.

It is interesting to note just how concerned Wittgenstein was with understanding the nature of truth during these early years. A glance at the indices of the Notebooks 1914-16 and the Tractatus will find the word "truth" used dozens of times in these writings. This is especially significant in view of the striking scarcity of the word "truth" in the later writings from the Blue Book on.[10] A tremendous change in the way Wittgenstein looks at a "proposition" has taken place such that the word "truth" is no longer necessarily connected with understanding the nature of "propositions". A proposition (Satz) is no longer seen as a picture of the facts but can be any meaningful linguistic unit. He now realizes that "...In fact we do the most various things with our sentences" and even one word exclamations like "Water!" or "Ow!" (PI 27) (which have nothing to do with naming objects, nor with stating facts) are now seen to be meaningful units of language on an equal footing with factual propositions. Wittgenstein's dominant concern in both periods of his philosophizing was to understand the character and functioning of language itself. His later thought no longer sees language as centering on the possibility of picturing the world in terms of true or false propositions. Hence, the character and functioning of language can be understood, he now sees, without focusing exclusively on the words "true" and "false". It is this new way of looking at language that will dictate Wittgenstein's understanding of the word

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10. The word again begins to appear more frequently in the writings of Wittgenstein's final years collected in On Certainty. Perhaps he realized a certain lack in his late work concerning the notion of "truth" which had to be made up. Our discussion below will take these very important final writings into account.

"truth" in the later philosophy. However, before going on to discuss Wittgenstein's later view of "truth", it is worth our while to pause briefly to develop the basis for our comparison with Nietzsche's seemingly very different relationship to the question of "truth". This will serve to place our discussion of "truth" in Wittgenstein within the larger context of this study as a whole.

iii. The Issue of "Truth" in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein

In Part One we saw that Nietzsche had a post-Kantian orientation from the very beginning of his philosophical career. In his early extensive writings on the problem of truth[11], which included the essay "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense", we saw him taking the position of an extreme scepticism regarding the question of "truth", that is, regarding the possibility that human beings could ever know reality as it is in itself. Nietzsche's scepticism is directed primarily at the possibility of coming to know metaphysical (ultimate) truth, but the consequence of this for him is that it calls into question the fundamental values which had animated Western culture from the start (the true, the beautiful, and the good)[12] and hence vitiates in a certain way all ordinary meanings for the word "truth", including even "scientific" truth. We saw that this early radical scepticism was only intensified in the later philosophy with Nietzsche's calling into question of the very idea of a thing-in-itself. This last was done not with a view to forgetting about metaphysical questions and

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11. See Chapter Two, sec.iv, and Chapter Three, sec.i.

12. See Chapter Two, sec.iv.

narrowing the scope of philosophy into a one-dimensional positivism, but rather serving to intensify the scepticism to the point where he presents a symbolic designation of truth as an "abyss", an "illusion", or a series of "veils behind veils": the idea that "there is no truth" was now equated with the idea that "there is no reality in itself". It is these ideas that we termed "metaphysical scepticism" and it is this that Nietzsche connected with the growing scepticism and despair of the modern world: the long and wonderful Western dream of knowledge, knowledge of reality, had shattered in the modern world to the point where all the traditional values and meanings which gave significance to human life were being called into question. Hence, from the very beginning Nietzsche had seen a link between metaphysics and epistemology on the one hand, and questions of value on the other. His entire philosophical task - and his final call for a "revaluation of all values" - revolved around this link.

Wittgenstein was also very concerned with questions of value from the very beginning of his philosophical career, but his insight, expressed in the Notebooks 1914-16 and in the Tractatus, was that value could only be "shown" (gezeigt) and never expressed in propositional form (gesagt).[13] And his early concern with the question of "truth" was not with "truth" in the metaphysical sense denoting knowledge of "reality-in-itself". Rather, it is "truth" as a relation between language and the world that he is trying to

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13. As was pointed out in Chapter Five value falls within a larger framework of things that can only be shown and not said. In a letter to Russell dated 19.8.19, Wittgenstein underlines this as the main point of the Tractatus: "Now I'm afraid you haven't got hold of my main contention, to which the whole business of logical prop[osition]s is only a corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by prop[osition]s - i.e. by language - (and, which comes to the same, what can be thought) and what can not be expressed by prop[osition]s, but only shown (gezeigt); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.-". Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore, G.H. von Wright, ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p.71.

understand: the striking capacity of propositions to represent the world truly or falsely. He considered this use of the word "true" to be the paradigm and the central use of the word, perhaps because he associated this capacity of language to picture the world with the possibility of human knowledge itself.

Since this pervasive concern for the question of "truth" was not metaphysical in the sense of attempting to know reality-in-itself,[14] there would be very limited value in comparing this concern with Nietzsche's own early concern for "truth" - although for Wittgenstein a metaphysics in Nietzsche's sense did come into existence in order to explain the possibility of propositions representing the world truly or falsely. What will illuminate the connection that Nietzsche draws between that crisis in values which he calls "nihilism" and the crisis in truth (the epistemological scepticism and relativism of the modern world) is the later philosophy of Wittgenstein in which he tries to present a philosophy of language and a weltanschauung free of metaphysics altogether. It is the way in which the word "true" is there separated from all of its metaphysical connotations that can clarify the question of nihilism and perhaps even point beyond it.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy can be understood as addressing the question of metaphysics in part because of the metaphysics that came into existence in the Tractatus in order to account for the possibility of language (modeled on the paradigm of true or false propositions) operating with meaning and sense. If he were to go beyond the ordinary factual uses of the words "true" and "false" (for which the Tractatus was

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14. As Wittgenstein later pointed out, it was metaphysical in the sense of looking for an essence to all language (PI 92) or for the "general form of propositions" (PI 65). See Wittgenstein's critical discussion of this aspect of the Tractatus in PI 92-116.

attempting to account) and call the doctrine of "objects" and names naming "objects" "true", then he would be involved in a knowledge claim about "reality-in-itself". Perhaps the statement in the Preface to the Tractatus that the book as a whole is "true" is just such a metaphysical claim. The later philosophy spends a great deal of effort attempting to understand just how such claims arise and the confusions that lie behind such claims. In the following sections we will examine the nature of this critique of metaphysics and look at its consequences for our understanding of the word "truth". But first it is important to complete our preliminary conceptual framework by drawing one more comparison with Nietzsche's philosophy.

We saw in our "critical assessment of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism"[15] that a distinction can be made between two ways of approaching Kant's philosophy in the First Critique. On the one hand it is possible to look at Kant's forms and categories as suggesting "conditions" that we bring to experience or impose upon experience. This way of interpreting Kant can lead to the orientation that we called, with Anders Nygren, "epistemological scepticism". It begins with the subjectivity of the knowing being and with the idea that this knowing being brings certain apriori conditions to experience. We argued that this is the way that the Kantian philosophy influenced Nietzsche. This interpretation of Kant involves a largely psychological approach (in the sense of "transcendental psychology") and seemingly results in a radical distinction between an unknowable reality-in-itself and the phenomenal world taken as "mere appearance".

Another way of responding to Kant, the one recommended by Nygren,

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15. Chapter Three, sec.iv.

is to speak in terms of "presuppositions" rather than "conditions" and to pursue a presuppositional method that is purely logical, rather than psychological. This latter approach can help us avoid the temptation to treat the presuppositions as if they were themselves additional "facts" on the same level as factual knowledge about the world which are are trying to comprehend. It can lead to a radical distinction between the logical presuppositions of the facts and the facts themselves, the former not being facts since they determine in some sense what we mean by "facts". It is in this latter way that the Neo-Kantian atmosphere of early 20th century Vienna seems to have influenced Wittgenstein.[16] The Tractatus is almost totally concerned with the logic of propositions and with the logical presuppositions of the possibility of propositions operating with meaning and sense.[17] And as we saw in the last chapter, this presuppositional approach remained through the transition to the later philosophy even though "logic" was now broadened into "grammar" and "logical possibility" into "grammatical possibility". It is this difference in the influence of Kant on these two thinkers that will ultimately make the difference in the way they understand the question of "truth".

It is important to keep this distinction in mind because there is another sense in which the early work of Wittgenstein is pre-Kantian: in its creation of a metaphysics which claims to identify the "substance" of the world. (TLP 2.021.) We argued in Chapter Five that the paradoxical

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16. See, e.g., Janik and Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna, p.22.

17. Although, as Professor H.L. Finch points out (Wittgenstein - The Later Philosophy (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1977), pp.12-16), there is still a certain psychological aspect to Wittgenstein's early thought (which was dropped in the later thought) in that the sense of propositions was seen to come through the mental activity of "meaning" them, i.e. of "thinking the sense" (p.12).

elements within the Tractatus are the result of this tension between a purely logical-presuppositional method on the one hand, and the attempt to give an account of reality-in-itself on the other. We then argued in Chapter Six that it was the progressive realization of the implications of this presuppositionalism that led Wittgenstein away from metaphysics to the view that "language is not grounded on any reality" (PG p.184) and to the very different understanding of the human situation with regard to language which characterizes the later philosophy. In his book on The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy Ernst Konrad Specht compares the two phases of Wittgenstein's thought in the following way:

> The contrast between the two linguistic models can be briefly characterized thus: the atomic model presupposes a world of given objects, in the Realist sense, to which a multiplicity of linguistic symbols is unambiguously allied. In this way the atomic model thus implies a Correspondence or Picture Theory of language.
>
> By way of contrast, the language-game model at first leaves open the question about reality existing in itself and is limited to the investigation of the objects appearing in the language-games.[18]

Logically prior to facts, in the later philosophy (or even, as Specht puts it to "objects") are the conceptual and grammatical presuppositions of the facts, the "language-games". This approach, in Specht's view, "leaves open the question about reality existing in itself". But we shall see that it does more than this: it calls into question the very meaningfulness of the idea of "reality in itself". Wittgenstein has moved from what is in some sense a pre-Kantian "Realist" metaphysics to a point of view which calls into question the very possibility and meaning of traditional metaphysics. With this in mind, then, let us turn to the question of the meaning of "truth" in

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18. D.E. Walford, trans. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), p.25.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy, looking first at the evolution of his conception of a "proposition".

iv. "Propositions" in The Later Philosophy

In making his whole task in the early period the effort to understand the nature of a proposition, Wittgenstein was trying to understand the nature of language itself, the way in which language was related to the world. He seemed to take the proposition, conceived of as any statement that could be true or false (N p.21), as the paradigm for the relation of all language to the world, which, if understood, would clarify the essence of language. A proposition is a "logical picture of a situation" in the world[19] and the relation of this logical picture to the world is expressed in the words "true" or "false". (N p.59.) Hence, if one could understand the nature of this logical picturing, and how it is that each logical picture may or may not truly mirror a state of affairs in the world, one would be simultaneously understanding the essential nature of language.

In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein is highly critical of his earlier project and opposes to it his later way of looking at language:

> But now it may come to look as if there were something like a final analysis of our forms of language, and so a single completely resolved form of every expression....
>
> This finds expression in questions as to the essence of language, of propositions, of thought. - For if we too in these investigations are trying to understand the essence of language - its function, its structure, - yet this is not what those questions have in view. For they see in the essence, not something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement, but something that

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19. N p.25, cf. TLP 2.11, 2.202, 2.182, 3.34.

> lies beneath the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look into the thing, and which analysis digs out.
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> 'The essence is hidden from us': this is the form our problem now assumes. We ask: "What is language?", "What is a proposition?" And the answer to all these questions is to be given once for all; and independently of any future experience....
>
> Why do we say a proposition is something remarkable? On the one hand, because of the enormous importance attaching to it. (And this is correct). On the other hand this, together with a misunderstanding of the logic of language, seduces us into thinking that something extra-ordinary, something unique, must be achieved by propositions....
>
> We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on. This order is a super-order between - so to speak - super-concepts. Whereas, of course, if the words "language", "experience", "world", have a use it must be as humble a one as that of the words "table", "lamp", "door". (PI 91-97.)

The relevant points that can be derived from these paragraphs would seem to be the following:

1. Wittgenstein is still concerned with "trying to understand the essence of language" but now this is not seen as an inner structure hidden within propositions that must be revealed through logical analysis but rather as "something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement." This would seem to apply directly to the understanding of "propositions": one must look at language actually functioning, at propositions as they already lie open to view, and they will become clear. Whereas Wittgenstein's whole early task consisted in "explaining" (erklaren) the nature of the proposition, his concern with understanding them has not diminished, but now there is something to be seen, but nothing to be explained. As he says a few pages later: "Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. - Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to

explain". (PI 126.)

2. The traditional philosophical question which asked for "the essence" of a thing, for its essential nature independently of its accidental characteristics and its many particular variations, misleads us into ignoring those particular variations and looking below their "surface" to the common logical structure behind them all. This traditional philosophical error found expression in the early philosophy in the form of the questions "What is language?" and "What is a proposition?" which looked for a single inner nature to these things that can be discovered and specified "once for all" and "independently of any future experience".

3. However, in spite of this early misdirection, the question about propositions, their structure and function, remains enormously important and hence is not to be abandoned. For with this question not only are we looking for something extremely fundamental to the understanding of language itself: if we connect the idea of a proposition with truth or falsity, then we are asking a question about the very foundations of human knowledge. Philosophy, in giving up the search for hidden essences, one might say, has never given up dealing with the fundamental questions, even if these questions are now connected with grammar, and the presuppositions of grammar, rather than with metaphysics or epistemology traditionally conceived.

4. Hence, what is profound and essential about philosophical investigation does not reside in "trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language". We are still dealing with the concepts of "proposition", "truth", "language", etc., but what is profound and essential will be surveyable even when these words are seen to be on the same level as the humblest of words: like "table", "lamp", and "door".

As these four points indicate, the focus of Wittgenstein's concern did

not change between the early and later philosophies, nor did his presuppositional method change: the method of looking at language in terms of its possibilities of sense and nonsense. What did change was his conception of where to find that which is profound and essential in philosophical investigation: it is no longer the essence hidden behind the phenomena, so to speak, for now "Essence is expressed by grammar". (PI 371.) In connection with this, he no longer looks at factual propositions as embodying all that is essential to the functioning of language, although their investigation is still of "enormous importance". Indeed, as we shall see, he no longer believes there is one essence (in the traditional sense) to all propositions, nor to all language. If we wish to speak of what something is, its "essence", we are now simultaneously talking, not only about the thing, but also the grammar in which the word functions.

During Wittgenstein's transitional period there was still much discussion of propositions in ways closely related to the Tractatus. Let us look at some key passages from this period in order to point out this link with his earlier views and in order to have a basis for tracing the change to the later views.[20] As our sixth chapter has already pointed out, the one doctrine of the Tractatus most conspicuously missing during this period is the doctrine of "objects" which are the "substance" of the world. However, propositions in the early transitional period are still conceived of as "logical pictures". When speaking of language in general, he says:

> (1) Its propositions represent a state of affairs and are either true or false. (2) But in order that propositions may be able to represent at all something further is needed which is the same both in language and reality. For example, a picture can represent a scene rightly or wrongly; but both in

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20. This method of exposition (by comparison with the early views) is one often followed by Wittgenstein himself, e.g. in PI 92-116.

> picture and scene pictured there will be colour and light and shade.
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> Thought must have the logical form of reality if it is to be thought at all.
>
> Grammar is not the expression of what is the case but of what is possible. There is a sense therefore in which possibility is logical form. (L32 p.10.)

> Propositions are the basic elements of our description of the world. What are they? "Sentences in a book between two full stops"; or "Expressions that may be true or false"....
>
> Any affirmation can be negated: if it has sense to say p, it also has sense to say ~p....
>
> A proposition therefore is any expression which can be significantly negated. (L32 p.22.)

> 'Language' is languages. - Languages <u>are</u> systems.
>
> It is units of languages that I call "propositions". (PG p.27.)

> A class of true propositions is delimited in a completely different way from a class of propositions with sense. In the first case the limit is drawn by experience, in the second case by the syntax of language. (VC p.213.)

There are three basic points (all related to one another and to the point of view of the <u>Tractatus</u>) that are important to point out in connection with these passages:

1. Wittgenstein sees language as made up of discrete units ("propositions") which he is intent on understanding as holding the key to language. And these units of language are still identified with whatever can be "true or false". Propositions <u>in this sense</u> are still taken to be the paradigm case for all language.

2. The words "true" and "false" would seem to mean the same for all propositions (as he had claimed in his early notebooks (N p.21)). Hence, one can identify what is a proposition and what not through this conception: "a proposition...is any expression which can be significantly negated".

3. As in the <u>Tractatus</u>, there is a clear distinction between the <u>sense</u> of propositions (which is apriori) and that which allows determination of

their truth or falsity (the aposteriori). The rules of grammar or "the syntax of language" are apriori in a way that is clearly separated from the empirical and not to be confused with it.

The path away from these views was connected not only with the realizations of his own radical presuppositionalism (which we focused on in Chapter Six) but also with a new method of carefully looking at the actual uses of key philosophical words within the multiplicity of settings in which they are found. It is this new way of looking at grammar[21] in terms of its concrete possibilities of use (rather than in terms of an abstract thinking which tries to get below the concrete usages to the essential nature of the concepts) which led Wittgenstein to see that context and settings are integrally linked to meanings and ultimately to see meanings as being entirely intertwined with human activities and the situations within which those activities are carried out.[22] As we shall see, partly in order to indicate this link between meaning and concrete situations Wittgenstein now adopts a new methodological approach which uses the notion of the "language-game".[23] The understanding of meaning now requires that we look at language games, at the sentences and the activities and situations with which they are intertwined, rather than at

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21. For a fuller explanation of his new way of looking at grammar see Chapter Six, secs. iii, iv, and v.

22. Hence, he criticizes the Tractatus for not looking at the multiplicity of concrete cases: "The basic evil of Russell's logic, as also of mine in the Tractatus, is that what a proposition is is illustrated by a few commonplace examples, and then presupposed as understood in full generality" (RPPI p.10). His position now is that the "whole environment of the event of saying" a word in inseparable from its meaning: "Just in this way we refer by the phrase "understanding a word"...to the whole environment of the event of saying it" (BrB p.157), for "only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (Z 173). See also, for example, RPPI 240 & 630, PI 23, OC 229, 350, & 433.

23. As he states explicitly, for example, in BB p.17.

"propositions" isolated from a context. He now concludes that "The sentence...has no sense outside of the language-game".[24]

Therefore, by the time of the Blue Book, the Lectures of 1933-35, and the Moore Lecture Notes, Wittgenstein had clearly moved away from all three of the early views ennumerated here. Briefly examining each of these views in turn will provide us with an insight into his later thinking about the question of "propositions".

1. What Wittgenstein took to be his "whole task" in the early philosophy, "to explain the nature of a proposition", was misdirected from the beginning since it was looking for an essence to all propositions and posing itself in the form of an abstract question "What is a proposition?". Having begun to take into consideration the possible uses of the word "proposition" within the language games and contexts of everyday language, he now sees that there is no general essence which all propositions have in common:

> To return to discussion of the general notion of a proposition. Have we got any general notion? What would we do if we had to explain what a proposition is? Propositions do not all have something in common, but are a family of things having overlapping likenesses.... I have given examples, but in what sense have I got a general notion which would draw a line around this group? When asked to make groupings within this family, I gave and could give, only examples.[25]

This statement marks one of the most fundamental changes in Wittgenstein's philosophy as well as a fundamental change in the history of philosophy. For when generalized it says that the search for essences, whether in the world or in language, must come to an end. The statement

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24. RPPI p.93: "Der Satz...hat keinen Sinn ausserhalb des Sprachspiels."

25. L35 p.67; cf. pp.20 & 77.

says that there is no essence to all propositions, nor, by implication, to language itself, an idea which became fundamental to the Philosophical Investigations:

> But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? - There are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (PI 23.)

The implications of these statements bear on all Wittgenstein's subsequent philosophical ideas, including the second idea which the transitional period had retained from the early philosophy. It should be made clear, however, that insofar as the German word Satz can be translated as "sentence" or "proposition" and may serve as a useful device for talking about language, Wittgenstein continued to freely use this word throughout his later philosophy. The meaning of the words "sentence" or "proposition", however, are now defined by the context in which the word is being used, not by an apriori definition of all "propositions".

2. Since we have seen Wittgenstein deny that there is any general notion of a proposition, it would follow that the words "true" and "false" might not mean the same for all propositions and that we could not define all propositions in terms of these ideas as "that which can be significantly negated". This is indeed his view. In these same lectures Wittgenstein examines the possibility of defining the truth of a proposition as that which "agrees with reality". A little later, he examines the definition of a proposition as "anything that can be true or false":

> Let us examine the statement that a proposition is true if it agrees with reality and false if it does not.... Likeness is a most common form of agreement. But a drawing which

> is out of perspective might also be said to agree. That is, a thing might not be like reality and be said to agree with reality, for example, a painted picture, a statue, a picture drawn according to queer rules of projection, a map. So if we say a proposition is true when it agrees with reality we must say in what way it agrees with reality, since the expression "agrees with" is used in all sorts of different ways....
>
> Consider the idea of projection. There are the same difficulties with this idea as with the ideas of agreement and truth. (L35 pp.106-7.)

> The definition of a proposition as anything that can be true or false, and thus as anything that can be denied, sounds as if it gave a criterion for deciding whether something is a proposition: deny p and see whether the result is a proposition. What is it like to try to deny p and to decide that it is no proposition if one cannot? The words "true" and "false" sound like the adjectives "red" and "green", and to say a proposition is whatever can be true or false sounds like a discovery, like "iron is anything that can rust". But to say a proposition is what can be true or false comes to saying that what we mean by "proposition" is partly given by the rule p v ~p = taut. It is what this and other rules apply to. And this means that these rules determine the game played with "proposition". (L35 p.140.)

In the first passage Wittgenstein is pointing out that any projection can be done in some other way and that there is no essential character to projection which would allow the words "agrees with reality" to always carry the same meaning. An artist, for example, may say he or she is copying a scene onto the canvas exactly as it appears, yet to a viewer even the subject of the painting, let alone in what way the subject "agrees with" the reality that is being portrayed, may be a mystery. To say a proposition is "true" if it agrees with reality is to say nothing, since there are many possible modes of projection, and many different meanings to the idea of "agreement". The difficulties being pointed out with regard to the idea of projection, Wittgenstein says, apply equally to the idea of "agreement" and even "truth". There is no essential nature to any of these concepts but only "family resemblances", overlapping likenesses, similarities, and differences (PI 67). As he categorically states in the Blue Book: "We

are unable to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real definition to them". (BB p.25.)

In the second passage quoted it may sound as if the formula "a proposition is anything that can be true or false" has identified a way of determining "genuine" propositions and distinguishing them from "pseudo-propositions". This may seem similar to the use of "the capacity for rusting" as a criterion for determining empirically whether or not a certain metal is iron. But investigation of the grammar of the word "proposition" allows us to see that the capacity to be true or false is often part of the way we define the word to begin with; hence to state the formula "a proposition is anything that can be true or false" is in part merely to state a tautology. The rules of the truth-functional calculus are part of the meaning, that is the rules for use, that we often attach to the word "proposition". However also, in part, not Wittgenstein suggests. The grammatical rules for usage for the disjunction of truth and falsity intersect and overlap with the rules for the factual usage of the word "proposition", but there are other places where the rules of usage would diverge. Only examination of the actual uses of these words in everyday language would show the extent of intersection and divergence. And as we have seen, not only do the grammatical practices for the use of these different words diverge somewhat but the words themselves have no essential unitary meaning: the meaning of "proposition" may vary somewhat from case to case and the meaning of "true" and "false" may likewise vary. Hence Wittgenstein has abandoned his earlier view that the words "true" and "false" mean the same for all propositions and that these words can be connected with the word "proposition" in such a way as to identify

what is or is not a genuine proposition.[26]

The early Wittgenstein focused on a use of the word "proposition" which restricted its meaning to those statements which made factual claims and could therefore suggest, for example, that "mathematical propositions so called are not propositions at all" (L32 p.22). However, as he emerged from the transitional period we find him more and more distinguishing different kinds of propositions (including once again allowing the idea of "mathematical propositions" (MLN p.261)). Now that he was focusing on the grammar of everyday language rather than on an idealized conception of the essence of language he began to focus on the possible ways in which the word could sensibly be used. Hence, for example, he could now speak of the "colour scale" as a "system of propositions" (PR p.317), of "a proposition of syntax" (PR p.218), of "a kind of empirical proposition" versus "a 'proposition' in a different sense" (PR p.312), of "hypotheses" as propositions versus "what I call propositions" (MLN p.261), and of propositions that are more or less "like an empirical proposition" (RFM p.125). We have also seen that he now often used the word interchangeably with the word "sentence", holding that a proposition could consist of simply one word like "Water!" or "Ow!" (BrB p.82, PI 27).

The bottom line is that just as we have seen him say that the word "proposition" is vague and may change its meaning somewhat from use to use (L35 p.67) so any and all concepts are thus vague and may change their meanings somewhat from case to case:

> He concluded finally that '"makes sense" is vague, and will have different senses in different cases', but that the expression 'makes sense' is useful just as 'game' is useful, although, like 'game', it 'alters its meaning as we go from proposition to proposition'; adding that, just as 'sense' is

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26. See PI 136 & 225 for Wittgenstein's definitive statements on this.

vague, so must be 'grammar', 'grammatical rule' and 'syntax'.[27]

Although these notions may be extremely useful for getting clear about language, all these concepts, including 'grammar', 'grammatical rule', 'syntax', and the idea of 'sense' itself, are vague and have no essential nature which can be formulated definitionally. What 'makes sense' may vary from case to case depending on the context and the situation, and there can be no apriori conception of what makes sense and what does not.

3. We characterized the third view stemming from the period of the Tractatus by stating that "the rules of grammar or "the syntax of language" are apriori in a way that is clearly separated from the empirical and not to be confused with it." As Chapter Six demonstrated, a clear distinction between the apriori and aposteriori was not only retained in the later philosophy but its implications were more fully understood. This distinction is, therefore, still fundamental although it is no longer connected with a theory of factual propositions as the paradigm of all significant language. Rather, the distinction is now connected with the way meaning functions through concrete human speech activities within specific situations. Because Wittgenstein now sees the relations between the apriori and aposteriori in terms of specific linguistic situations, what is to be classified as apriori and what is to be classified as aposteriori may vary from case to case and is always correlated with a specific situation.

His investigations in connection with the relations between the apriori and aposteriori continued to the very end of his career and constitute perhaps one of the main contributions of his later philosophy. For what he revealed was that the traditional philosophical distinction between the two

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27. MLN p.274, cf. L35 pp.20-21.

(so clearly articulated, for example, by Leibniz in his distinction between "truths of reason" and "truths of fact"[28]) cannot be formulated in any apriori definition but, like all the key philosophical words we have seen considered in this section, can be useful and illuminating only when referred to specific language games, to concrete linguistic situations. Wittgenstein discovered that in certain situations the apriori and the empirical intertwine in such a way that a clear separation between the two is extremely difficult. This is not to say that Wittgenstein affirmed so called "synthetic apriori propositions" such as were defended by Kant.[29] He might well say that the attempt of Kant to see the synthetic apriori as providing us with "knowledge" of a certain kind was to mistakenly attribute factuality to the apriori in a way that is very misleading. His own insight, on the other hand, sees an intermingling of the two in such a way that what sometimes seems to have the characteristic features of the empirical takes on a unique status and assumes a presuppositional relation to the linguistic situation in which it is used. However, a full exposition of this point (that the distinction between the apriori and the aposteriori can no longer be given in an apriori definition, neither in connection with the nature of "propositions" nor with any other concept) requires a prior investigation of the new understanding of meaning and sense which arose in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. For this reason we have introduced these ideas here simply as necessary background and will postpone a substantial discussion of them until Chapter Eight after we have accomplished our exposition of meaning and sense in the later philosophy. Let us turn now

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28. E.g. Monadology secs. 31-36.

29. Although he agreed that certain propositions can "understandably be called that" (RFM p.125).

to this exposition.

v. "Meaning" In The Later Philosophy

In spite of the fact that Wittgenstein continued to use the word "proposition" in his later philosophy (now in many different senses and in many different contexts), if one had to identify a "basic unit of language" (a way in which Wittgenstein would no longer be likely to speak) the choice would not be the proposition but rather the "language game". "The sentence", he says, "has no sense outside the language-game" (RPPI 488). The notion of "language games" has become extremely useful to Wittgenstein in his attempt to get a clear view of the working of language. However, there can be no strict definition of language games any more than there can be a strict definition of "propositions". Like the notion of "games" with which these are associated, there is no essence to all language games, only a series of "family resemblances", of overlapping similarities and dissimilarities. (PI 66-67.)

Early in the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein gives three or four senses in which he will use the phrase "language game". He cites here his second example:

> We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games "language-games" and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language game.
>
> And the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses.
>
> I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language-game". (PI 7.)

By beginning with the language games by which children learn, or by focusing on the idea of a primitive language much simpler than our own, Wittgenstein is trying to isolate certain features of the functioning of language and of meaning within language. However, this is not a form of anthropology but a device for illuminating "complete systems of human communication". Hence, as Wittgenstein makes clear in the Brown Book, even the most complex or sophisticated uses of language can still be called "language games":

> Systems of communication...we shall call "language games". They are more or less akin to what in ordinary language we call games. Children are taught their native language by means of such games, and here they even have the entertaining character of games. We are not, however, regarding the language games which we describe as incomplete parts of a language, but as languages complete in themselves, as complete systems of communication. To keep this point of view in mind, it very often is useful to imagine such a simple language to be the entire system of communication of a tribe in a primitive state of society. Think of primitive arithmetics of such tribes.
>
> When the boy or grown-up learns what one might call special technical languages, e.g., the use of charts and diagrams, descriptive geometry, chemical symbolism, etc., he learns more language games. (BrB p.81.)

One of the most important things that the notion of language games illuminates about the way language means is that the meaning of our sentences are inseparably connected with "the actions" into which they are woven. The proposition, therefore, cannot be the basic unit of language for the sense of any proposition can vary depending on the language game within which it is used. The proposition can mean different things in different language games and has no sense outside of some game. For example, the statement "I just killed someone" means something different in a play or a poem, after a wrestling or boxing match, in the confessional of a church, in a police station, in an advertisement, during battle in a

war, during major surgery, after a college debate, following a landslide political victory, etc. Propositions (and the words which make them up) do not mean purely in isolation but rather in the context of the human activities with which they are intertwined.

One way of reading the later works, including the Philosophical Investigations which is at their heart, is to see it as one extended discussion of meaning and the many ramifications of what Wittgenstein understands as meaning. This discussion includes a continual battle against the conception of meaning found in the Tractatus (as well as in much traditional philosophy). And the most fundamental idea of these later writings, which comes up again and again, is that meaning is most fundamentally use. Meaning arises from the way that we use the signs and sentences of our language as these are altogether intertwined with various human activities. Wittgenstein says: "For a large class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language". (PI 43.) Any exceptions to this claim (for example, meaning as physiognomy (PI 586 & p.218) or meaning as intention (PI 689-93)) are not emphasized in comparison with the repeated emphasis on meaning as use: as, for example, in OC 10 where he says "...It is only in use that the proposition has its sense." For exceptions to this claim (for example, a people might find the physiognomy of a natural phenomenon meaningful in a certain way) can themselves only become part of language when they are taken up through use into the public language games. Similarly, if meaning in part can be seen as making known one's intentions (concerning what one means) by an explanation (PI 560), the very possibility of such an explanation presupposes language games established though common patterns of use.

In the Investigations meaning as use can be seen as a

connecting thread of much of the discussion[30] In the opening sections Wittgenstein begins with the view of meaning advanced by Augustine only to oppose this with his own conception of meaning as use as exemplified by the language games involving "five red apples" (PI 1) and the primitive language games of the builders (PI 2-6). And in section 20, after referring again to the language game of the builders, he asks, "But doesn't the fact that the sentences have the same sense consist in their having the same use?" Next, in his discussion of why ostensive definitions cannot be a foundation for meaning (as Augustine had suggested) he writes: "...The ostensive definition explains the use - the meaning - of the word when the overall role of the word in language is clear". (PI 30.) "Use" here, this suggests, can be looked at as equivalent to "meaning". Again, in his discussion of why naming cannot be seen as the foundation of meaning Wittgenstein says that a proper name (e.g. "Moses" (PI 79)) may change its meaning depending on the context in which it is used. And the fact that a name does not have a fixed meaning, he says, detracts as little from its usefulness as does a table that sometimes wobbles from one that does not. (PI 81.) His criticisms of the Tractatus involve the fact that he did not realize this basic characteristic of language but took the idea of structural mapping as a paradigm for all the diverse ways in which language operates. Thus the basic ideas of the Tractatus ("proposition, language, thought, world") leave out the fundamental understanding that meaning is use: "The language-game in which they are to be applied is missing." (PI 96.) Again, in section 120, he suggests that the meaning of a word is not something different from the word but lies in its use. This

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30. The words here translated as "meaning" are meinen, bedeuten, and sometimes sagen.

pattern continues throughout the Investigations up to the final categorical assertions of Part Two: "Let the use teach you the meaning" (p.212) and "Let the use of the words teach you their meaning" (p.220).

This emphasis on meaning as use is also found, of course, in the other late writings for it is the basic understanding of meaning that has replaced the Tractatus conception. Thus in the Blue Book Wittgenstein writes, "...If we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its use" (p.4), and in the Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology: "The usefulness, i.e. the use, gives the proposition its special sense, the language-game gives it" (RPPI 266), and again in On Certainty: "...A meaning of a word is a kind of employment of it. For it is what we learn when the word is incorporated into our language. This is why there exists a correspondence between the concepts 'rule' and 'meaning'." (OC 61-2.)[31]

Wittgenstein's use of the word "use" above is nearly interchangeable with this use of the word "language game", for the notion of language game conveys the idea that there are no meanings to the signs of language apart from the practices with which they are interwoven. This idea that meaning is connected with practices is the first of several implications that we will suggest in connection with the notion that meaning is use: language is a form of behavior, an extension of other kinds of behavior (Z 545), and as such meaning always involves "practices" (OC 601) or the "teaching" of practices (RPPII 337). One cannot discover the meaning of an expression by simply contemplating the expression itself but must always

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31. Some further references to the idea that meaning is use are the following: Z 24, BrB p.159, RFM p.177, PI 432, OC 10. Some references to the idea that meaning is entirely given within language are the following: L32 pp.64, 85 & 86, Z 332 & 333, PI 500-546 & p.184.

look at the practice of which it is a part." (OC 601.) Even mathematical propositions, he says, have no meaning apart from being "grounded in a technique". (RFM p.159.) What this in effect does is make the referential aspect of language strictly secondary in such a way that referring can never be the basis of meaning. For referring only makes sense as part of a practice which provides a meaningful context for reference. At one point Wittgenstein calls these practices "conversation": "conversation, the application and further interpretation of words flows on and only in this current does a word have its meaning". (RPPI 240.) "Conversation", here, does not merely mean talking but agreed upon ways of speaking intertwined with agreed upon ways of doing things in the world. The language of the "builders" (BrB pp.77-81, PI 2-6) has meaning only in the context of their building activities.

Secondly, and for this same reason, there can be no "private meanings", no private languages that are not derivative from public ones. Meaning is inseparable from human conventions, customs, agreements. Hence, when Wittgenstein speaks of meaning as use he is using the word "use" in a large sense to include standard practices, customs, and conventions: "To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions)".[32] Even the language of our sense-impressions (which some have connected with something "private") is founded on convention and such talk has no meaning outside of public language-games (PI 355). This is also true of all expression of "intentions"

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32. PI 199. Professor Finch (Wittgenstein - The Later Philosophy, pp.27-33) points out the significant difference in the functions of the two words Wittgenstein uses that can be translated as "use" (Gebrauch and Verwendung) which in part includes the difference between "customary usage" and "possible uses" (p.28). This distinction, while implicit in our discussion below, need not be explicitly emphasized in order to make the points we wish to make.

which again we might take to have some private rather than public meaning. There is meaning to the expression of intentions because "an intention is embedded in its situation, in human customs and institutions". (PI 337.) The Cartesian picture of a private subjectivity which is the real source of meaning has no role to play in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. This is not behaviorism, however, of which Wittgenstein is clearly critical[33] but rather a new way of seeing things beyond the split between behaviorism and subjectivism.[34]

A third implication of looking at meaning as intrinsically use is to shift the focus from an ontological way of looking at meaning (as if language, in some way, reflected a prior ontological "reality") to seeing it as fundamentally connected with human action. We have seen that language is grounded in behavior and practices, for Wittgenstein. Perhaps his most concise expression of this is found at Z 545 where he says: "Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour. (For our language-game is behaviour.) (Instinct)".[35] Even though the word "instinct" (Instinkt) is used at this place, it would be a mistake to believe language was somehow determined by behavioral "causes" which mitigate the human capacity for free action. When Wittgenstein speaks of the sources of meaning he does not oppose a causal conception (which might be called "reaction") to the possibility of free action. The conventional rules which

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33. PI 307 & 308.

34. See, for example, PR pp.93-95. The question of Cartesianism and subjective "privacy", an issue we have seen fundamental to our critique of Nietzsche, will be discussed more fully in Chapter Nine, especially sec. iii. Our purpose in the current section is to lay out Wittgenstein's later idea of meaning, and some of its implications, as a groundwork for subsequent discussion.

35. See also PI 218 & RPPI 151.

make up the standard usages of our languages can always be disobeyed (RFM p.193) or obeyed in some other way (PI 206). His point, rather, seems to be that the world as it is encountered within language is to be connected with the primacy of human response rather than dictated to us by prior ontological structures. Hence, repeated disobedience of a grammatical rule, for example, if adopted as a pattern of behavior by some group (that response), might itself soon become a new meaningful language game. This idea of the primacy of response (what is also in a sense the primarcy of "action") would seem to be basic to the meaning of the quotation from Goethe's Faust (Im Amfang war die Tat) which is found in On Certainty 402 and again in a 1937 passage in Culture and Value. In the latter place he explicitly connects the idea Goethe expresses here of the primacy of action with the primitive language game as a "reaction":

> The origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop.
>
> Language - I want to say - is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'. (CV p.37.)[36]

The implications of seeing meaning as human action rather than as something dictated to us by pre-existing ontological structures are far reaching and indeed revolutionary. We will examine in detail some of these implications in our concluding chapter where we will be attempting to address the problem of nihilism and looking at some larger implications of Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's work. For the present, however, it is important to see that there is no sharp break in Wittgenstein's philosophy

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36. This primitive reaction may itself be linguistic: "What is the primitive reaction with which the language game begins.... The primitive reaction may have been a glance or gesture, but it may also have been a word." (PI p.218.)

between the primitive reactions that constitute the origin of language games and the conscious ways in which we may or may not follow the established rules of linguistic usage. Although in some respects there are, of course, tremendous differences between these, in Wittgenstein's philosophy they are both subsumed under the idea that meaning involves human action rather than determination by ontological necessities. Traditional philosophy, whether in the form of empiricism or rationalism, was still under the domination of the ontological picture, the picture that language (and especially as this is connected with knowledge) is grounded "objectively" and independently of human action. Wittgenstein's philosophy reverses this picture and takes its stand on the priority of action:

> The limits of empiricism are not assumptions unguaranteed, or intuitively known to be correct: they are ways in which we make comparisons and in which we act. (RFM p.176.)
>
> ...The end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game. (OC 205.)

The Tractatus itself was looking to the "substance" of the world in its attempt to discover the ground of the possibility of meaning and sense. But Wittgenstein came to progressively realize the implications of his early doctrine of the immanence of meaning within language: that there is no way to step out of human meanings (and not presuppose them) which could discover "the way the world is" independently of those meanings. This left a very wide gap in his philosophy of language since meaning could no longer be understood as arising out of any form of "picturing" the world. Slowly Wittgenstein came to realize that there is no ontological grounding for language beyond the human capacity for action and response, and indeed, that there is no need of any such grounding in order to

comprehend meaning, nor in order to understand the multiplicity of functions which language is able to perform:

> If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do". (PI 217.)
>
> As if giving grounds did not come to an end sometime. But the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting. (OC 110)[37]

A fourth implication of the idea that meaning is use is interwoven with this idea that meaning is fundamentally action. Wittgenstein was forced to continually enlarge his conception of meaning, so to speak, from being located with the single proposition, to the series of propositions as they are intertwined with human practices (language games), and finally he had to include an even larger conception which involves the idea that human beings simply respond to life in certain ways and in certain patterns: the idea of "forms of life". Like any other conception - philosophical or otherwise - the idea of "forms of life" has meaning in terms of the uses to which it is put, and hence, like the notion of the language game, it is without an essence or exact definition. And since

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37. Peter Winch, in his article "Im Amfang war die Tat", sums up this aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy as follows: "It is instructive to reflect on the contrast between Wittgenstein's treatment of this subject and Strawson's. Strawson's starting point is the statement in which a predicate is ascribed to an identified subject; Wittgenstein's is a primitive reaction. Not, of course, that Wittgenstein denies that we can make true and false assertions about persons: his point is that these assertions make use of a concept which is the creation of a mode of acting to which the true-false bipolarity does not apply. "The deed" now fills the role taken in the Tractatus by the relation of "name" to "object". ...Emphasis on the deed opens the door to an understanding of how new concepts can be created and to a way of grasping concepts and ways of thinking very different from our own. And just because there is no application of the true-false polarity at the level of the deed, this is not to open the door to "idealism" or "relativism". (Irving Block, ed., Perspectives on The Philosophy of Wittgenstein (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981), p.177.)

Wittgenstein does not use the phrase very often in his writings (it appears only five times in the Philosophical Investigations) there are some difficulties connected with precisely understanding his meaning here.

However, it is necessary to bring in this idea in connection with Wittgenstein's notion that meaning is use, and it is possible to get a general idea as to why he thought such an idea important in this connection. Just as we saw Wittgenstein associating meaning with human action (in a very large sense of the word "action") so his later writings include more and more of the total human environment as the context of meaning. Both of these ideas are brought together in a passage from the Brown Book:

> Just in this way we refer by the phrase "understanding a word" not necessarily to that which happens while we are saying or hearing it, but to the whole environment of the event of saying it....
>
> Thus also, acting voluntarily (or involuntarily) is, in many cases, characterized as such by a multitude of circumstances under which the action takes place rather than by an experience which we should call characteristic of voluntary action. And in this sense it is true to say that what happened when I got out of bed - when I should certainly not call it involuntary - was that I found myself getting up. Or rather, this is a possible case; for of course every day something different happens. (BrB p.157.)

Understanding, that is, understanding meaning, must be referred to the "whole environment" in which it occurs just as "action" is to be characterized in terms of the "multitude of circumstances" in which it occurs rather than in terms of some particular subjective feeling. Wittgenstein continually refers meaning to such a "background", "surrounding", or "context" (OC 350). His writings regularly emphasize this background in such statements as "Only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (Z 173) and "Our talk gets its meaning from the rest of our proceedings" (OC 229) (even without often mentioning the idea

of "forms of life" which form part of this background).

There are certain fundamental patterns of living and responses to living which are part of "the whole environment of the event of speaking" and are fundamental to our being human. These very general patterns would seem to be what Wittgenstein often means when he speaks of "forms of life". Our language games are intertwined with specific practices which are part of much larger patterns of human behavior, for example, we can imagine a language consisting of two language games: giving orders and reports in battle. These language games would be part of a larger form of life which involved making war:

> It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle. - Or a language consisting only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. And innumerable others. - And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life. (PI 19.)

One might say that if we conceive of religious behavior, for example, as a form of life, then we could specify a number of language games that would occur within that larger human response to life: thanking, praising, confessing, singing hymns, preaching, absolving, taking sacraments, etc. It should be stressed that the conception "forms of life" is a somewhat vague one and is perhaps only differentiated from the idea of language games (themselves intertwined with practices) through its use as a more general context for meaning. It is where we must stop if we are looking for the ground of meaning and simply conclude that "this is what we do". (PI 217, cf. PI 211.) It is these large human patterns of behavior and fundamental responses to living that are the substratum of the meaningful behavior we call "language" and beyond these we cannot give any further justification for meaning. Meaning terminates in action, in these general ways of acting:

> Instead of the unanalysable, specific, indefinable: the fact that we act in such-and-such ways, e.g. punish certain actions, establish the state of affairs thus and so, give orders, render accounts, describe colours, take an interest in others' feelings. What has to be accepted, the given - it might be said - are facts of living. (RPPI 630.)

In a footnote the translator tells us that "forms of life" was a variant here for "facts of living" (Tatsachen des Lebens). Compare the final sentence here with Wittgenstein's statement in the Investigations (written within the context of a discussion of calculating and of colour judgments): "What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life." (PI p.226.) Meaning comes to rest, so to speak, not in propositions or even in language games, but in the whole environment of basic human responses to life.

One final implication of the idea that meaning is connected with use that is important to underline here is that meaning can be characterized as "groundless". If we think once again of the ontological tradition in the West (including empiricism) and what this tradition looked for as "grounds" or "good reasons", we may find very generally speaking that philosophers often looked for ontological structures or conditions of one sort or another in order to "explain" whatever needed explaining. Wittgenstein's later philosophy opposes this tradition in that philosophy only describes and neither can, nor needs to, explain anything.[38] And what it describes are not ontological structures preexisting language, for all describing itself presupposes language already in operation with its full complement of meaning. As far as language and meaning are concerned, there is nothing to explain. Wittgenstein emphasizes this by using the word "unpredictable":

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38. See e.g. PG 66 & 104, LFM p.22, Z 58, 220, & 615, RFM p.101, RPPI 723, 889, & 984, PI 126.

> You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds.
> It is there - like our life. (OC 559.)

We have seen above Wittgenstein speak of grounds as coming to an end in "an ungrounded way of acting" (OC 110), and we have seen him say that it is "acting" which "lies at the bottom of the language-game" (OC 205). But Wittgenstein in passages like this one is emphasizing his tremendous divergence from the metaphysical tradition (including his own early work). Rather than trying to look behind the phenomena as the tradition tended to do, Wittgenstein takes his stand on the Goethean idea of focusing carefully on the phenomena themselves and realizing that this is the place where we should and must stop. Hence, in his later work he continually emphasizes that "the chain of reasons comes to an end" (BrB p.143). It comes to an end, as far as meaning is concerned, in groundless human actions. Because our acting, just as much as our languages, is not grounded in any pre-linguistic ontological structures we may say that meaning is in this sense "groundless", or as Wittgenstein puts it "The mistake is to say that there is anything that meaning consists in". (Z 16.) At this point we have exhausted justifications and must simply say "This is what we do". (PI 217.) When Wittgenstein says that the language game is simply "there - like our life", one is reminded of his emphasis on "forms of life" as the termination point for all our enquiring, doubting, and justifying: for "what has to be accepted - the given" are these forms of life. Meaning is groundless in this sense: that there is no ontological explanation for it, but it comes to rest in groundless human actions and in "forms of life".

vi. The Concept of "Truth" in the Later Philosophy

In the Tractatus the essence of language was the capacity to picture the world in such a way as to be either true or false. And since a "proposition" (any statement capable of being either true or false) was the unit of sense in the Tractatus, sense (or meaning) was intimately linked to truth. Meaning in language (its sense) was to be found in whatever could be true or false. In one of his later criticisms of the Tractatus Wittgenstein points out this early connection:

> Now it looks as if the definition - a proposition is whatever can be true or false - determined what a proposition was, by saying: what fits the concept 'true', or what the concept 'true' fits, is a proposition. So it is as if we had a concept of true and false, which we could use to determine what is and is not a proposition....
> But this is a bad picture. (PI 136.)

As we earlier pointed out this link between the concept of truth and the concept of meaning is reflected in the dozens of occurrences of the words "true" and "false" in the early writings. And the relative lack of occurrences of the words in the later writings is an indication that Wittgenstein's conception of meaning had become disconnected from the idea of truth. If meaning is conceived of primarily as use - if it is constituted in human language games as these are intertwined with the multiplicity of human activities - then meaning (grammatical sense) is no longer directly correlated with that which must be either true or false, and truth becomes just another language game or games (within the multiplicity of games).

In the light of our discussion of Wittgenstein's later conception of "propositions" (section iv above) and of his later conception of meaning

(section v), we are now in a position to discuss his later understanding of "truth". Although certain far reaching implications of his later understanding of "truth" are best deferred to our concluding chapters, the seven points which we make here will articulate what is fundamental and what is revolutionary in Wittgenstein's viewpoint. The last three of these points, therefore, will be introduced here for completeness sake and their fuller implications will be discussed in Chapter Nine. Together these seven points, we believe, present a balanced picture of the notion of "truth" in Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

1. The grammar of the word "truth" intersects with the grammar of the word "proposition" but neither of these conceptions can be defined in terms of the other. In addition, we have seen that meaning is no longer associated with propositions but is now connected with the larger conceptions of language games and forms of life. We have seen Wittgenstein argue that there is a variety of meanings to the word "proposition" and that we have no "general notion" but only overlapping likenesses and family resemblances of which we can only give examples. (L35 p.67.) And while the grammar of the word "truth" may overlap with the grammar of the word "proposition" (especially in factual uses of the latter), inspection of examples would reveal that the two words are not everywhere interchangeable. The idea that a proposition pictures the world in such a way as to be true or false was itself just a picture which it seemed could only be applied in one way. Wittgenstein says that it seemed "that the picture forced a particular application upon us". (PI 140.) But any picture can be applied in some other way: what constitutes isomorphic mapping depends on how one applies that picture. Not only is the notion of a "proposition" not restricted to that of "truth or falsity" but the idea of something being either true or false is itself of no help

because even that picture has yet to be applied and can be applied in more than one way (i.e. the meanings of the words "true" and "false" may vary depending on their application).

2. This leads to our second point which is that "truth" cannot be defined in terms of the idea of "agreement with reality" any more than the word "proposition" can be defined in terms of "truth". In our discussion of "propositions" we saw Wittgenstein criticize the idea that "a proposition is true if it agrees with reality" on the grounds that the idea of "agreement" is vague and can be applied in various ways. (L35 p.106.) We can now understand more fully why this is true. For if the meaning of the words "agreement", "truth", "projection", etc. is constituted in use, then it is clear that each might have different meanings depending on its uses in different situations. As Wittgenstein says in On Certainty, "the idea of 'agreement with reality' does not have any clear application". (OC 215.) Even the impressive work of science is based, he says, on "agreement about the idea of agreement" (RFM p.97), or, as he says in OC 82: "What counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the language-game." The meaning of the word "truth" or of the words "testing for truth", therefore, can only be defined in terms of their uses in human activities, in terms of prior human agreements which give meaning to the terms and hence cannot themselves be true or false. What counts as a test is not itself true or false, but is part of logic.

3. This should be made explicit as a third point by saying that the word "truth" may mean something different from language game to language game with overlapping similarities and differences between its uses but no essential nature common to them all. Like an "artichoke" whose leaves can be peeled away one by one to reveal no essence (PI 164)

so there is no essence to any concept, including "truth". The "true" meaning of a word is not something hidden beneath the surface, but each particular use is one of a family of meanings connected with a general pattern of uses. As we have seen Wittgenstein say: "We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real 'definition' to them". (BB p.25.)

In Wittgenstein's thinking this principle can be carried to great lengths depending on the extent to which one emphasizes shades or nuances of meaning as determined by particular uses in particular circumstances. In Remarks On Colour, for example, he deals implicitly with the all important traditional notion of "identity" by speaking of a "(kind of) identity". (ROC p.59.) There are "kinds of identity" just as there are "kinds of truth". In his 1934-35 lectures he says that there are "no fewer uses of the word "not" than there are of the words "all" and "any"" and continues: "One could say "proof" has as many different meanings as there are proofs". (L35 p.116.) Again in a 1946 note in Culture and Value we find the following:

> We can apply to the tunes by the various composers the principle: each species of tree is a 'tree' in a different sense of the word. That is, don't be misled by the fact that we say all these are tunes. They are stages along a path which leads from something you would not call a tune to something else that you would equally not call a tune. If you just look at the sequences of notes and changes of key all these entities seem to be on the same level. But if you look at the context in which they exist (and hence at their meaning), you will be inclined to say: In this case melody is something quite different from what it is in that one (amongst other things, here it has a different origin and plays a different role). (CV p.47.)

There is no ontological principle to be derived from this, neither that the world is made up of individuals or "particulars" (as a nominalist might claim) nor that it is in some sense constituted by "relations". For there is

no world about which we might theorize apart from, or independent of, our language games. One might conservatively only say that there are many "kinds of truth", or one might say that "there are as many meanings to the word "truth" as there are uses of it". What one says here depends on how one is using the word "truth" in these circumstances. It may be defined more univocally - or more equivocally - depending on the use to which the word is put. Wittgenstein is very clear about this:

> ...People constantly commit the fallacy of supposing that 'true', 'problem', 'looking for', 'proof' always mean the same, whereas in fact these words 'mean entirely different things' in different cases. (MLN p.301.)

4. What this means is that no "theory of truth" is possible in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Not only are there a multiplicity of legitimate senses in which the word "truth" is used, but philosophy itself, we have seen, does not deal with theories or anything that might itself be called "true" or "false":

> One might also give the name "philosophy" to what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions. (PI 126.)
>
> If one tried to advance theses in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them. (PI 128.)

Philosophy therefore leaves facts and theories to science and takes its task as description - and not even to focus on the "truth" of its description, but rather on the logical-grammatical "form" of the description, i.e. with description of rules and their logical status, as in a "game":

> We are not interested in any empirical facts about language, considered as empirical facts. We are only concerned with the description of what happens and it is not the truth but the form of the description that interests us. What happens considered as a game.
>
> I am only describing language, not explaining anything. (PG p.66, cf. L35 pp.70-1.)

Therefore, insofar as philosophy deals with the question of "truth", philosophy concerns itself with the grammar of the word, with the language games and forms of life within which it functions, and in general with the logical role the notion plays in our lives. This is an apriori activity which does not advance any theses which might be discovered to be true or false, nor is it possible to discover apriori truths as some rationalists have thought. (L35 pp.97-98.) Philosophy describes grammar with certain purposes in mind, one of which is to throw light on the grammatical confusions to which unclarity about language seduces us.[39] This applies to the grammar of "truth" as well as is seen in the following passage from the lectures of 1930-31:

> Philosophy is not a choice between different "theories". It is wrong to say that there is any one theory of truth, for truth is not a concept.[40] We can say that the word has at least three meanings; but it is mistaken to assume that any one of these theories can give the whole grammar of how we use the word, or to endeavour to fit into a single theory cases which do not seem to agree with it.
>
> Of the three theories, W. made no comment on the Correspondence Theory, beyond giving "George V is King of England" as an example of the correspondence of judgment and fact, but commented as follows on the Coherence and Pragmatic theories.
>
> Coherence. In a court of law statements are often taken as true if they are coherent with the rest of the facts, even though it may not be possible to verify them.
>
> Pragmatism. The hypothesis that there are electrons is taken as being true because in practice you can work as if it were the case. So also Einstein's Theory of Relativity is accepted because it works in practice. Thus Eluclidean space is used for everyday purposes, and relativity for immeasurable and astronomical distances....
>
> But we do also use the word true of a ruler, which is a sense not ascribable to any of the other examples given.
>
> Thus it is nonsense to try to find a theory of truth, because we can see that in everyday life we use the word

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39. Philosophy gets its purposes from the traditional philosophical problems (PI 109); Cf. PI 133, 90, 119, & 132; see also ROC p.23.

40. Later, Wittgenstein is willing to speak of a "concept of 'truth'" (PI pp.222-23).

quite clearly and definitely in these different senses. (L32 pp.75-76.)

Here we see that Wittgenstein is not only affirming the idea that philosophy is not concerned with "theories" but also implicitly that the method of philosophy is to give the "grammar of how we use" a word. And the grammar of the word "truth" is varied according to its use within different language games to the point where we see that there are several clearly distinct and legitimate ways in which the word is used. In some situations we use the word "true" in connection with what corresponds to certain states of affairs. But this is not a more fundamental use of the word than that connected with coherence or with pragmatism (to which these others might somehow be reduced). On the contrary, we have seen that the word "correspondence" may itself have various meanings depending on the language games in which it is used. Similar considerations apply to the words "coherence" and the pragmatic idea of "usefulness". What we mean by "coherence" and hence by a "coherence criterion of truth" may vary according to the linguistic situation and hence the meaning of "truth" in the coherence sense may vary. It may mean one thing in a courtroom, for example, and quite another in a physics lab. A similar idea (that there can be various senses of the word "usefulness" with regard to "truth") may have been what Royce meant in his suggestion to William James that he reflect on the possibility of substituting "expedient" for "truth" to yield the courtroom oath: "Do you swear to tell the expedient, the whole expedient, and nothing but the expedient, so help you further experience?"[41]

However, since some commentators have associated Wittgenstein with pragmatism, it is worth while to dwell for a moment on this

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41. Quoted in Warren Shibbles, Wittgenstein, Language & Philosophy (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm C. Brown Publishers, 1969), p.11.

question. In an article on "Wittgenstein's Concept of Truth"[42] Jerry H. Gill makes the following remark:

> ...It should be noted that Wittgenstein's later views have a strong "pragmatist" flavor which permeates his concept of 'truth' as well as his concept of 'meaning'. The experience-centered emphasis of C.S. Pierce, the functional, activity-centered emphasis of William James, and the contextual and social emphasis of John Dewey are all brought to mind by various passages in the Investigations.... Although he refers to James several times, the pragmatist point of view is never really discussed by Wittgenstein. Nevertheless, he obviously read James a good deal, and may have been influenced more than he realized. At any rate, Wittgenstein's concern for experience, context, use, form of life, tolerance, and purpose places him in closer proximity to this school of epistemological thought than to any other.[43]

We will take issue with these remarks on three points. First, Wittgenstein does discuss pragmatism explicitly in several aphorisms or lectures (including the one quoted above) and there are many other remarks which have an implicit bearing in this regard.[44] For example in the Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology Wittgenstein discusses pragmatism and states explicitly why he is not a pragmatist:

> But you aren't a pragmatist? No. For I am not saying that a proposition is true if it is useful.
>
> The usefulness, i.e. the use, gives the proposition its special sense, the language-game gives it.
>
> And in so far as a rule is often given in such a way that it proves useful, and mathematical propositions are essentially akin to rules, usefulness is reflected in mathematical truths. (RPPI 266.)

Wittgenstein is using the word "use" here in one of his own philosophical senses of the word (as used in the assertion "meaning is use"). Therefore

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42. International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 6, March 1966, pp.71-80.

43. Ibid. pp.79-80.

44. In fairness to Gill we should point out that a number of Wittgenstein's remarks about pragmatism were not published until the 1970s and 80s, long after Gill's 1966 article was written.

collective human uses or language games are what give a proposition sense. But "a proposition must make sense before we know whether it is true, or false".[45] Meaning (including meaning as use in Wittgenstein's special sense of the word "use") is logically prior to matters of truth or falsity.

For this reason we would take issue with a second point in the Gill quotation by saying that the later Wittgenstein has no implicit theoretical "concept of truth" as the article suggests, and whatever remarks he does make about "truth" do not have "a strong pragmatist flavor". If one imagines a pragmatist criterion of truth stating that the true is what is found to be useful, Wittgenstein might well suggest that to take "use" in the sense of agreed upon linguistic practices as the meaning of "truth" is to confuse the all important distinction between apriori grammatical matters and aposteriori factual matters.[46] For apriori grammatical matters, if they are the presupposition of what we mean by "truth", cannot themselves be true. Insofar as they are useful, they are not to be identified with truth, for they are the criterion of falsity and illusion as well: and of whatever else has meaning in our language games. What might be confusing here is the fact that Wittgenstein does speak of meaning as "use" and is also willing to recognize the pragmatic idea of "truth" as one legitimate sense of "truth" (as in the passage quoted above). For example, he says:

> The pragmatic criterion of truth of a proposition is its usefulness in practice. But the person who says this has in mind one particular use of "useful": its use in the lab, say, to predict the future. (L35 p.142.)

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45. L35 p.195 (emphasis added).

46. The relation between the apriori and the aposteriori in Wittgenstein's thought will be further discussed in the next chapter.

There are many different senses of the word "use", some of which may legitimately intersect with the grammar of the word "truth", but the grammar of "use" is by no means identical with the grammar of "true" as we saw Royce point out to William James. When Wittgenstein speaks of "meaning as use" he is using the word "use" for certain (philosophical) purposes: to describe the connection between meaning and human language games and practices, and to underline the apriori (presuppositional) status of meaning. His own philosophical descriptions directed to the purpose of seeing clearly how language functions should not fool us into thinking he is advancing any theories, nor into believing that meaning ever loses its presuppositional status in his thinking. "Meaning as use", as it is manifested in agreed upon ways of speaking and practicing, cannot be thought of as either true or false for it is the presupposition of the very possibility of these language games. Like our "world picture" itself, "it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false". (OC 94.) As he says in On Certainty:

> The reason why the use of the expression "true" or "false" has something misleading about it is that it is like saying "it tallies with the facts or it doesn't", and the very thing that is in question is what "tallying" is here. (OC 199.)
>
> Really "The proposition is either true or false" only means that it must be possible to decide for or against it. But this does not say what the ground for such a decision is like. (OC 200.)
>
> Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end.... (OC 204.)
>
> If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not true, nor yet false. (OC 205.)

The ground of what is true or false is, so to speak, the sense of these language games as constituted in collective human agreements and practices. There would be no meaning to these words without this apriori

grammatical aspect of language. If a pragmatist identifies this sense of the word "use" (in "meaning is use") with "truth", then he or she is confusing apriori grammatical matters with aposteriori factual ones. Wittgenstein, by keeping these conceptually distinct, can in no sense be called a pragmatist.

The third point where it is important to take issue with Gill's remarks is connected with his idea that Wittgenstein is "closer to this school of epistemological thought". As our discussion to date should have made clear, Wittgenstein's philosophy has moved out of epistemology just as much as it has moved out of metaphysics. He is not doing epistemology (as this was defined and attempted in one way or another throughout the Western philosophical tradition) but is instead describing the grammar of language with an eye to illuminating its functions and its logic. To read the traditional philosophical activities of epistemology or metaphysics into Wittgenstein's philosophical activity is to misread him. Hence, although Gill has a clear insight into how Wittgenstein's philosophy handles the idea of "truth", his article persists in misreading Wittgenstein in these ways. For example, he states that:

> ...'True' is a word which functions within the activity of using language (language-games) and its meaning is determined by the part it plays in this language. It is in this sense that truth and falsehood can be said to be based upon human agreement, since language is an activity which is a vital part of the way in which human beings live. The totality of the forms of human life embodies an overall agreement in both language and experience, which in turn determines the use, and thus the meaning, of such terms as 'true' and 'false'. (p.74.)

What Gill correctly says here in so many words is that meaning (connected with "an overall agreement in language and experience") has a presuppositional status in relation to questions of truth and falsity. And earlier in the article he even makes this point explicitly: "Agreement in

form of life would seem to be logically prior to agreement in opinion about what is and what is not the case" (p.73). But the implications of this insight (which the article fails to point out) are the ones we have tried to indicate: that no "theory of truth" is possible, that Wittgenstein is clearly not a pragmatist, and that traditional epistemology (seen perhaps most generally as the attempt in one way or another to ground meanings (and hence knowledge) in "reality" (or in "experience" of phenomenal "reality") is, from Wittgenstein's point of view, laboring under confusion between conceptual and empirical matters. Wittgenstein has no "theory of epistemology".

5. Our fifth point concerning the idea of "truth" in Wittgenstein's philosophy is that (as with traditional epistemology) metaphysics is understood to be impossible. Although this point (as well as our sixth and seventh points) will be developed further in Chapter Nine, it is important here to see that philosophy deals exclusively with apriori grammatical matters not because this is an arbitrary restriction of its scope, for Wittgenstein, but because the traditional disciplines of both epistemology and metaphysics for him were essentially talking about grammar in the first place. Wittgenstein tries to bring words back to their everyday uses because traditional philosophy was trying to do the impossible: it was confusing the grammatical and the empirical:

> When philosophers use a word - "knowledge", "being", "object", "I", "proposition", "name" - and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home? -
>
> What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. (PI 116.)

> We feel as if we had to penetrate phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the 'possibilities' of phenomena....
>
> Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. (PI

90.)

> Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. (PI 109.)
>
> The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language. (PI 111.)

In these passages from the Investigations Wittgenstein is describing the activity of philosophy in terms of the idea that the human situation is such that not only can "knowledge" not be grounded in any "reality" or "experience" prior to grammatical meanings but it makes no sense even to speak about any "reality as it is in itself". Our metaphysical idea of "reality in itself" makes us think we must "penetrate phenomena", but there is nothing "behind" the phenomena to which we might penetrate for the very reason that the phenomena are not an "appearance" for Wittgenstein. "The limit of the empirical - is concept formation", he says (RFM p.121), and it makes no sense to talk about the world as it might be independently of the ways that we can talk about it: "Time and again the attempt is made to use language to limit the world and set it in relief - but it can't be done". (PR p.80.) Wittgenstein is not arbitrarily restricting the scope of philosophy to grammar: the presuppositional nature of meaning does this. For this reason, "Whenever we try to talk about the essence of the world we talk nonsense". (L32 p.110.)

Thus the traditional idea of "metaphysical truth" would seem to involve a serious confusion. Since, as we have seen, many grammatical propositions can take the form of empirical or factual propositions, it often looks as if we could say something about the essence of the world. Hence if a "common sense realist", for example, makes a statement like "the fundamental constituents of reality are physical objects", it looks as if

a statement has been made that is either true or false. However, such a statement, for Wittgenstein, is only tracing around the frame of the grammar of the word "physical object". (OC 35-37.) This statement is a metaphysical statement that mistakenly believes it can say something about the essence of the world:

> From the very outset 'Realism', 'Idealism', etc. are names which belong to metaphysics. That is, they indicate that their adherents believe they can say something specific about the essence of the world. (PR p.86.)

The idea of "metaphysical truth", however, is an illusion because there is no way to transcend the presuppositional status of grammar and use language to set the world in relief. The word "truth", as we have seen, has as many senses and as many uses as it is given by our language-games and the activities with which they are intertwined. It must have a use as humble as the words "lamp", "table", "door": there are no "super-concepts", including the concept "truth". (PI 97.)

Just as we have seen Wittgenstein criticize the pragmatists for having a certain use of the word "use" in mind when they identify it with "truth" so all metaphysical thinking isolates certain uses of words turning them into "super-concepts" (as Wittgenstein himself did in the Tractatus). Philosophy removes the seeming super-status of these concepts by illuminating their grammar in connection with the logical structure of language. It shows that all metaphysical truth claims are in reality confusions about grammar:

> It is a typically metaphysical question; the characteristic of a metaphysical question being that we express an unclarity about the grammar of words in the form of a scientific question. (BB p.35.)

> Philosophical Investigations: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: that the difference between factual and conceptual investigations are not clear to it. A metaphysical question is always in appearance a factual one,

although the problem is a conceptual one. (RPPI 949, cf. Z 458.)

Not only, therefore, can there be no "theory of truth" in a scientific, empirical, or pragmatic sense, it also makes no sense to make any truth claims about the "essence of reality". "Reality", like any other word, has a variety of uses within our language, none of which are metaphysical. And "truth", grammatically speaking, is an ordinary word on a par with any other ordinary word (which does not mean, of course, that philosophers may not take a special interest in it in order to become clear about its grammar, etc.). The obsession of the Western tradition with the grounds of knowledge and with metaphysical "truth" seems to come to an end here. "Knowledge", and "truth", are ordinary words with a multiplicity of senses whose grammars closely intertwine. And as Wittgenstein concludes at the end of his reflections in On Certainty: "It is as if "I know" did not tolerate a metthat a proposition is true if it is useful.

The usefulness, i.e. the use, gives the proposition its special sense, the language-game gives it.

And in so far as a rule is often given in such a way that it prng as use in Wittgenstein's special sense of the word "use") is logically prior to matters of truth or falsity.

For this reason we would take issue with a second point in the Gill quotation by saying that the later Wittgenstein has no implicit theoretical "concept of truth" as the article sugges on this tendency with his idea of a latent nihilism implicit in Western thought which involved the denigration of this phenomenal world of change, becoming, suffering, and death in favor of the "Being" supposedly behind phenomena. In the 19th century aftermath of the great attacks on the very possibility of metaphysical knowledge by such figures as Kant and Hume, Nietzsche's proclamation

that the traditional identification of "Truth" and "Being" is at an end initiates a metaphysical scepticism which has reverberations in 20th century relativism and scepticism (sometimes even concerning science[47]). As we will try to indicate more fully in Chapter Nine, by dropping for the first time even an implicit assumption of an "in itself" from philosophy, Wittgenstein has cut the ground from under relativism and scepticism, not by showing their arguments to be "wrong", but by indicating in what way they can be called "nonsense".

In showing the connection between the implicit assumption of a metaphysical ("super-concept") of "truth" and metaphysical scepticism, Wittgenstein seems to have removed the grounds which traditionally devalued and undercut the ordinary, everyday uses of the word "truth". For scepticism implicitly or explicitly retains the notion of an "in itself" which it conjures up in its denial that we can ever achieve genuine knowledge. It thinks the idea of a reality in itself, then denies that we can ever get to this "reality". Just as the tradition devalued ordinary truth in favor of the truth of "Being" so scepticism devalues ordinary truth in the same way: with its implicit retention of a metaphysical conception of truth. But if both traditional metaphysics and scepticism are shown to involve the attempt to take apriori grammatical propositions as if they were in some way propositions about the nature or structure of "being" (or the nature of language), and hence both are shown to be "nonsense" in this way, then our ordinary pursuits of knowledge and the ordinary variety of uses of the words "true and false" are no longer undercut or devalued. The integrity

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47. Two lucid discussions of the problem of relativism in contemporary philosophy of science can be found in the following books, both listed in the bibliography: Derek L. Phillips, Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge (especially chapters 3-7) and Richard J. Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism (especially Parts One and Two).

of ordinary truth is established and we can take seriously the distinction between truth and falsity in our everyday lives: for the words "truth" and "falsity" do have meaning, and extremely important uses, in a variety of contexts, from the court of law to the physics lab, from the college classroom to international propaganda. Relativism or scepticism here can no longer be of the metaphysical sort which calls into question the meaning of all "truth" but must rather be the ordinary doubting and the ordinary scepticism which is vital to the very pursuit of truth.

7. Finally, Wittgenstein's philosophy leaves open the possibility that human beings may create or evolve new language games involving the word "truth". We have seen that Wittgenstein sees our time as a "sick" one requiring an entirely "changed mode of thought and life": "The sickness of a time is cured by an alteration in the mode of life of human beings, and it was possible for the sickness of philosophical problems to get cured only through a changed mode of thought and of life...." (RFM p.57.) New language games are continually coming into existence and old ones dropping out of use in connection with transformations in the way people live. And we have seen that the grounds of knowing come to an end, for Wittgenstein, in ungrounded human action. (OC 110.) This priority of action (over knowing) in human life underlines the possibility that new and as yet unheard of uses of the word "truth" may yet evolve. Yet they may well be new forms of "ordinary truth", so to speak, forms of truth that Nietzsche might call "healthy" in that they do not devalue the phenomena and our everyday language games in connection with the phenomena. For Wittgenstein, new uses of the words "true" and "false" are entirely possible. We will explore this idea further in the concluding chapter where we will be considering an encounter of Nietzsche's fundamental thought with the fundamental thought of Wittgenstein.

However, before such an encounter can be enjoined, we must complete our understanding of the question of "truth" in Wittgenstein's thinking by examining in some detail that area of his philosophy which bears directly on the problem of metaphysical truth and on the difficulty Western thought has had in coming to terms with the relations between the apriori and the empirical. The study of the relations between the apriori and the empirical constitutes a substantial portion of the later Wittgenstein's philosophical effort and, in our view, one of his major contributions to philosophy. If metaphysics involves confusion between apriori conceptual matters and aposteriori factual ones, then Wittgenstein's work in this regard goes a long way toward demonstrating why such confusions have persisted for over two millennia of Western thought. Let us examine, then, in Chapter Eight, Wittgenstein's thinking regarding the relations between the conceptual and the factual.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LIMITS OF EMPIRICISM

AND THE AUTONOMY OF ORDINARY TRUTH

> Any facts necessary to give a proposition sense enter into the propositional symbol. If a fact is presupposed in the significance of a symbol, then it is part of the symbol.
>
> Wittgenstein[1]

> I am by no means sure that I should prefer a continuation of my work by others to a change in the way people live which would make all these questions superfluous.
>
> Wittgenstein[2]

i. Overview

Nietzsche's treatment of the apriori as subjective conditions which the mind imposes on experience rather than as, so to speak, "objective" logical presuppositions found operating within language led him into an epistemological subjectivism which ultimately vitiated for him the possibility of any truth, whether metaphysical or ordinary. Like the Cartesian dualism between subject and object which we discussed in

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1. L32 p.110.

2. CV p.61.

Chapter Three, Nietzsche has begun his philosophical activity with the implicit assumption that subjectivity and objectivity are separated at the outset, and that philosophical activity in part consists in attempting to examine the ways in which subjectivity might or might not transcend itself in order to attain knowledge of the objective "external" world. It is this starting point and this way of interpreting the Kantian legacy that leads to a metaphysical scepticism which sees every human cognitive construction as merely another "perspective" and sees every claim to "truth" as merely the point of view of an isolated subjectivity forever trapped within its own metaphysical privacy.

Our discussion of Wittgenstein to this point has made clear that his response to the Kantian question, which asks what must be presupposed if knowledge is to be possible, took a very different form indeed. His presuppositionalism is every bit as thorough and austere as Nietzsche's, but that presuppositionalism is found not in the structure or conditions imposed by subjective consciousness but rather is found in operation within language, in the very character of language itself. Focusing on the primacy of language in this way led to an approach to traditional philosophical problems which was in itself a new starting point. For as we saw in our discussion of "truth" in the last chapter meaning, that is, language full blown and in operation (and entirely intertwined with human activities in the world) is now seen, on the largest scale, to be presupposed in all human language activities. This new starting point (which in another sense was merely drawing to conclusion the logical implications of the Kantian presuppositionalist question) now looked at "reality" (as our last chapter pointed out) as something appearing within language (the sphere of meaning) and not as something supposedly external

to language toward which our epistemologies are ever reaching in a vain attempt to ground meaning and knowledge in something assumed to transcend meaning and knowledge.

In a similar way, by taking language as a starting point, Wittgenstein's philosophy avoids the dilemma of epistemological subjectivism which begins with the assumption that knowledge is constituted within human subjectivity, and sees the epistemological task as finding arguments as to how these subjective cognitive constructions can be said to be more or less adequately grounded in objective "external" realities. For when the question "What must be presupposed if language (and hence knowledge) is to be possible?" is answered by saying that language, the world, and human activities are in a very real sense inseparable from one another and must be presupposed from the beginning, then the starting point is no longer human subjectivity: for the subject and object are now seen to appear within language. Language is no longer seen as something constructed within subjectivity, as a sort of a tool by which we try to bridge the gap between our metaphysically private thoughts and a world forever external to those thoughts. Rather, "subject" and "object" are now words (and in a very real sense "realities") appearing within language which have their own unique grammars and which can only be understood in terms of those grammars. (For how could one possibly understand the meaning of something outside of all meanings?) If one begins in the Cartesian manner with subject and object metaphysically separated, our study of Nietzsche would seem to be no way to get these together again and hence no way to account for human knowledge, neither through "reason" nor "experience", since the gap one is attempting to bridge is an illusory metaphysical gap in which one wishes to imagine that there can be

"reason" or "experience" somehow outside of the meanings which we give to "reason" and "experience". However, if the presupposition of knowledge is meaning, then subject and object are connected, so to speak, from the outset, since they are connected within language by all the ways in which the grammars of these two words are intertwined within our language games.

What has been described here in these first few paragraphs, one might say, is that aspect of Wittgensteinian presuppositionalism which has an "absolute" character to it, in that all knowledge, all experience, and all cognitive endeavors must presuppose meaning (language full blown and in operation). These are the conclusions to be drawn from our discussion of meaning in the last chapter. But the question then arises for us, as to the nature and role of the empirical and the aposteriori within this way of looking at language. Wittgenstein spent a great deal of thought investigating the specific relations between those aspects of language which function in an apriori and presuppositional fashion and those aspects of language which have an empirical and aposteriori function. And the results of this thought comprise a concrete exemplification as to the difficulties of extricating ourselves from metaphysical thinking. (And hence, by implication, as to why the problem of "metaphysical truth" - and the metaphysical scepticism which is its corollary - has remained at the heart of much 20th century thinking.) For what Wittgenstein's work uncovered was that no preconceived criteria are possible for distinguishing which kinds of proposition are apriori and which kinds empirical. Only examination of specific language games in specific grammatical situations will be able determine to what functions in an apriori role and what functions empirically within that context. For many propositions in our

language are capable of moving in and out of an apriori role depending on their function within a specific grammatical situation. For this reason, what may initially look like an empirical proposition on closer inspection may turn out to have an apriori status in that situation. When Wittgenstein suggests that metaphysics obscures the difference between experiential propositions and grammatical propositions (BB pp.55-57), he does not mean that there are preconceived criteria by which one can distinguish these, rather metaphysics is fooled by not examining carefully enough how each of its propositions functions within the concrete grammatical situation. Perhaps this is a large part of what Wittgenstein meant when he said that "Human beings are entangled all unknowing in the net of language". (PG p.462.) For the capacity of propositions, including those that look like empirical propositions, to shift in and out an apriori role depending on the grammatical situation, functions to continually prevent us from seeing clearly the limits of empiricism.

In this chapter, then, we will look at a number of specific ways pointed out by Wittgenstein in which the relation between the apriori and the aposteriori may be difficult to discern and hence mislead us into misunderstanding the limits of empiricism. The study we are undertaking here will cover many of the fundamental ideas connected with his philosophical activity, and it should be made clear that an in-depth exposition of these themes would constitute an entire volume in itself as well as a concomitant exposition of his philosophy as a whole. Our purpose here, of course, is much more limited: to present an overview of this aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy which will allow us to see concretely the limits of empiricism and in what way traditional empiricism itself may have been continually seduced into making metaphysical truth

claims. This will allow us in turn be become clear about the autonomy of ordinary truth and to distinguish it from an ostensible "metaphysical truth". Once this is accomplished we will be in a better position to examine, in Part Three, the most radical implications of an encounter between Wittgenstein's thinking and Nietzsche's call for an eschatological transformation of our being-in-the-world. Each problem that we will touch on in this chapter is a tangled and difficult philosophical problem in its own right. We will not go into these problems themselves but rather collect them together in such a way as to illuminate the limits of empiricism as well as Wittgenstein's method of stepping out of metaphysical thinking altogether. The reader will be able to aid in this exposition by keeping in mind our goals within this chapter as well as the controlling themes of this essay as a whole.

ii. The Apriori and The Limits of Empiricism

It should be well understood by this point that Wittgenstein never modified the presuppositionalist view (developed above in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven) that meaning (sense) is prior to all matters of fact. We have seen him declare repeatedly that "No fact can be a paradigm for grammar....Grammar is not determined by facts" (L32 p.95) or, as he says explicitly in 1934-35: "A proposition must make sense before we know whether it is true, or false". (L35 p.195.) This idea holds throughout his later philosophizing and becomes a way of understanding the most diverse concepts, from the idea of "colour" ("Do not believe that you have the concept of colour within you because you look at a coloured object - however you look." (Z 332)), to the notion of "logical inferences" ("There

is not any question at all here of some correspondence between what is said and reality; rather is logic antecedent to any such correspondence...." (RFM p.45)), to the concept "physical object" ("..."Physical object" is a logical concept....And that is why no such proposition as: "There are physical objects" can be formulated." (OC 36)). It is this radical presuppositionalism that makes Wittgenstein the 20th century heir to the Kantian project and which makes his philosophy seem like an inversion of the traditional conception of the relation between language and the world. As Wittgenstein put it in the early 1940s:

> It is difficult to put the body of fact right side up: to regard the given as given. It is difficult to place the body differently from the way one is accustomed to see it. A table in a lumber room may always lie upside down, in order to save space perhaps. Thus I have always seen the body of fact placed like this, for reasons of various kinds; and now I am supposed to see something else as its beginning and something else as its end. This is difficult. It as it were will not stand like that, unless one supports it in this position by means of other contrivances. (RFM p.130.)

Although various readings of the metaphorical aspects of this passage are possible, the reading we would like to suggest here (which is supported by the other considerations we have been putting forward) focuses on Wittgenstein's idea that for all language meaning is prior to fact. Hence, traditional philosophy can be seen as always seeing the table in the lumber room upside down: it continually attempted in one way or another to ground language in the facts, rather than seeing that the facts themselves had to be rooted in sense, had to make sense, before we could begin to speak about their truth or falsity. Now that Wittgenstein has turned the body of fact right side up, this passage suggests, it will look strange to people, for they must now recognize "something else" as the beginning and something else as the end of the body of fact: that facts are rooted in

grammatical conventions and not the reverse. And now that the table has been righted it does not seem to stand properly, and it needs all the philosophical supports that it can be given (all the criss-crossing back and forth of the territory of grammar which constitutes Wittgenstein's later method) so as to allow people to change their way of looking at the body of fact. As he says in On Certainty 131: "...Experience is not the ground for our game of judging. Nor is its outstanding success."

In one place in Remarks On Colour Wittgenstein asks the question, "Where do we draw the line here between logic and experience?" (ROC p.17.) The question of where and how to draw this line was a constant reflection of his later philosophy and led him to realize that there is often no clear line between the two. The facts themselves are often taken up into language and become part of the symbolism. (L32 p.110.) What happens in the case of certain propositions, Wittgenstein says, is that "reality outside the so-called system of signs somehow enters into the symbol". (PR p.120.) Some such propositions, he says, "have a peculiar logical role in the system of empirical propositions". (OC 136.) They may have "the form" of empirical propositions, but "not everything that has the form of an empirical proposition is one". (OC 308.) This is because under certain circumstances an empirical proposition can be turned into a "norm of description". (OC 167.)

But the circumstances within which an empirical proposition can be turned into a norm of description are connected with the way it is used in a particular grammatical context. It is the use - the language games and activities with which they are interwoven - "which distinguishes the logical proposition from the empirical one". (ROC p.7.) Hence, it is possible for the logical role of a proposition to oscillate, depending on its use. It is as

if when we turn our attention to certain empirical propositions (which we are concerned to test or to treat factually) other propositions recede into the background taking on an apriori grammatical status and functioning as a context of meaning for our factual investigations. Sentences may hover, so to speak, on "the borderline between logic and the empirical, so that their meaning shifts back and forth and they are now expressions of norms, now treated as expressions of experience". (ROC p.19.) And it is their use that distinguishes the one logical role from the other. (ROC p.19.) As Wittgenstein says in On Certainty: "...The same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing". (OC 98.)

Let us examine some of the ways identified by Wittgenstein in which the distinction between the empirical and the apriori varies according to context and use. The notions that we will distinguish are often interrelated with one another more or less closely, and new ideas might be distinguished in connection with new grammatical contexts and new uses. Hence, we make no claim to exhaustiveness here but are primarily concerned to articulate Wittgenstein's work in connection with the relation between the apriori and aposteriori. We will identify six contexts in which the relation between the two is examined by Wittgenstein.[3] Since the first two contexts identified are closely related, we will discuss the first only briefly, making some essential points applicable to it in connection with the second context.

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3. An obvious seventh context would be the interrelation between mathematical "truths" and the empirical. We omit discussion of this because it is not directly related to our topic. However, some key references where Wittgenstein considers this relationship are the following: PR pp.125, 218, & 332, L35 pp.152, 160, 170 & 173, RFM pp.49-53, 76, 80-81, 92, 114, 161, & 173-4, OC 447, 455, & 651.

1. Facets of our experience may become paradigms within language and hence themselves a "means of representation". In PI 50 Wittgenstein illustrates the creation of paradigms with the example of the standard metre in Paris. One cannot say that the metre in Paris either is or is not one metre long since it is what we mean by one metre. It has "a peculiar role in the language-game", he says, just as if we were to imagine colour samples being preserved in Paris in the same way. In this case the colour samples would not be "something that is represented" but rather "a means of representation", and "it will make no sense to say of this sample either that it is of this colour or that it is not". The distinction here is one between facts of our experience (e.g. it is a fact that this desk is one metre long) and the common agreements or conventions in which a colour sample or a sample of length become part of our language and function in an apriori role in our subsequent representation of lengths or colours.[4]

2. Closely related to the discussion of paradigms is Wittgenstein's focus on the relations between criteria and symptoms. Here again there is an interweaving of the apriori and the aposteriori in such a way that the two are not always easily distinguishable from one another. In Zettel 438 Wittgenstein writes:

> Nothing is commoner than for the meaning of an expression to oscillate, for a phenomenon to be regarded sometimes as a symptom, sometimes as a criterion, of a state of affairs. And mostly in such a case the shift of meaning is not noted. In science it is usual to make phenomena that allow of exact measurement into defining criteria for an expression; and then one is inclined to think that now the proper meaning has been found. Innumerable confusions have arisen this way.

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4. Cf., for example, L35 pp.85-87, BB p.56, PG p.143, & Z 333.

Certain phenomena take on a conventional role in our language and function as definitions which allow us to identify the larger complex of which they are a part in different situations and in new circumstances. As Wittgenstein says in PI 354, in order to know factually whether or not it is raining, it must be precisely rain that is in question, and this requires a definition. (cf. PI 356.)

The "innumerable confusions" that have arisen because of the oscillation between criteria and symptoms would seem to refer in part to the confusions of philosophers rather than scientists. For scientists are notably successful in their endeavors without worrying about making careful distinctions between the apriori and the aposteriori. Part of what Wittgenstein is pointing out in these considerations are the "limits of empiricism", the way that our factual investigations logically require the context of meaning which is provided by language fully in operation. For certain phenomena to be given a criterial status in language, and to function in an apriori role in our investigations, is one of the ways in which this is illustrated. The confusions to be removed are philosophical confusions, confusions which prevent us from seeing our human situation clearly, not confusions which prevent scientists from working. In the Blue Book Wittgenstein makes this clearer in connection with the oscillation between criteria and symptoms:

> Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?", we sometimes answer by giving 'criteria' and sometimes by giving 'symptoms'....
>
> In practice, if you were asked which phenomenon is the defining criterion and which is a symptom, you would in most cases be unable to answer this question except by making an arbitrary decision ad hoc. It may be practical to define a word by taking one phenomenon as the defining criterion, but we shall easily be persuaded to define the word by means of what, according to our first use, was a symptom. Doctors

> will use names of diseases without ever deciding which phenomena are to be taken as criteria and which as symptoms; and this need not be a deplorable lack of clarity. For remember that in general we don't use language according to strict rules - it hasn't been taught us by means of strict rules, either....
>
> We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don't know their real definition, but because there is no real 'definition' to them. (BB pp.24-25.)

The point certainly is not that in any particular case we must be able to distinguish clearly between criterion and symptom. In many instances such a distinction might be to some extent arbitrary, since, as we have seen, a particular phenomenon may shift into and out of the linguistic role of a criterion. Rather, we begin to realize not only that there is no "real definition" to our concepts (that our concepts are to some extent fluid and not based on an isomorphism with a supposed extra-linguistic reality) but also that language and "world" are so inextricably interrelated that it makes no sense to speak at getting at the "real thing" experientially apart from our ways of talking about it. Shortly after his discussion of criteria and symptoms in the Investigations, Wittgenstein concludes that "Essence is expressed by grammar.... Grammar tells what kind of object anything is". (PI 371 & 373.) How we are to define a thing, and how we are to identify a thing so as to refer to it again, are conventional, not factual, matters which often involve a phenomenon taking on an apriori linguistic status. There is a sort of ontological awakening here in which the table in the lumber room has been set right side up for the first time, and we recognize that the body of fact is constituted, so to speak, within language. Phenomena may shift in and out of an apriori criterial status in our language games, but something must always play a similar logical role. A proposition must make sense before we can speak of true or false factual matters.

3. Wittgenstein's attempt to place the body of fact right side up may seem counter-intuitive in that it may seem to deny the fundamental role of experience in our lives. We want to say: "Well what about my immediate experiences? The red that I am looking at right now or the pain that I feel at this moment?" That Wittgenstein does not deny a role to experience is shown by the following:

> Suppose someone is given the order, "Bring me something of this color", and I show him a blue sample. What agrees with it? There are different kinds of agreement, e.g., what matches, what contrasts pleasantly. The order might be obeyed by bringing any blue object, or by bringing something exactly similar, or by bringing something that looks well with the sample....
>
> Why is it that the idea seems to be satisfied by some things and not by others? It is not a matter of experience that something satisfied it. In a way it must be satisfied beforehand. There is of course a sense in which experience enters. For example, if a piece of cloth is laid next to the sample and is seen to have the same color, we might say it is an experiment showing that the two are the same. But that this color is the same as the color of the sample is not shown by experiment. Whether it agrees or not is determined a priori. It is a priori that if you bring me something blue, it will agree; this is not something you predict. (L35 p.85.)

If a blue object is used as a paradigm or sample (as in the situation Wittgenstein describes) then it has been given a linguistic status and functions as a criterion for what one means by "blue". Hence, bringing something "blue" with reference to this criterion means that one already has apriori agreement about what constitutes "blue". If the person brings an object that does not "agree", this simply means that they have not brought something "blue", for "it is a priori that if you bring me something blue, it will agree".

In addition, once it has been taken up into language in this way a commitment has been made to certain usages: to the entire grammar of possible color talk, to the grammar of talk about "matching" things, and to

perhaps several other language games that intersect with this particular activity. But if a piece of cloth is laid next to the sample, Wittgenstein says, and we look at the two and call them "the same", then experience has played a role, and has entered our language games in this aposteriori way.

The limits of empiricism involve the fact that I must already be committed to the grammar of possible color talk before I can point to something blue and name it as "blue". The experience of looking at a blue sample or the experience of pain cannot and do not form the basis for our language games concerning these things. There can be no successful attempt to use ostensive definition, for example, either through actually pointing or through focusing one's attention in a certain way, to provide a grounding for our language games or even for our empirical language games. Just as the idea of "agreement" in the above example is vague and requires a linguistic "stage setting" (PI 257) in order to be interpreted as the person giving the order intends, so with ostensive definition. There is no more "essence" to the act of ostensive definition than there is to the concept of "agreement" or the notion of "makes sense". Therefore, as Wittgenstein points out, the meaning of an ostensive definition may vary according to the context: "...In the grammar of each different part of speech the ostensive definition has a different role....". (PG p.161.) In addition, without this linguistic stage setting "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in every case". (PI 28.) For "...The ostensive definition explains the use - the meaning - of the word when the overall role of the word in the language is clear". (PI 30) But this overall role is grammatical, that is to say, apriori.

For these reasons there can be no sheer "naming" which forms the

basis for language. Naming is, as it were, the "correlate" of ostensive definition (PI 27) in that philosophers (like the early Wittgenstein or the Augustine of PI 1) have felt they could show the correspondence between language and the world by pointing to objects and simultaneously giving them a name. But for even the activity of naming to be meaningful, the entire grammar of this activity must be presupposed: just as there is no extra-linguistic ostensive demonstration so there is no extra-linguistic naming. In addition, the activity of naming (if the naming is to be part of a language or result in a language) is simultaneously a commitment to a certain use of the word, to the grammatical context which constitutes the meaning of the word. Wittgenstein describes this in the following way:

> We could describe our trouble by saying that we feel as though we could give an experience a name without at the same time committing ourselves about its use, and in fact without any intention to use it at all. Thus when I say "red" comes in a particular way..., I feel that I might now give this way a name if it hasn't already got one, say "A". But at the same time I am not at all prepared to say that I recognize this to be the way "red" has always come on such occasions, nor even to say that there are, say, four ways, A,B,C,D, in one of which it always comes. You might say that the two ways in which "red" and "two" come can be identified by, say, exchanging the meaning of the two words, using "red" as the second cardinal numeral, "two" as the name of a colour. Thus, on being asked how many eyes I had, I should answer "red", and to the question "What is the colour of blood?, "two". But the question now arises whether you can identify the 'way in which these words come' independently of the ways in which they are used, - I mean the ways just described. Did you wish to say that as a matter of experience, the word when used in this way always comes in the way A, but may, the next time, come in the way "two" usually comes? You will see then that you meant nothing of the sort. (BrB p.159.)

Naming is itself a language game requiring a commitment to a certain use of the word. The naming of colors requires commitment to the grammar of color talk. It requires this stage setting in language and hence, apriori

(before any naming takes place) certain uses of the word used as a name will make sense and certain others will not. For naming only operates within a meaningful grammatical context.

We feel as though we should be able to linguistically point to the "red", for example, for there it is, undoubtably different from the blue next to it. But what would it mean to be experiencing this without already thinking of it as a "color", without distinguishing it linguistically in any way from the vast multiplicity of things in the world? The very act of focusing on this red which we wish to name already presupposes an articulated world, a world, for example, in which the grammar of possible color talk as well as the grammatical context of naming is already fully in operation.[5]

What this leads to is the realization that talking about the immediate experience of red is simultaneously making use of the word "red" with its specific uses in our language. It is not as if we can perceive a color, for example, and somehow identify it (and therefore distinguish it from everything which is not a color and from all colors which are not this color) and then apply language to our perception. Identity and difference in the world are not separable in this way from our language games of identity and difference. As Kant might have put the matter, the

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5. There is a sense in which what might be called "sheer qualitative experience" (e.g. the sheer presence of the red) cannot be gotten into language at all. Even the words "sheer qualitative experience" are misleading in this connection (since they are all words and hence have only the public meaning of all words). Wittgenstein seemed to be very aware of this and refers to it, for example, in PI 610 where he speaks of our inability to "describe the aroma of coffee" and then continues: "These notes say something glorious, but I do not know what". By pointing to the "glorious" (sheer qualitative) presence of the world, and then underlining that he does "not know what" he is saying in this connection, Wittgenstein would seem to be pointing to this "unsayability".

conceptual and the experiential are fused into a unity here and there is no meaning to speaking of a percept that is not at the same time conceptualized in one way or another.[6] In Zettel 332-3, Wittgenstein puts the matter succinctly:

> Do not believe that you have the concept of colour within you because you look at a coloured object - however you look.
> (Any more than you possess the concept of a negative number by having debts.)
>
> "Red is something specific" - that would have to mean the same as: "That is something specific" - said while pointing to something red. But for that to be intelligible, one would have already to mean our concept 'red', to mean the use of that sample.

At the primary level, language and experience are inseparable from one another in Wittgenstein's philosophy, just as perception and conception are inseparable in Kant's philosophy. As he says in a slightly different context: "No aspect that is not (also) conception". (RPPI 518.) Experience cannot be named or identified in such a way as to provide a foundation for language. In a certain very real sense, perception is already within language.

4. Similar considerations are involved when we turn to the so-called 'inner sensations' such as pains. All sensations of this sort involve a grammar just as much as color words involve a grammar or naming

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6. As Norman Kemp Smith puts it in A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1962): "Kant thus teaches that experience in all its embodiments and in each of its momentary states can be analyzed into an endlessly variable material and a fixed set of relational elements. And as no one of the relational factors can be absent without at once nullifying all the others, they together constitute what must be regarded as the determining form and structure of every mental process that is cognitive in character. Awareness, that is to say, is identical with the act of judgment...." (pp.xxxiv-xxxv).

involves a grammar, and unclarity about the relation of the apriori and the experiential in this connection has again led philosophers into confusion. For example, when a certain idea seems necessarily true to us, the chances are we are talking about grammar rather than about experience:

> What does it mean when we say: "I can't imagine the opposite of this" or "what would it be like, if it were otherwise?" - For example, when someone has said that my images are private, or that only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain, and similar things.
>
> Of course, here "I can't imagine the opposite" doesn't mean: my powers of imagination are unequal to the task. There words are a defence against something whose form makes it look like an empirical proposition, but which is really a grammatical one. (PI 251.)

Every word we use when we discuss our sensations or images has a grammar and a use of its own which we are committed to if the word is to be used with sense. Hence, in the statement "My images are private", not only are we committed to the conventional uses of the word "images" but also to the grammar of the word "my" and the grammar of the word "private". These grammars overlap and interweave with the grammar of the word "images" so that when we make this statement we are really articulating one use of the word "images" rather than making a factual claim. If we try to simply name a pain or an image without committing ourselves to the conventional uses of the word, we find that this cannot be done:

> How has he done this naming of pain? And whatever he did, what was its purpose? - When one says "He gave a name to his sensation" one forgets that a great deal of stage setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone's having given a name to pain, what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word "pain"; it shews the post where the new word is stationed. (PI 257.)

What we realize here once more is that when we focus our attention on a sensation (in a kind of inner ostensive demonstration) and attempt to identify it, we are simultaneously talking about the sensation and the word with which we try to identify it. Language and experience are inseparable from one another on this basic level.

What again might seem counter-intuitive about this understanding of our immediate experiences is that we are continually in our everyday lives recognizing and identifying things with certainty by looking, tasting, smelling, hearing, etc. The world that we live in has this kind of immediacy to it which might seem prior to anything so abstract as grammar. But Wittgenstein's point that language and experience are inextricably linked does not deny the immediacy with which we identify most of our sensations. On this level, however, there are no criteria for identifying the kind of sensation, nor for identifying repeated sensations of the same kind. We simply accept the sensation as presented and find that there are no further grounds on which our naming of it is based. We simply give sensations unverifiable names and operate on that basis. All of our immediate perceptions and immediate recognitions would seem to be groundless in this way. One of the problems raised in Plato's Theaetetus - that the various models by which we might explain immediate recognition do not seem to work - is not solved by Wittgenstein but rather is, one might say, affirmed as it stands: the phenomenon of recognition is so immediate and basic that it cannot be "explained". Again, this is one of the several ways in which the human situation can be said to be "groundless":

> I remember that sugar tasted like this. The experience returns to consciousness. But, of course: how do I know that this was the earlier experience? Memory is no more use to

me here....

> But when I say "It tastes exactly like sugar", in an important sense no remembering takes place. So I do not have grounds for my judgment or my exclamation. If someone asks me "What do you mean by 'sugar'?" - I shall indeed try to shew him a lump of sugar. And if someone asks "How do you know that sugar tastes like that?" I shall indeed answer him "I've eaten sugar thousands of times" - but that is not a justification that I give myself. (Z 659.)

In a certain sense immediate recognition is not even a matter of remembering, Wittgenstein says. It is more like an exclamation: "There it is!" We simply recognize and give an unverifiable name to our perception. The giving of grounds is, of course, essential to the language game of empirical judgment, but in these immediacies of sensation and recognition, Wittgenstein says, we "do not have grounds". We are at a level in which the giving of grounds has come to an end, and all that can be said of this situation is that "It is there - like our life". (OC 559.)

Finally, we have seen that (as with immediate sensations and immediate recognition) language itself, for Wittgenstein, is not grounded in any extra-linguistic realities to which we can point or which we can name. The human situation is "groundless" in this way. We will see in our discussion of the following that even the common sense certainties of our everyday experience can and must also be understood as "groundless".

5. The moving of propositions into or out of an apriori status depending on the grammatical situation is also found on the level of what we will call the "everyday certainties". These everyday certainties (like my certainty that this is a desk in front of me or that these are my two hands) play a "peculiar logical role" (OC 136) in our language games. Under numbers three and four above we examined the possibility of naming or pointing to sensations (or immediate experiences) with the idea of using them as a grounding for knowledge or for language in general. We saw

that the inseparability of the conceptual and the experiential on this level prevented such naming or pointing from functioning as such a ground. However, in connection with the everyday certainties, rather than speaking of the "inseparability" of language and experience, we will speak of the apriori context within which our factual and empirical language games operate. We will see that within Wittgenstein's last writings in On Certainty there are two general categories of the apriori which should be distinguished from one another. We will examine the first of these here, under the rubric "everyday certainties", and discuss the second in number six below. In each case we will look at the "groundlessness" of these certainties as well as at their "peculiar logical role" in relation to matters of fact.

One of Wittgenstein's primary concerns in On Certainty is to develop the logical differences between certainty and knowledge. This philosophical concern, however, is also found elsewhere in his writings and is of special interest to us in this study since we are attempting to come to terms with Nietzsche's pervasive scepticism and the concomitant problem of nihilism. Such a "metaphysical scepticism", we have seen, finds no certainties that are beyond doubt and leaves us in a world where even the solidity of the everyday seems to disintegrate in uncertainty. In his Remarks on The Philosophy of Psychology Wittgenstein gives some examples of everyday certainties, making the point that these are not susceptible to ordinary doubting:

> Uncertainty: whether a man really has this feeling, or is merely putting up an appearance of it.... But what does this uncertainty consist in? Am I really always in some uncertainty whether someone is really angry, sad, glad, etc. etc.? No. Any more than whether I have a notebook in front of me or a pen in my hand, or whether this book will fall if I let go of it, or whether I have made a miscalculation when

> I say 25 x 25 is 625. The following, however, is true: I can't give criteria which put the presence of the sensation beyond doubt; that is to say: there are no such criteria. (RPPI 137.)

Ordinary doubt comes to an end in these certainties of everyday experience. And Wittgenstein includes within the class of these certainties not only that this is a notebook in front of me, or the simple mathematical calculations that I have been doing for years, but also my perception, in normal circumstances, of other people's feelings and emotions. Doubt here would require shifting beyond ordinary doubt into a kind of metaphysical doubting: the super-ordinary doubting of Descartes' First Meditation or the metaphysical scepticism of Nietzsche. In factual matters, of course, one can give criteria for doubting, that is, one can identify possible situations in which a proposition may be true or may be false. But where these immediate certainties are concerned, doubt can get no foothold. Factual matters are based on giving good grounds and good (empirical) reasons as to why a proposition should or should not be held to be true, but with these everyday certainties there are no grounds to which one can appeal. They would not seem to meet the criteria for judging something as an empirical matter, but rather function logically as a context for empirical matters, a context which is itself ungrounded.

In his latest writings, published as On Certainty, Wittgenstein returned again and again to this question of certainties and their relation to empirical knowledge. His primary concern here was not now the problem of 'recognition', nor of the immediate sensations of 'red' or 'pain', but was rather with the claims of philosophers like G.E. Moore in connection with such everyday certainties as "I know these are my two hands" (OC 21-23) or "I know that that's a tree" (OC 349-50). The basic focus of the book involves a grammatical analysis of the logic of knowing in contradistinction

to the logics of doubt, belief and certainty.[7] Through this analysis Wittgenstein attempts to show the significant differences in these logics, differences that lead us to realize that the certainties like "I know these are my two hands" are not a matter of knowledge at all but are part of an unquestioned and unquestionable context of our lives within which our knowledge activities take place and without which these activities cannot make sense. Logically, they are the presuppositions of our knowledge activities, the undoubted context of certainty which functions as a stable background to provide the very possibility of the doubting and testing of factual matters.

For this reason G.E. Moore's claim that "I know these are my two hands" is a misnomer. Moore, like any normal human being, is certain of such everyday matters - but it is not a matter of knowing:

> I should like to say: Moore does not know what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our method of doubt and enquiry. (OC 151.)

Our method of testing factual matters, of doubting, of reformulating hypotheses, and of creating experimental situations with which to test our hypotheses, goes on - and can only go on - against the backdrop of certainty which our doubting always presupposes.[8] The logic of knowing is different from the logic of these certainties and presupposes them:

> Does anyone ever test whether this table remains in

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7. He is speaking, of course, of the grammatical logic of our language, not of any formal calculus, for "everything descriptive of the language-game is part of logic" (OC 56).

8. See, for example, OC 4, 56, 115, 150 & 160.

existence when no one is paying attention to it?

We check the story of Napoleon, but not whether all the reports about him were based on sense-deception, forgery or the like. For whenever we test anything, we are already presupposing something that is not tested. Now am I to say that the experiment which perhaps I make in order to test the truth of a proposition presupposes the truth of the proposition that the apparatus I believe I see is really there (and the like)? (OC 163.)

The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing. (OC 166.)

In testing for the truth of an empirical proposition we do not presuppose the truth that the apparatus we are using is really there. For such immediate certainties are not a matter of truth or falsity at all but have a different logical status from empirical matters: they form the context of ordinary beliefs within which our knowledge activities operate, yet they themselves are not knowledge. Wittgenstein says they are "groundless", since they are so simple and certain that any such proposition "is as sure for me as any grounds I could give for it". (OC 111.)

The everyday certainties have an apriori logical status. They are not subject to testing in the way aposteriori matters are but must be presupposed for any such testing to take place. Their certainty, while certainly psychological, is not only psychological but functions in this apriori logical role:

But why am I so certain that this is my hand? Doesn't the whole language-game rest on this kind of certainty?

Or: isn't this 'certainty' already presupposed in the language-game? Namely by virtue of the fact that one is not playing the game, or is playing it wrong, if one does not recognize objects with certainty. (OC 446.)

Compare with this 12 x 12 = 144. Here too we don't say "perhaps". For, in so far as this proposition rests on our not miscounting or miscalculating and on our senses not deceiving us as we calculate, both propositions, the arithmetical one and the physical one, are on the same level.

I want to say: The physical game is just as certain as the arithmetical. But this can be misunderstood. My remark is a

logical and not a psychological one. (OC 447.)

All of our language games rest on this recognition of objects with certainty, a recognition which, we have seen, cannot itself be grounded or explained. And the certainty of the mathematical proposition is on the same level, in a certain sense, as the certainty of the physical one. But this remark, Wittgenstein says, is not about psychological certainty: it is a logical remark. The everyday certainties presupposed in our knowledge activities are on the same logical level as the ordinary certainty of basic mathematical calculations (something traditionally recognized as apriori): they both form parts of the apriori logical "axis" (OC 152), the "hard rock" (OC 99), or "the substratum" (OC 162) around which or within which our aposteriori factual investigations can take place.

Yet once again we may find that the apriori and the empirical are intertwined here in the sense that we do look and see that these are our two hands and we do look at the apparatus we are using in our experiment. Part of our immediate experience has taken on an apriori logical role. Like G.E. Moore, however, we can be fooled into thinking that propositions about this immediate experience are a matter of knowledge for, as Wittgenstein says in Remarks On Colour, they "have the character of experiential propositions":

> There seem to be propositions that have the character of experiential propositions, but whose truth is for me unassailable. That is to say, if I assume that they are false, I must mistrust all my judgements. (ROC p.63.)

If these were a matter of knowledge, and if their logical role was that of experiential propositions, then their "truth" could not be unassailable. If we can speak about "truth" here at all, it would be a certain kind of apriori "truth". The experiential and the apriori seem to be intertwined on

this basic level.

6. Interspersed with Wittgenstein's reflections on the immediate everyday certainties in On Certainty, there are reflections on another category of certainty which he refers to in one place as "countless general empirical propositions". (OC 273.) This second category should be distinguished from the first because the propositions within it have a somewhat different logical role from the immediate everyday certainties like "These are my two hands". The "general empirical propositions" which make up this second category are often far removed from immediate experience: they are read in books, absorbed from the general culture, learned as children, etc. Wittgenstein gives a wide range of examples of these propositions, examples such as my belief that I had great-grand parents (OC 159), that the earth has existed a long time (OC 182-90), that every human being has parents (OC 211), that a cut off arm will not grow again (OC 274), that the earth is round (OC 299), etc. Such propositions, he says, include the main facts of geography, chemistry, and history (OC 170) that one has learned at school or read in books as well as, for example, the main facts of anatomy and physiology (OC 240). They also include such abstract beliefs as the assumption that "chemistry is possible" (OC 169) which are rarely, if ever, articulated.

What logically distinguishes this set of general propositions is that we ordinarily do not test them, nor do we doubt them, but we absorb them as part of a world picture [Weltbild] that we begin to acquire as children and gradually come to accept as the ground and substratum of our activities in the world:

> The child learns to believe a host of things. I.e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some

> things stand unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held fast by what lies around it. (OC 144.)

The key idea here is that each of these propositions is "held fast by what lies around it". Hence these propositions are beyond doubt - and logically part of an apriori "system" - not primarily (as with the immediate experiential certainties) because they are as certain as any grounds I might try to give for them: rather, they are beyond doubt because they are interwoven with a host of other propositions which make up my general world picture. For example, "the existence of the earth", Wittgenstein says, "is...part of the whole picture [Bildes] which forms the starting point of belief for me". (OC 209, cf. PI 482.)

Here is yet another way in which the experiential and the apriori seem to be interfused. No particular proposition of this sort necessarily has an apriori status, but the system as a whole (which forms "the substratum of all my enquiring and asserting" (OC 162)) "is a system in which consequences and premises give each other mutual support". (OC 142.) We acquire this frame of reference or "Weltbild" through experience, yet because it is a system of mutually interlocking propositions, rather than a series of isolated factual claims, the system itself functions in an apriori role in relation to our empirical testing and factual investigations. We do not in general learn the individual propositions within this system from experience, but rather "we first begin to believe a whole system of propositions. Light dawns gradually over the whole" (OC 141):

> Experience can be said to teach us these propositions. However, it does not teach them in isolation: rather, it teaches us a host of interdependent propositions. If they were isolated I might perhaps doubt them, for I have no experience relating to them. (OC 274.)

As with the immediate experiential propositions like "these are my two hands", Wittgenstein is willing to speak of "truth" in connection with the system of "general empirical propositions". It is a "truth", he says, which belongs to our frame of reference. (OC 83.) Here we are talking once again about a kind of apriori "truth", not "truth" in the sense of factual matters that have undergone rigorous empirical testing. The latter are always aposteriori and logically subsequent to the framework itself, but "truth", in connection with my world picture, is not the result of testing: "I did not get my picture of the world through being satisfied of its correctness", Wittgenstein says, rather, "It is the inherited background against which I distinguish the true and false". (OC 94.) This system, therefore, functions as an "element" in which in which our arguments have their life.[9] As such it forms part of the conditions of the very possibility of empirical argumentation.

Like the other five Wittgensteinian themes examined in this section, we can see that these general empirical propositions are being understood in the Kantian sense as presuppositions of the possibility of knowledge. And as with the other themes discussed, these general empirical propositions (which form the background of all our judging and testing) have a unique logical status in that for them as a system the experiential and the apriori are interfused. Our discussion has attempted to make clear that the various ways that this interfusing (or intertwining) of the apriori and aposteriori can take place is one of the fundamental themes of Wittgenstein's later philosophizing.

In this section, therefore, we have looked at six linguistic situations in

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9. OC 105, cf. RFM p.97.

which "experiential propositions" can take on an apriori status and hence at six ways in which the limits of empiricism are delineated by Wittgenstein in his attempt to set the body of fact right side up. We have seen that certain phenomena within our experience may become paradigms within language and themselves function as a means of representation. And we have seen that phenomena that we take as criteria for larger complexes may shift into or out of an apriori position with regard to the complex. We have also examined the way that "immediate sensations", like the sensation of "red", are in a sense inseparable from the grammar with which they are articulated, similarly for so called "inner sensations" like pain. We saw in connection with this that the phenomenon of "recognition" is not something that can be explained or further grounded, for Wittgenstein, but is a basic aspect of human life inseparable from our language games of recognition. Finally, we saw the latest work of Wittgenstein reflecting on the notion of "certainty" in an attempt to distinguish the logic of certainty from the logic of knowing. We saw that the distinction between certainty and knowing functions both for the everyday certainties such as "I know these are my two hands" and for the framework of general propositions (or weltbild) which forms the background of all our knowing and investigating. The limits of empiricism are to be found in this variety of ways in which the apriori functions as a condition of the possibility of the empirical.

On the most general level Wittgenstein is describing the ways that the facts may "enter into" grammar as well as the ways that there may be an "oscillation" between grammar and fact. But we have also seen that this fusion and interweaving of fact and grammar serves to underline the idea of the "groundlessness" of the human situation. Whatever empirical

propositions we might undertake to investigate, other experiential propositions will recede into the grammatical background, so to speak, and function in an apriori manner, providing the very possibility of the empirical investigation from a logical-grammatical plane which cannot itself be factually or experientially grounded. There is a kind of "hermeneutical circle" of knowledge here[10] akin to the hermeneutical circle made so much of by thinkers like Heidegger and Gadamer. In speaking of one of those general empirical propositions which seems so self-evident to us that "the opposite hypothesis has nothing on its side" (OC 190), Wittgenstein goes on to say:

> Well, if everything speaks for an hypothesis and nothing against it - is it then certainly true? One may designate it as such. - But does it certainly agree with reality, with the facts? - With this question you are already going round in a circle. (OC 191.)

Apriori grammatical and aposteriori factual matters are interrelated in such a way that it becomes meaningless to speak of stepping out of grammar or out of language in such a way that we can identify "the facts" and assess the conformity or lack of conformity of language to their parameters. The limits of empiricism are to be found precisely here. There is a kind of "hermeneutical circle" that encompasses all of our knowledge activities, a circle connected, as Wittgenstein is pointing out, with the complex relationship of the apriori and the aposteriori in human life.

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10. See, for example, Richard Bernstein's exposition of the "hermeneutical circle" in several contemporary philosophers in Part Three of Beyond Objectivism and Relativism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

iii. Human Liberation and The Problem of Metaphysical Truth

It may be significant that the word "truth" begins once more to appear frequently in Wittgenstein's last writings in On Certainty just as it had appeared frequently in his early writings. For with his identification of human agreements and language games as constituitive of meaning in a way that is logically prior to fact, it might have seemed as if Wittgenstein was throwing "objective truth" out the window in favor of some sort of conventionalist view of "truth". In the Investigations, for example, the question of the relation between "truth" and apriori grammatical considerations is explicitly examined relatively infrequently whereas, as our last section made clear, this issue occupies much of On Certainty. One key passage of the Investigations does explicitly make Wittgenstein's point, but the issue is not pursued from a variety of angles as it is later in On Certainty:

> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and false?" - It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. (PI 241.)[11]

To suggest that meaning is use, that it involves agreed upon language games and forms of life, may be misleading in that people often think of "agreement" as agreement in opinions or ideas: that is, as agreement concerning things that may be either true or false. But just as we have seen Wittgenstein use the word "use" in special philosophical senses directed toward illuminating the functioning of language, so his idea of "agreement" is a tool applied in much the same way. As this aphorism

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11. Cf. PI 482 & 485.

makes clear, agreement in opinions has nothing to do with truth or falsity: even universal agreement about a certain matter does not necessarily guarantee its truth. But before people say anything about the world, before they hold any opinions, there must be the possibility of speaking about the world. Language, in connection with forms of life, provides just this possibility: as in the Tractatus sense is the prior possibility of saying anything about the world, true or false. In his philosophical use of the word "agreement", Wittgenstein is not talking about agreement in opinions of any sort, but rather about that "agreement" in language and form of life which provides the very possibility of sense.

In approaching Wittgenstein's philosophy it would be an error to believe that we can look at these agreements in language and forms of life from a factual point of view, thereby identifying the facts on which we agree as one step toward discovering the character of the world which forms the basis for our language games. This attempt to step out of the "hermeneutical circle" forgets that in our language games of identifying these "facts" we must presuppose the very "agreements" (constituitive) of sense that we seek to identify. It is another form of the metaphysical picture which believes we can discover a character to the world which constitutes the ground of sense. It will be instructive, in this connection, to look briefly once again at Wittgenstein's work in the Tractatus where he was under the influence of just such a metaphysical picture.

Just as in the Investigations, the Tractatus recognizes that if we are to be able to distinguish anything as true or false, this possibility must be already there apriori.[12] This is what constitutes the sense of a proposition

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12. For example, TLP 2.0121, 2.013, & 2.2-2.223.

or its "pictorial form" and allows us to "picture" the world in language in such a way that the picture may be true or false: "What a picture represents it represents independently of its truth or falsity, by means of its pictorial form". (TLP 2.22.) But notice what is going on here. Although the "facts" are limited to the totality of true propositions about the world (TLP 1.1), the fact that there must be the prior possibility of things existing in states of affairs in the world, a possibility which is mirrored by the sense of propositions and which allows them to be true or false, makes it look as if there were a "reality" there, other than the totality of facts, which "a picture represents independently of its truth or falsity". It is this "reality", the idea that "each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs" (TLP 2.013), which leads Wittgenstein to identify a "substance" to the world which "contains the possibility of all situations". (TLP 2.014.) As he later commented, "the difficulty...is to fight off the thought that possibility is a kind of shadowy reality". (PG p.281.) In Chapter Five we studied the paradoxes that resulted from his holding that sense must be presupposed on the one hand and that the world must have a "substance" on the other.

In the Investigations these paradoxes are avoided because possibility is seen to be grammatical possibility and it is realized that there is no transcendental argument by which we can transcend the presuppositional status of sense in order to come upon the supposed basis in reality for that sense. The apriori may look like a superior status (a "transcendental" status), but it is simply grammatical and is investigated through grammatical investigation. In the Tractatus there is in a sense a doubling of the idea of "truth". In order to explain the possibility of speaking of the world truly or falsely (in ordinary factual propositions) a proposition

was conceived of as a picture that "represents" something that is there independently of its truth or falsity: what it "represents" is, so to speak, the reality of apriori possibility - a "reality" beyond the ordinary factual reality described by everyday true propositions. Possibility, in the later philosophy, is simply part of ordinary grammar.

We saw Nietzsche point out that something like this characterized the whole metaphysical tradition: behind ordinary factual propositions which can be said to be true or false by ordinary criteria there was the "ultimate reality" or "truth of being", a higher level truth that philosophers were trying to discover. If "truth" is kept on its ordinary, everyday level (as in the above quotation from the Investigations then the possibility of that truth cannot be taken as another, higher level "truth". This is why grammatical possibility (constituted in language games and forms of life) cannot itself be treated factually in a way that attempts to identify the factual grounds of sense. If grammar allows the possibility of truth or falsity, then to think that one can discover the factual ground for grammar is to look for a higher order metaphysical truth which is the ground of ordinary truth. It is to ignore that that same grammatical possibility must be presupposed even in this investigation.

Just as the word "truth" can only be sensibly used in the various language games in which it ordinarily functions, so the word "reality" can no longer be taken as a super-concept apart from the language games in which it normally functions. All such words must have a meaning as humble as "lamp", "table", "door". (PI 97.) It is not that this word might not function within some fascinating and philosophically important language games, it is rather that metaphysics in Wittgenstein's sense must be avoided: we must continually remain clear in our reflections concerning the

complex relations between the factual and the conceptual. Perhaps those ambiguities between the apriori and the aposteriori examined in the last section - the way that experiential matters can be taken up into language and given an apriori status - have misled philosophers, like the song of Circe, into the pitfalls of metaphysics.

What this means, however, is that in the grammar of ordinary language games, the words we use are held fast, so to speak, by the concatenation of meanings and activities in conjunction with which the word on which we are focusing functions. For example, the question which asks for the "constituent parts" of "reality" can only be understood if it is part of a language game which makes sense of the idea of "constituent parts". For as Wittgenstein points out (PI 47) the word "composite" functions in many different language games and has a different meaning depending on the game. To ask about the "constituent parts" of something in a vacuum, so to speak, is to fail to give a clear meaning to these words. (cf. OC 348.)

Wittgenstein perhaps sums up this insight in a key passage from Culture and Value that we quoted in Chapter Five:

> I read: "...philosophers are no nearer to the meaning of 'Reality' than Plato got,...". What a strange situation. How extraordinary that Plato could have got even as far as he did! Or that we could not get any further! Was it because Plato was so extremely clever? (CV p.15.)

Like the word "composite", the word "reality" is meaningful in a number of language games, each of which gives it a somewhat different meaning (within a general "family resemblance" of meanings). Within each of these games the meaning is constituted and "held fast" by the grammar of the language game, the situation within which the word is used, and the nexus

of other language games with which it intersects. For this reason, there is no meaning to "reality" outside of some language game, outside of some use of the word. The word in itself has no determinate "meaning" and it makes no sense, therefore, to write that "philosophers are no nearer to the meaning of 'Reality' than Plato got". There is no such thing as this 'Reality'. There is no "reality in itself" apart from the multiplicity of ways that we use the word "reality", or, better put: the idea of "reality in itself" is, in a certain way, "nonsense".

This is how Wittgenstein accounts for this "strange situation" (referring to in the statement that he quotes). Philosophers have been trying to get at the meaning of 'Reality' since before the time of Plato and yet they are no "nearer" than Plato was. This would be a truly astounding situation if there was something to get to: "all these great geniuses tried", one might say, "and yet none could advance upon Plato". Surely something is radically wrong here. Wittgenstein's answer would seem to be that there is no such "reality" to get to: neither is there not such a reality to get to. Both these assertions must be seen as "nonsense". All these philosophers ran up against the "limits of language" (PI 119); they all ran up against the presuppositional character of grammar which cannot be transcended. "Reality" is found in the language games in which the word functions. Hence, there are a multiplicity of meanings to the word "reality" but no meaning to the idea that there is one "reality in itself" which transcends, and is the source of, all ordinary meaning. There may be a language game or games within which this phrase has meaning, but it is only one of a multiplicity of language games in which the word "reality" has a variety of meanings. Why should that game take precedence and subsume all the others?

Wittgenstein's method of "criss-crossing" the grammatical and conceptual landscape (with an eye to the traditional philosophical problems (PI 109)) is a method that can generally be said to be itself directed toward "the truth". "Truth" here would mean presumably a seeing clearly of the human situation through becoming clear about the nature and functioning of language. Perhaps he is referring to this "seeing clearly" in the following remark on his method:

> One must start out with error and convert it into truth. That is, one must reveal the source of error, otherwise hearing the truth won't do any good. The truth cannot force its way in when something else is occupying its place. To convince someone of the truth, it is not enough to state it, but rather one must find the path from error to truth. (RFGB p.61.)

If the "truth" about the human situation includes, in part, an understanding of the grammatical confusions involved in all metaphysical thinking, then Wittgenstein on occasion seems to feel that there is a great danger in trying to communicate this "truth". For with the demise of the traditional metaphysical and epistemological tasks of Western thought, it may look as if there is something that we are "prevented" from doing by the limitations of language. Wittgenstein himself on occasion tended to give this impression: when, for example, at the end of his "Lecture on Ethics" he says, "My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk about Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless." (LE pp.11-12.) He seems in general to have wanted to avoid these implications, however, and his subsequent conversation with Waismann explicitly denies the metaphor he had used: "At the end of my lecture on ethics, I spoke in the first person. I believe

that is quite essential...For me a theory has no value. A theory gives me nothing.... Neither are religious utterances figurative, for else they should be also expressible in prose. Thrusting against the limits of language? Language is not a cage." (LE p.16.) Perhaps the desire to avoid the implications that language in some way "cuts us off" from something was one reason why this metaphor of the "limits of language" (which we saw appear frequently in the middle and early writings) was dropped in the later writings.

It seems that at least one great danger to be overcome (in expressing his insight into the presuppositional character of meaning and the concomitant impossibility of metaphysics as a knowledge activity) was to articulate this in such a way that people understood this as a liberation, as a freedom from confusion and an insight into the possibility of coming upon a transformed mode of living, rather than as being "cut off" from ultimate reality or from the real foundations of knowledge. Whether he succeeded in articulating his insights in this way is certainly open to question, but he does seem to be referring to this danger in the following remarks:

> Essence is expressed by grammar.... (PI 371.)
>
> Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.) (PI 373.)
>
> 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.)

After making these two striking statements that sum up, in a way, all that may sound strange and paradoxical in Wittgenstein's new way of looking at

things (two statements which take us out of the metaphysical tradition completely by implying that the world has no objects apart from language!), Wittgenstein then speaks of "the great difficulty" connected with the attempt to express his new insight. The difficulty seems to be connected with the feeling we have that there really must be an object there from which we read off our description, yet to which we seem unable to attain.[13] And although we have seen his philosophy try to express these ideas in different ways, the best that he can really offer is to "yield to the temptation to use this picture" and then through the investigation of the "application" of the picture (through grammatical investigation) to show how the metaphysical picture of essence (or of an An-sich) will not work. Yet this is not an entirely negative approach because there is a sense in which "truth" is only realized through "revealing the source of error" and showing "the path from error to truth".

But the careful reader will at the same time recognize that Wittgenstein's writings are also full of images of human liberation, images connected with the idea of finding a new way of thinking in which the old problems that have plagued us are seen to have been do to a

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13. Compare these quotations from the Investigations with Hegel's criticism (in his Encyclopedia) of Kant's idea of "reality in-itself": "But furthermore the Kantian objectivity of thought is itself subjective, since, according to Kant, thoughts, though universal and necessary determinations, are still only our thoughts and separated from the thing-in-itself by an impassible gulf. On the contrary, the true objectivity of thought lies in the fact that thoughts are not merely our thoughts, but at the same time the essence [An-sich] of things and of what is objective in general." Quoted in Ivan Soll, An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p.90. For a study which points out a number of illuminating parallels between Hegel and Wittgenstein see David Lamb, Language and Perception in Hegel and Wittgenstein (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979).

misunderstanding. They do not have to be "solved" for, with a new way of looking at the human situation, they simply vanish. One of the images with which Wittgenstein characterizes our traditional intellectual situation is that of a person imprisoned in an unlocked room: "A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that's unlocked and opens inwards; as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather than push it." (CV p.42.) Perhaps this characterizes the situation of Western philosophy which has been intellectually pushing the door in terms of a certain picture of ourselves as standing outside of the presuppositions of experience and meaning in such a way as to be able to give an epistemological or metaphysical grounding to these things. The idea of a ground to things is perhaps just a picture: deriving from the idea that thought (or language) is itself in a pictorial relation to the world (as the Tractatus had presupposed). We have pushed in terms of this picture since Plato and seem to be "no closer to the meaning of 'Reality'" than he was. Liberation will come not through solving the epistemological and metaphysical problems but simply through dropping that picture. If it occurs to us to look at our situation in a different way, then we find we can simply pull the unlocked door and we are free.

"Freedom" in this sense will involve seeing clearly "what lies right in front of everyone's eyes" (CV p.63) but which has been denied us because we have been blinded by a certain picture: of things needing a "ground" and of thought (or language) functioning in a pictorial manner. Wittgenstein is concerned with human liberation, but it is not a liberation through bringing us out of the concrete world to a metaphysical realm which transcends this world, whether this be perfect Platonic forms, Spinozistic intellectual love of God, or Hegelian Absolute Spirit. It is a

liberation revealing "what lies in front of everyone's eyes" through coming upon a totally new way of thinking which causes the old problems, that is the old imprisonment, to vanish:

> Getting hold of the difficulty deep down is what is hard. Because if it is grasped near the surface it simply remains the difficulty it was. It has to be pulled out by the roots; and that involves our beginning to think about these things in a new way. The change is as decisive as, for example, that from the alchemical to the chemical way of thinking. The new way of thinking is what is so hard to establish.
>
> Once the new way of thinking has been established, the old problems vanish; indeed they become hard to recapture. For they go with our way of expressing ourselves and, if we clothe ourselves in a new form of expression, the old problems are discarded along with the old garment. (CV p.48.)

We see Wittgenstein suggesting once again, and in a different context, that the new way of thinking he seeks to establish is as decisive as the change "from the alchemical to the chemical way of thinking". This is no empiricism, no nominalism, no common sense realism. Nor is this an "absolute solipsism" as Findlay suggests.[14] It is an attempt to establish an entirely new way of thinking that will liberate us, so to speak, into the everyday. Wittgenstein quotes Grillparzer as saying "It's so easy to wander about amongst great objects in distant regions, so hard to grasp the solitary thing that's right in front of you....". (CV p.13.) The problems of life can only be solved "in depth", Wittgenstein says, not "in surface dimensions" (CV p.74), but the depths he is aiming at involve what is right in front of our faces, not metaphysical denials of the everyday.

This focus on the everyday may have a superficial similarity to the

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14. J.N. Findlay, Ascent to the Absolute (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), p.156.

philosophy of some forms of behaviorism and others hostile to metaphysics who see the human situation in what might be called a "one dimensional light". For such people, Wittgenstein says, "the world becomes broad and flat and loses all depth" and their philosophy, like their writings, becomes "shallow and trivial". In denying the metaphysical picture and trying to bring us back to the ordinary and the everyday, Wittgenstein is not denying great depths to existence. On the contrary, he finds these depths now in "What lies in front of everyone's eyes":

> Some philosophers (or whatever you like to call them) suffer from what may be called "loss of problems". Then everything seems quite simple to them, no deep problems seem to exist any more, the world becomes broad and flat and loses all depth, and what they write becomes immeasurably shallow and trivial. (Z 456.)

For Wittgenstein, everyday existence contains all the "depth" that the most "spiritual" among us could ever require. And such depth can be come upon in various ways; one way, for example, is to "awaken to wonder": "Man has to awaken to wonder....Science is a way of sending him to sleep again". (CV p.5) Another way is through thought, not thought that soars to metaphysical heights, but thought focused on "the everyday": "If you want to go down deep you do not need to travel far; indeed, you don't have to leave your most immediate and familiar surroundings."[15]

For these reasons, then, the demise of metaphysical uses of the words "truth" and "reality" is no cause for alarm concerning the dangers of "spiritual shallowness" or "the emptiness of positivism". Neither Wittgenstein nor Nietzsche are positivists. Just as Nietzsche was a person of great depth looking for a way beyond nihilism that did not sacrifice

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15. CV p.50, cf. PI 111 & 129.

that depth so Wittgenstein's philosophy, as we have tried to indicate, does not go beyond great depth in going beyond metaphysics and epistemology. Indeed, in our longing for depth, we have perhaps used the idea of "metaphysical truth" to look away from, and hence devalue, the very place where the depths of existence are to be found. But to see these depths in the everyday, Wittgenstein's philosophy suggests, one must come upon a completely "new way of thinking", a new way of thinking which is perhaps as difficult to acquire as it was for people to drop the alchemical and acquire the chemical way of thinking.

iv. The Autonomy of Ordinary Truth and Ordinary Language

Some think Wittgenstein overthrew the idea that language has "limits" when he finally dropped the Tractatus point of view during his transitional years. They argue, therefore, that even though Wittgenstein speaks of "the limits of language" (die Grenze der Sprache) in such places as his 1930 "Lecture on Ethics" (LE p.12), when he finally arrived at the conception of meaning as use in language games and within forms of life, there were no longer any limits to what could be talked about with sense. As Wittgenstein himself says, one form of life might "culminate in an utterance of belief in a Last Judgment" (LC p.58): such talk, like other religious talk, now making perfect sense as language games within that form of life. Indeed, these interpreters are correct insofar as Wittgenstein had changed his view, between his early and later periods, as to what constitutes a legitimate "proposition". In the Tractatus he had seen factual propositions (those which could be either true or false) as paradigmatic for all language, hence excluding (non-factual) ethical and religious statements

as attempts to run against the "limits of language".

However, even though Wittgenstein largely dropped the metaphor of "limits" in his later writing, we have seen that he in no way dropped his critique of "metaphysics". In the later writing, even more clearly than in the early, we have seen him underlining the presuppositional status of grammar. And we should be clear that this critique of metaphysics is not of all metaphysical, religious, poetic, or ethical talk by any means; it is focused only on the illusion that metaphysical knowledge is possible. He often repeats the idea that metaphysics is a confusion between factual and grammatical matters. For example, he says in the Blue Book that in coming upon a metaphysical proposition "we show that this proposition hides a grammatical rule. That is to say, we destroy the outward similarity between a metaphysical proposition and an experiential one". (BB p.55.) As our study earlier in this chapter has shown the capacity of experiential propositions to function in language in a grammatical and apriori role is perhaps the main source of that confusion between fact and grammar which Wittgenstein calls "metaphysics". Metaphysics takes propositions that have a grammatical status and mistakenly treats them as if they were a form of factual knowledge.

For this reason, even though all kinds of language games are now seen to make sense, including, for example, religious language games, there are still "limits to language" in the later philosophy if one means by this the impossibility of transcending the presuppositional status of sense in order to find an epistemological or metaphysical grounding for either knowledge or language. There are no limits to what we can talk about, however, and artistic, religious, ethical, mythical, poetic, and even metaphysical language games might all have their place for Wittgenstein. What is objectionable is

not being clear about the logic of the language games we use and hence being mistaken about whether we have knowledge in connection with these games. Just as for Kant "the conditions of the possibility of experience" set limits to human knowledge, not to our ability to discuss ethical and religious matters, so neither for Wittgenstein do the presuppositional "limits of language" affect our ability to discuss ethical or religious matters. (Although it does, of course, affect our view as to whether there can be "knowledge" in these areas.)

"Knowledge" itself, for Wittgenstein, may be of a variety of kinds and degrees, for we speak of "knowing" in more senses than simply what is tested and corroborated through scientific methods.[16] But knowing is certainly not "relative" in the sceptic's sense of this word. For the word "knowledge" is rooted deeply in our lives - and is legitimately opposed to such notions as "ignorance", "deception", "illusion", and "falsehood". This same would seem to apply to the idea of "truth", a word which, like "knowledge" can be used in a variety of senses. Many of these senses may be connected with knowledge of one form or another, but other of the senses may have little or nothing to do with knowledge. For example, religious language games often speak of "The Truth" in a sense somewhat similar to the way they speak of "The Word". The later Wittgenstein might well accept all such games (and note false accounts of the matter as false (PI p.200)) pointing out that the criteria for the use of the word are connected with the context, the language game, and the form of life that gives rise to the utterance. This language game with the word "Truth"

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16. For example, there may be such a thing as "tacit knowledge" in Wittgenstein's philosophy. See the discussion of this in Jerry Gill's article on "Wittgenstein's Concept of Truth" (pp.74-76 & 79).

would be inappropriate and indeed nonsense in a physics lab. The "criteria of truth" are logical - and connected with the particular situation in which the word is used - but these criteria are not themselves true or false. (OC 205.) Wittgenstein points to two such uses of the word "truth" in the Investigations when he says that "The criteria for the truth of the confession that I thought such-and-such are not the criteria for a true description of a process." (PI p.222.) This does not make "truth" relative in the sceptic's sense any more than it makes "knowledge" relative. The word "truth" has tremendous importance in our lives and is legitimately opposed to "falsehood" and "illusion". It not only has a tremendous importance with regard to our language games concerning knowledge but, as the personal lives of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein indicate, a tremendous ethical importance as well. What must be accepted, however, is the autonomy of ordinary language: despite its importance in our lives, neither "truth" nor any other word can be treated as a "super-concept" having an essence apart from the ambiguities of ordinary language.

This is one reason why the work of the philosopher is of such great significance. The variety and vagueness of ordinary language (including the frequent interweaving of the apriori and the aposteriori) make it vitally important that people in every generation strive for logical clarity in spite of the many pitfalls which language lays in our way. This clarity must not only include a perspicuous view of the nature and functioning of language in general, but also specialized work with those words and language games that it is vitally important to be clear about: words like "truth", "knowledge", and "reality". But "philosophy", Wittgenstein says, "may in no way interfere with the actual use of language.... It cannot give it a foundation either. It leaves everything as it is". (PI 124.) For

language operates autonomously - and groundlessly (in unity with human beings and the world) - in the myriad language games that make up the vast array of human life. Language (including uses of the word "truth") will always be complex, varied, and vague, for the very reason that the concepts we use have no essence or, alternatively stated: "Essence is expressed by grammar". (PI 371.) "Truth" is expressed in the many and varied language games in which the word functions, and the "criteria of truth" are the logical presuppositions of these language games. In philosophy, Wittgenstein says, "What we have to do is to accept the everyday language-game, and to note false accounts of the matter as false." (PI p.200.)

It should be clear, however, that the fact that ordinary language is autonomous in this way by no means indicates that the philosopher cannot try to change the way people think, the way they value, or the way they live. Some seem to think that Wittgenstein's philosophy leads to an essentially conservative social and political stance, but we have seen Wittgenstein's passion for changing the way people think and for "curing the sickness of a time". The philosopher may work for human liberation in these areas as well. In pointing to the autonomy of ordinary language, Wittgenstein is pointing out that meaning is constituted in ordinary language as it functions in concrete situations in which human beings live their lives. Words do not have "essences" or meanings outside of language games in concrete situations. Thus he says that "When philosophers use a word...one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?" (PI 116.) What is autonomous about ordinary language (and what the philosopher may not interfere with) is that meanings are constituted in this way within concrete

circumstances. What philosophers often tend to do is to isolate language from its original home in order to try to make it more exact (with the picture in mind of an absolute exactness) or to picture the essence of something (with the picture in mind of things having a pre-linguistic "essential nature"). But philosophy must be done with the the realization that all careful and exacting talk is ultimately dependent on ordinary language and on concrete situations. If it is done in a way abstracted from concrete language games, Wittgenstein suggests, this is as futile as trying to understand the nature of boiling by abstracting from the situation of real boiling and picturing a boiling pot:

> Of course, if water boiled in a pot, steam comes out of the pot and also pictured steam comes out of the pictured pot. But what if one insisted on saying that there must also be something boiling in the picture of the pot? (PI 297)[17]

To be logically clear about language, as the philosopher wishes to do, one must look at language in use in concrete situations, for meanings are autonomous in just the sense that they cannot be abstracted from these situations:

> Just as the words "I am here" have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I say them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly, - and not because they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not determined by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination. (OC 348.)

It is in this sense that ordinary language (and the ordinary uses of the word "truth") are autonomous. But no particular language games and no particular way of looking at the world (Weltbild) is sacrosanct, and it

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17. See RPPII p.45: the last two paragraphs of #235 on this page might serve as a gloss on Wittgenstein's point here.

would be foolish to hold that the philosopher should not try to change the way people think and act. The great tradition of philosophy would be lost without such an attempt. As we have seen, one fundamental impulse behind Wittgenstein's own philosophical activity right from the beginning was the drive to change the way people understood their situation and to make clear to them the force of "the ethical" and "the mystical". And his personal ethical life was directly connected with the ethical task of changing the way people think. As he wrote in 1944: "That man will be revolutionary who can revolutionize himself". (CV p.45.) One might say that the philosopher's respect for the autonomy of ordinary language interferes neither with being a revolutionary, nor with revolutionizing oneself.

Philosophers may indeed discover and even advocate "a new way of looking at things". (PI 401.) For we have seen that our language games (and our ways of looking at things) are not grounded in any ontological necessities but rather in human action. But how is it, one might ask, that a new non-metaphysical way of looking at things, a way of looking which recognized the autonomy of ordinary language, can bring about the sense of depths to the world which one so often finds in the great metaphysical writings of the past? The attempt to answer this question, and the difficult task of pointing to the possibility of a new depth to the world and to a concomitant transformation of our being-in-the world, will occupy us in Part Three of this study. The answer would seem to include two general aspects, although each of these might be said to be a corollary of one unitary vision: First, if the autonomy of the everyday is fully realized, then it might take on a sense of overwhelming presence and fullness that it may lack for someone retaining implicit metaphysical assumptions.

Ordinary kinds of "truth" might then no longer seem to be a sham and a vague approximation of something seemingly forever missing, and the world as it confronts one might no longer seem to be a series ever shifting illusions or "appearances" hiding something to which we can never attain. Secondly, this "unitary vision" would seem to include an aspect pointed to by Wittgenstein's repeated references to "groundlessness" throughout the decades of his later philosophizing. Perhaps from a philosophic understanding of "groundlessness" one can move beyond philosophy to realization in such a way that the overwhelming fullness the everyday becomes "ecstatic" precisely in the measure in which this fullness is simultaneously a sense of "emptiness". Our task in Part Three will be to indicate as best we can such possibilities and to pose them in such a way as to confront the "nothingness" of nihilism. For it may be that the "nothingness" of nihilism, linked as we have seen with implicit metaphysical assumptions, can move toward a transformation of our being in the world precisely insofar as it drops these assumptions and takes its stand on a true realization of "groundlessness": the idea of "groundlessness" used now in a way that points beyond itself toward an immediate and direct realization of a fullness-emptiness beyond thought and beyond language.

Having discussed at length Wittgenstein's attempt to eliminate from our thinking the post-Kantian remnants of implicit metaphysical assumptions, we are now in a position to return to Nietzsche's analysis of the nihilistic despair of our modern age - and to grapple with this problem through an encounter of Nietzsche's thought with Wittgenstein's attempt to initiate a new way of looking at the human situation. It is this task that will occupy the concluding chapter, and to which we now turn.

PART THREE

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER NINE

BEYOND METAPHYSICS AND BEYOND NIHILISM

> The majority of men in every generation, even those who, as it is described, devote themselves to thinking, live and die under the impression that life is simply a matter of understanding more and more, and that if it were granted to them to live longer, that life would continue to be one long continuous growth in understanding. How many of them ever experience the maturity of discovering that there comes a critical moment when everything is reversed, after which the point becomes to understand more and more that there is something which cannot be understood. This is Socratic ignorance and that is what the philosophy of our time requires as a corrective.
>
> Kierkegaard[1]

> ...It is a sign that one has turned out well when, like Goethe, one clings with ever-greater pleasure and warmth to the "things of this world": - for in this way he holds firmly to the great conception of man, that man becomes the transfigurer of existence when he learns to transfigure himself.
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> Nietzsche[2]

i. Overview: The Problem of Nihilism and Its Overcoming

Our study of Nietzsche's philosophy in Part One attempted to

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1. Journals 1849

2. WM 820.

demonstrate the link at the heart of his thinking between the question of nihilism in the modern world and the problem of metaphysical truth. The calling into question of the traditional belief in the possibility of attaining to a final truth, and the concomitant calling into question of truth as a value, were leading, in his view, to an eventual disintegration of the very fabric of Western culture. For with the loss of the highest values, which had given meaning to human life and to the world, with the "Death of God", Nietzsche foresaw an age in which the dominant sensibility would be a sense of its own nothingness. He called this sensibility "nihilism" and connected its essential character with a formulation that rang of despair: "There is no truth".

The loss of those traditional values which had given meaning and value to human life had led us into a no man's land, a nothingness in which we felt the demise of the old metaphysical possibilities as a loss of the very world from under us. Yet with nothing positive or worthwhile with which to replace these values, the result was a scepticism so pervasive and so corrosive that it saw human existence as hanging over an "abyss" which disintegrated the very meanings of our language and the everyday certainties in which our lives are immersed. We saw Nietzsche predict for the 20th century either gigantic suicidal wars or a mass longing for oblivion and mediocrity. Little did he realize that the future would hold for us both of these phenomena, as well as others, like the threat of nuclear annihilation, which Nietzsche's wildest nightmares could not have conceived.

The literature of the 20th century is full of recognition of the gigantic suicidal problems which our century faces and it is full of attempts, in one way or another, to see to the bottom of these problems.

In his book Man In The Modern Age, Karl Jaspers discusses some of this literature, including Spengler's Untergang des Abendlandes (1918), a book that seems to have influenced Wittgenstein.[3] Jaspers points out that what characterizes such books is "the increasing emphasis of their insistence that mankind stands face to face with Nothingness"[4] He then continues with the following:

> Still, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche remain the leaders in this field - though Kierkegaard has found no disciples to sustain his advocacy of primitive Christianity, and Nietzsche's Zarathustra philosophy has not been generally adopted. Since, however, both of them were revealers of the trend toward annihilation, it was only to be expected that the war should draw unprecedented attention to their doctrines.
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> Beyond question there is a widespread conviction that human activities are unavailing; everything has become questionable; nothing in human life holds good; that existence is no more than an unceasing maelstrom of reciprocal deception and self-deception by ideologies.... One who holds such a view cannot but be inspired with a consciousness of his own nullity. His awareness of the end as annihilation is simultaneously the awareness that his own existence is null.[5]

Wittgenstein, while never publishing any extended analyses of the character of our age, also keenly felt "the darkness of this time". (PI P p.vi.) "Modern times were to him a dark age", Von Wright writes in his "Biographical Sketch"[6] and Norman Malcolm writes that the prospects that he saw for humanity often brought him "close to despair":

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3. As indicated by his several references to Spengler's ideas over a period of years: See, e.g. CV pp.9, 14, 16, 19, 20, & 27.

4. Man In The Modern Age, Eden and Cedar Paul, trans. (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Anchor Books, 1957), p.15.

5. Ibid. p.15.

6. In Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein - A Memoir (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.20.

> It was Wittgenstein's character to be deeply pessimistic, both about his own prospects and those of humanity in general. Anyone who was on an intimate footing with Wittgenstein must have been aware of the feeling in him that our lives are ugly and our minds in the dark - a feeling that was often close to despair.[7]

Perhaps Wittgenstein's desire to initiate a new way of thinking which might cure "the sickness of a time" animated his relentless drive for philosophical clarity. Whatever the case, his views shed valuable light on some of the great problems of our age in a way that deserves the most serious philosophical attention. The general and controlling purpose of our study has been to lay bare the structure of Nietzsche's profound analysis of nihilism - and its intimate connection with the problem of metaphysical truth - and to engage this analysis with the radically new way of philosophical thinking (and hence new way of understanding the question of metaphysical truth) which animates Wittgenstein's mature philosophizing. In this chapter we will try to summarize and make explicit some main implications of this effort.

We recall that Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism not only focused on the intellectual effects of the Copernican Revolution, the rise of science, and the subsequent 18th century philosophical attempts to show the impossibility of metaphysics, they also sought out the deepest historical roots of the metaphysical orientation of Western thought. He identified the roots of this orientation in the phenomenon of resentment, the pervasive tendency in human life to deny in one way or another the immediate everyday phenomena of suffering, sickness, perpetual change, and eventual death in favor of a conception of "reality" or "being" which transcended the transitoriness of daily existence, a conception which

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7. Ibid. p.72.

provided a stable ground in which the true value and meaning of human existence might be rooted. It was resentment of the concrete conditions of human life that was the real mainspring of metaphysics, for Nietzsche. For this reason the traditional conception of "truth" as metaphysical truth (as one final description of the ultimate character of reality) was in effect a defacto devaluation of the ever-changing phenomenal world in which our lives are led. Nietzsche saw that the metaphysical tradition defamed and desecrated the phenomenal world, including the human body - although it had at the same time provided a kind of vicarious meaning and value to life, and even to suffering, through focusing on a transcendent reality which was the goal and destiny of all earthly existence.

We recall also that the entire energy of Nietzsche's mature philosophizing was directed into finding a way beyond the nihilism, the spiritual exhaustion, and sense of nothingness which characterized the modern age. The calling into question of the traditional standpoint of Western metaphysics by such figures as Kant and Hume had not resulted in a renewed valuation of the phenomenal world precisely because we had not given up the "metaphysical" standpoint: we saw the challenge to metaphysics as a challenge to the possibility of ever attaining to "the truth", and the result was a corrosive scepticism of the deepest character. Nietzsche recognized his own scepticism, formulated under the uncompromising rubric "There is no truth", as being at the heart of modern nihilism. For this reason the overcoming of nihilism in his thinking required much more than merely a critique of metaphysics and the affirmation of a shallow positivism. It required, in some fundamental way, a transformation of our being-in-the-world. In order to find value and meaning in an everyday world no longer grounded in any transcendental

substratum, we had to transform ourselves in two fundamental ways: we had to come upon a mode of being in which resentment of change, suffering, and death no longer vitiated our affirmation of the present, and we had to come upon a super-human creative fullness which would allow us to "create truth" in spite of the death of traditional metaphysical truth.

Nietzsche's philosophical drive toward the overcoming of nihilism resulted, therefore, in a visionary philosophy which intuited a mode of human existence that engaged the phenomenal world, for the first time in history, with a creative fullness and meaningfulness in which the very highest human potentialities were at last realized. We characterized this vision as "eschatological" and saw that an eschatological impulse dominates Nietzsche's mature philosophizing in which he looked to a transfiguration of ourselves and the world in an as yet unheard of future. We examined in this connection Nietzsche's philosophy of play, as well as his "Dionysian conception of truth", in each of which a new innocence was conjoined with an insight into the transfigurative potentialities of human creativity. In Nietzsche's vision, only such a transformed mode of being in the world would provide a sanctity to the phenomena which the traditional metaphysical devaluation of the phenomena had denied. And with this new sanctity metaphysical scepticism would no longer vitiate the possibility of meaning and value in human life, for value would be found in the present, and in creative engagement with the present, rather than in a metaphysically conceived "being" which functioned as a devaluation of that present.

In Part One we attempted at some length to show that Nietzsche's conceptions of Will to Power and Eternal Recurrence were explicitly not traditional metaphysical constructions of any sort but rather visionary

myths introduced by him as part of his attempt to affirm the autonomy and integrity of the phenomenal world and to avoid a metaphysical orientation which devalued that world. However, our critical analyses of his philosophy revealed that in another way, seemingly unrecognized by him, tacit metaphysical assumptions permeated his understanding of the human situation. We tried to show that his scepticism itself involved a metaphysical form of doubting akin to the super-ordinary doubting used as a method by Descartes, a doubting which so vitiates Descartes' Meditations that it raises great difficulties in even the attempt to "prove the existence of the external world". Secondly, we tried to show that another and related aspect of Nietzsche's scepticism also involved tacit metaphysical assumptions: that he retained the picture of human beings as isolated subjectivities over and against the world who had to somehow transcend that very subjectivity if they were ever to have genuine knowledge that was not merely one more subjective perspective. This "epistemological subjectivism", in conjunction with super-ordinary doubting, shapes Nietzsche's scepticism into what we called a "metaphysical scepticism", an orientation which makes his statement that "there is no truth" just as much a metaphysical notion as the traditional picture of a "Truth" which transcends the ambiguities of the phenomenal world.

Wittgenstein once told Malcolm that "he really thought that in the Tractatus he had provided a perfected account of a view that is the only alternative to the viewpoint of his later work."[8] If his later work can be seen as an extended attempt to step out of metaphysics as we have argued, then this would imply that the Tractatus was a perfected account

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8. Ludwig Wittgenstein - A Memoir, p.69.

of the metaphysical point of view. In terms of Nietzsche's criticism of traditional metaphysics, the Tractatus implicitly devalued the phenomenal world by looking "beneath" that world to a "substance" which allowed us to account for certain aspects of the phenomena. However, the alternative to that metaphysical picture would not be Nietzsche's scepticism. For just as the attempt to account for our ordinary language by positing a metaphysical grounding for that language could be said to call the "reality" of the ordinary into question (by turning it into an "appearance" of something more fundamental), so the orientation which doubts every statement in ordinary language on the grounds that it is only another subjective perspective can also be said to call into question the integrity of the ordinary. Both the Tractatus and Nietzschean scepticism are metaphysical points of view. Wittgenstein's later work continually referred to the Tractatus in a conscious effort to overcome that point of view and to articulate a new and completely non-metaphysical orientation, but at the same time it implicitly and explicitly tried to expose the metaphysical nature of super-ordinary doubting. This later philosophy, therefore, functions both as a criticism of traditional metaphysics and of metaphysical scepticism. In the following sections of this chapter we will look at Wittgenstein's criticisms, first, of metaphysical scepticism, and secondly, of epistemological subjectivism. Finally, in the closing sections of this chapter we will try to go beyond what is explicitly found in Wittgenstein's writings - and to point beyond nihilism - through returning to the fundamental ideas of a "groundless human situation" and a revalued understanding of "truth".

ii. Metaphysical Scepticism and The Autonomy of Ordinary Language

It might be said that Nietzsche's requirements for the overcoming of nihilism involve three basic elements: first, the integrity of the ordinary world must be restored, secondly, there must be some aspect of the ordinary world which has the character of "depth", that is, to which a "sanctity" has been restored which allows it to function as a source of human value, and finally (and perhaps intimately connected with the other two), the pervasive human tendency to resent the conditions of concrete existence must be either eliminated or in some way made non-operative. It is the first of these requirements that is vitiated by Nietzsche's own metaphysical scepticism. But the super-ordinary doubting which is part of the core of metaphysical scepticism is not the result of a different point of view on the everyday, it is rather a misunderstanding of language and of the autonomy of ordinary language.

In the Tractatus Wittgenstein had already objected to scepticism in "ethical" matters on the grounds that the only questions that could be intelligibly asked were factual ones and any questioning that attempted to transcend the bounds of sense, so to speak, was not a genuine questioning but rather nonsensical:

> Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical.
>
> When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words....
>
> If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it.
>
> Scepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked.
>
> For doubt can exist only where something can be said. (TLP 6.45, 6.5, & 6.51.)

In a very real sense these ideas are continued in the later philosophy even after Wittgenstein's conception of sense is broadened far beyond factual matters to include the entire variety of ordinary language games. For even though there might be a language game which asked a question such as "Does God exist?", if this is taken to be a factual question involving the possibility of some form of knowledge, then the person asking it has misunderstood the presuppositional character of sense and the nature of factual language games. Wittgenstein might well say that this question, taken factually, involves confusion about the grammar of the word "God", the grammar of the word "exists", and also confusion about the grammatical presuppositions of factual questions (namely that there must be methods by which we can test them and determine whether they are true or false). It would not seem to be a casual remark in the Investigations (373) when Wittgenstein writes: "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar.)"[9] Theological questions are not factual questions but involve understanding the grammar of the word "God". As Wittgenstein wrote in 1946: "The way you use the word "God" does not show whom you mean - but, rather, what you mean."[10]

The transition to the later philosophy did not involve a change in the view that certain questions, and certain doubts, may be nonsensical in that they may involve grammatical confusions. Rather, the transition involved a recognition of the autonomy of meaning as constituted in ordinary language games. Doubt is no longer understood in the traditional Cartesian manner as a psychological attitude of an isolated subjectivity. Rather

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9. Wittgenstein is here apparently following Luther who said that "Theology is the grammar of the word "God"". See L35 p.32.

10. CV p.50, cf. pp.82 & 85, & Z 717.

"doubt" only has meaning as part of the public world of meanings; it only has meaning within certain language games, but our language games themselves, we have seen, rest on a host of everyday certainties which "stand fast" for us and which are logically prior to truth or falsity. "Doubt", Wittgenstein says, "itself rests only on what is beyond doubt". (OC 519.) The extreme sceptic, who wants to call into question all of our language games and says something like "in the end we can only adduce such grounds as we hold to be grounds" has misunderstood the logical nature of "grounds", and to say this, Wittgenstein writes, "is to say nothing at all. I believe that at the bottom of this is a misunderstanding of the nature of our language-games." (OC 599.)

In the Tractatus all the possibilities of sense were provided by the "form of objects", but in the later philosophy the possibilities of sense are provided by ordinary grammar. This is true as well of the possibilities of doubting and uncertainty:

> Even our ordinary language has of course to provide for all cases of uncertainty, and if we have any philosophical objection to it, this can only be because in certain cases it gives rise to misinterpretations. (PR p.87.)

Grammar provides for all meaningful possibilities of doubt: where doubt might be expected, where it is very unlikely, where it loses its sense altogether. (OC 56, cf. OC 454.) It can very easily give rise, of course, to misunderstandings and misinterpretations (which is the work of the philosopher to be clear about). But there cannot sensibly be a doubting which transcends every possibility of sense. We saw that Nietzsche's feeling of the "abyss" that opened up in connection with the notion that "there is no truth" pointed toward a disintegration of the very fabric of ordinary meanings and everyday certainties. Ordinary language is

autonomous in this way: that sense disintegrates in the face of a doubting that calls all of the ordinary into question. Wittgenstein considers the possibility of doubting the ordinary meanings in language and continues:

> ...That I should stand before the abyss if I wanted so much as to try doubting their meanings - shews that absence of doubt belongs to the essence of the language-game, that the question "How do I know..." drags out the language-game, or else does away with it. (OC 370.)

What the metaphysical orientation does, whether this orientation be that of scepticism or not, is to place such a weight on certain words that they become abstracted from the nexus of meanings within which their sense is constituted. Hence, the very meaning of the word "doubt" is grammatically connected with the meanings of the words "certainty" and "knowledge". A doubt that calls everything into question proposes to transcend this nexus of meaning which connects the meaning of "doubting" with the meaning of "knowing", etc. When this is attempted "doubt" loses its meaning entirely: "A doubt without an end is not even a doubt", Wittgenstein says. (OC 625.) He further discusses this characteristic of metaphysical talk in the Blue Book (where he uses as one example the ideas of Nietzsche and Heraclitus that "everything is in flux"):

> We have been told by popular scientists that the floor on which we stand is not solid, as it appears to common sense, as it has been discovered that the wood consists of particles filling space so thinly that it can almost be called empty.... Our perplexity was based on a misunderstanding; the picture of a thinly filled space had been wrongly applied.
>
> As in this example the word "solidity" was used wrongly and it seemed that we had shown that nothing really was solid, just in this way, in stating our puzzles about the general vagueness of sense-experience, and about the flux of all phenomena, we are using the words "flux" and "vagueness" wrongly, in a typically metaphysical way, namely without an antithesis; whereas in their correct, and everyday use vagueness is opposed to clearness, flux to stability, inaccuracy to accuracy, and problem to solution. (BB pp.45-46.)

Just as the meaning of the word "doubt" is connected with the word "certainty" and the meaning of the word "appearance" is connected with the word "reality", so the proposition that "everything is in flux" is nonsense in that the very meaning of the word "flux" requires "an antithesis", namely "stability", something which is not in flux.[11] Propositions cannot be abstracted from their grammatical context in ordinary language as the metaphysician would like to do. Ordinary language is autonomous in this way - that only within it is meaning constituted at all.

In On Certainty Wittgenstein makes the logical point that just because it may be possible to call any particular judgment into question does not mean that it may not be a logical requirement that some empirical judgment always be beyond doubt. (OC 519.) The very possibility of calling into question the particular case presupposes this. A similar line of reasoning is presented in Remarks On Colour in connection with the relation between "seeming" and "being":

> Because it seems so to me - or to everybody - it does not follow that it is so.
>
> Therefore: From the fact that this table seems brown to everyone, it does not follow that it is brown. But just what does it mean to say, "This table isn't really brown after all"? - So does it then follow from its appearing brown to us, that it is brown?
>
> Don't we just call brown the table which under certain circumstances appears brown to the normal-sighted? We could certainly conceive of someone to whom things seemed sometimes this colour and sometimes that, independently of what colour they are.
>
> That it seems so to men is their criterion for its being

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11. In connection with the Heraclitean-Nietzschean ideas of flux and vagueness see also RPPI pp.187-88.

so.

> Being and seeming may, of course, be independent of one another in exceptional cases, but that doesn't make them logically independent; the language-game does not reside in the exception. (ROC 96-99.)

Even though it does not logically follow that because something is universally believed that it is so, the grammars of "seeming" and "being" are not completely independent from one another. Hence, in an exceptional case, what is universally believed may be understood by an individual to be untrue. However, meaning, the language game, is something public just as are the language games of truth and falsehood, fact and fiction. For an individual in an exceptional instance to see through the illusions of the crowd, still logically requires that that individual use the public language games of being and seeming and public criteria of truth and falsity. The language game does not reside in the exception, but is publicly constituted. This again is a reason why metaphysical scepticism, which says that "there is no truth", that every knowledge claim is merely a "perspective", and that all perspectives are merely "illusions", violates the meanings of the words "truth", "perspective", and "illusion" within ordinary language and therefore is, in a certain sense, "nonsense". Justification and doubt come to an end in the autonomy of ordinary language the meanings of which our language games of doubt and justification presuppose and cannot therefore justify. Wittgenstein is referring to this autonomy when he says: "What is spoken can only be explained in language, and so in this sense language itself cannot be explained. Language must speak for itself." (PG p.40.) Restoring the integrity of the phenomena means restoring the integrity of everyday meanings, for these meanings, as we have seen, are inseparable from our experience of the world.

There is an additional difficulty, however, in overcoming the Cartesian-Nietzschean impulse towards a super-ordinary doubting that implicitly calls into question the integrity of the phenomena. This additional difficulty is connected with the second way in which we found Nietzsche to be involved in the very metaphysical thinking that he wished to overcome: his "epistemological subjectivism". Our reflection on this will occupy the following section of this chapter, but here, in connection with the question of the logic of knowing and doubting, it is important to distinguish the logic of these things from the way our imagination presents them to us. The distinction here is, we believe, tremendously important for understanding Wittgenstein's philosophy. In a key passage from On Certainty - which is essential because it says explicitly what is implicit in the whole of the later philosophy - Wittgenstein writes the following:

> "I know" has a primitive meaning similar to and related to "I see" ("wissen", "videre"). And "I knew he was in the room, but he wasn't in the room" is like "I saw him in the room, but he wasn't there". "I know" is supposed to express a relation, not between me and the sense of a proposition (like "I believe") but between me and a fact. So that the fact is taken into my consciousness. (Here is the reason why one wants to say that nothing that goes on in the outer world is really known, but only what happens in the domain of what are called sense-data.) This would give us a picture of knowing as the perception of an outer event through visual rays which project it as it is into the eye and the consciousness. Only then the question at once arises whether one can be certain of this projection. And this picture does indeed show how our imagination presents knowledge, but not what lies at the bottom of this presentation. (OC 90.)

Later in the book, in a slightly different context (although still in the context of the general problem of knowledge versus belief or certainty) Wittgenstein recorded the single enigmatic remark that "Here once more there is needed a step like the one taken in relativity theory". (OC 305.) If we connect up these two passages, perhaps an insight is possible into

one of the things Wittgenstein may mean by calling for a step comparable to that taken in relativity theory.

The first passage opposes the logic of "I know" (which makes a grammatical connection between me and a fact) to the picture of knowing as it is grasped by the human imagination. And the passage implies that what "lies at the bottom" of knowing is not anything that the imagination can picture but rather what can be conceptually understood in terms of the logic of "knowing". In a similar way, it is often said that one of the great implications of the step taken in relativity theory was that the human imagination (which could, in a sense, form a picture of the Newtonian universe) could no longer picture the universe to which the Einsteinian equations were pointing. The Einsteinian universe could only be conceptually understood (in terms of mathematics, etc.), not imagined by the pictorial human imagination. Perhaps a comparable transition in our way of thinking is suggested by Wittgenstein's later philosophy, and, if taken by philosophers, would be a philosophical step comparable to that taken in the 20th century by the physicists. We must realize that there is no way to imaginatively picture "the way the world is", nor to picture our "epistemological" relationship to the immediacy of the phenomena which confront us, nor, indeed, are we able to picture our own "subjectivity" (which Wittgenstein calls "the myth of the inner picture[12]) Neither epistemology, insofar as it is based on a picture (like the one Wittgenstein describes above) of a subjective consciousness connected by "visual rays" to an object, nor metaphysics, insofar as it imagines a world that "must" have

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12. RPPII 109. This does not mean, of course, that the imagination has no role to play in philosophical thinking. For a further remark on pictures versus conceptual investigations see RPPI 1108.

a certain character to it independently of our language games, are viable any more. A step like that taken in relativity theory must be taken in philosophy. Just as scientists are realizing that it is logic, mathematics, and conceptual understanding which illuminate the nature of the universe, so philosophers must realize that it is logic and conceptual understanding which illuminate the human situation, not anything that is within the grasp of the pictorial imagination.

In examining, in the following section, the logical problems involved in Nietzsche's "epistemological subjectivism", we will simultaneously be examining this problem of the way the pictorial imagination sees the relation of knower to known in the knowledge situation.

iii. Epistemological Subjectivism and The Autonomy of Ordinary Language

Our study of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism in Part One indicated the radical subjectivism which is at the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy and which links him with the Cartesian starting point of Meditations One and Two.[13] Nietzsche takes subjectivity as his starting point and it is in large measure this that leads to his perspectivalism and to what we termed his "metaphysical scepticism". For example, we saw him make the following claim:

> That things possess a constitution in themselves quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity, is a quite idle hypothesis: it presupposed that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential....

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13. See Chapter Three, section iv.

> Conversely...could it not be...that the objective is only a false concept of a genus and an antithesis within the subjective. (WM 560.)

Anything that we might call "objective", Nietzsche says, is merely another item "within" consciousness, and there is no way to transcend consciousness to discover whether things have a "constitution in themselves" for any ideas or thoughts that we might have are still within consciousness. Subjectivity, therefore, is "essential" - there is no way to escape it.

The picture of knowing behind this idea would seem to be the one that we saw Wittgenstein bring up in On Certainty 90, quoted at the end of our last section. He says there that our "imagination" presents knowledge in terms of "a picture of knowing as the perception of an outer event through visual rays which project it as it is into the eye and the consciousness." Imaginatively we picture ourselves as a subjectivity confronted by the stimuli of "outer events" which our subjectivity must then interpret or construct into knowledge. In another place Wittgenstein brings up this picture again in terms of the idea that our subjectivity only forms "images" of outer events and that we can only know what is going on in another person by evoking a similar image within ourselves. He continues: "Why, I could of course not even see him; no I could only form an image of him. Isn't this hypothesis really like the one that there is only fiction in the world and no truth?" (RPPII 92.) The connection he makes is clear: from the picture of knowing as being rooted in human subjectivity the idea that there is no truth seems to logically follow. For any ideas we might have would simply involve further "images" and we could not even see the "outer events" directly but only form images of them.

What shows the inadequacy of this picture is the realization of the

autonomy of meaning within ordinary language. In our last section we saw that this autonomy of meaning obviates the possibility of sensibly speaking of a doubting that has no end to it and which is not grammatically juxtaposed to knowledge and certainty. It shows the impulse toward super-ordinary doubting to involve a metaphysical orientation which uses words (without antitheses) apart from the grammatical matrix in which they are embedded. This idea of the autonomy of meaning also shows epistemological subjectivism to involve such a metaphysical orientation. For the autonomy of meaning in ordinary grammar means that any talk of "subjectivity" or "objectivity" must already have meaning within our language games: there is no objectivity, nor is there any subjectivity (that we can speak of) apart from language.

Wittgenstein spent an immense amount of time and energy thinking about the question of "subjectivity" and the related mental concepts of "understanding", "intending", "meaning" (as a mental process), "seeing", "hearing", "feeling pain", etc. Indeed, such reflections take up most of the two volumes of Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, much of Zettel, and a great deal of the Investigations (from #82 to the end of the book), as well as large portions of this other post-Tractatus writings and lectures. Intimately related to this is the fairly large number of pages in which he continues to reflect on the question raised in the Tractatus (5.62ff) about "How much truth there is in solipsism".[14] His general goal was a clear understanding of what we have called "the question of subjectivity", not necessarily the understanding of any particular mental concept:

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14. For the textual locations of his reflections on solipsism, see Appendix B.

> The treatment of all these phenomena of mental life is not of importance to me because I am keen on completeness. Rather because each one casts light on the correct treatment of all. (Z 465.)

For this reason our considerations here could not possibly do justice to the complex reflections on the "phenomena of mental life" which take up so much of the Wittgensteinian corpus. This would require an entire chapter, perhaps an entire volume. But the importance of these questions are beyond doubt for, as Wittgenstein says, "The phrase "in the mind" has caused more confusion that almost any other in philosophy". (L35 p.114.) For this reason we must considerably narrow our scope and try to discuss the question of "epistemological subjectivism" as much as possible within the nexus of Wittgensteinian ideas already discussed in Chapters Five through Nine. We will therefore discuss the matter of "subjectivism", in this section, exclusively in terms of the autonomy of ordinary language and will leave it to the reader to make the important connection between our critique of epistemological subjectivism in these terms and Wittgenstein's reflections concerning what is "true" about solipsism which continued right into the time of the Blue Book and the beginnings of his later philosophy.

One way to underline and further clarify the notion of the autonomy of meaning within language is to draw on a metaphor that Wittgenstein commonly used during the middle period of his writings: the metaphor of "logical space". This metaphor was largely replaced in the later writings by that of "language games" (which included the grammatical possibilities provided by the game as it is intertwined with concrete human activities). In each case, the key to understanding the apriori role of grammar and the autonomy of meaning within grammar is to see it as providing all logical possibilities. Whereas in the Tractatus logical possibilities were provided

by the ontological substratum of the world, in the latter philosophy possibility is no longer metaphysical but is now seen to be entirely grammatical:

> By "possible" we mean logically possible. Where is the phenomenon of possibility to be looked for? Only in the symbolism we use. The essence of logical possibility is what is laid down in language. (L35 p.162.)

This logical possibility, which is provided by the grammar of the language, is often characterized in the middle writings as "logical space":

> The place of a word in logical space fixed by grammar is its meaning.... The meaning of a word is given if you describe language by all its rules. All explanations take place inside language. They would only transcend language if they made assertions of fact, which they do not. The meanings of the words are part of language. (L32 pp.61-62.)
>
> Language is space; statements divide space. Language is not contiguous to anything else. We cannot speak of the use of language as opposed to anything else. So in philosophy all that is not gas is grammar. (L32 p.112.)
>
> You can only search in a space. For only in space do you stand in relation to where you are not. (PR p.77.)

Even though this metaphor of "logical space" was dropped in the later writings, it can be a useful device for articulating the connections between logical possibility and grammar. The understanding that meaning must be presupposed if we are to be able to talk sensibly about facts (or any other matters) is formulated in this passage in the notion that language provides all possible "logical space". Language is autonomous in this sense: that there is nothing outside the logical possibilities provided by grammar that could be meaningful at all, since anything outside of grammar could not contradict grammar but would have to be nonsense.

Therefore, if we are going to talk about any aspect of the world,

including the foundations of human knowledge, we can only do our talking within the logical space provided by language. The grammar provided by language must be presupposed. Within the logical space provided by language, however, we can speak of different kinds of logical spaces provided by the different grammars of the words we use. Hence, just as the grammar of our languages of measuring can be said to provide the logical space (or possibilities) of measurement, so the grammar of "hearing" or the grammar of "pain" provides the logical space (or possibilities) of hearing or pain:

> We divide the evidence for the occurrence of a physical event according to the various kinds of such evidence, into the heard, seen, measured, etc., and see that in each of these taken singly there is a formal element of order, which we can call space. (PR p.140.)

> 'I haven't got stomach-ache' may be compared to the proposition 'These apples cost nothing'. The point is that they don't cost any money, not that they don't cost any snow or any trouble. The zero is the zero point of one scale.... The proposition presupposes the capacity for feeling pain, and this can't be a 'physiological capacity' - for otherwise how would we know what it was the capacity for - it's a logical possibility.... I compare this state with another, it must therefore be comparable with it. It too must be located in pain-space, even if at a different point....
>
> 'The sense consists in the possibility of recognition', but this is a logical possibility. I must be in the space in which what is to be expected is located. (PR pp.110-11.)

When we talk about "not hearing" something, it is the logical space of hearing in which we are located. If we say "I haven't got stomach-ache", we are not yet speaking about "physiological capacities" (although we may later decide to discuss such capacities in relation to pain - that is, we may relate the logical space provided by the grammar of "pain" to the logical space provided by the grammar of physiological talk). However, first we must be located within the logical possibilities provided by the

grammar of "pain": outside of this logical space there is only nonsense. Asking, for example, "What color is your stomach-ache?" or "How rusty are your pains?" takes us outside the grammar of any possible pain talk and cannot give us new facts, but only nonsense.

The epistemological subjectivism of a Descartes or a Nietzsche gives a picture of knowing in terms of an imaginative account which sees what we call "the objective" as a category which is constructed, or created, as Nietzsche says, "within the subjective". It is the picture of visual rays projecting the outer event onto consciousness. But it is a typically metaphysical picture in that it attempts to transcend the logical spaces provided by the respective grammars of "subjectivity" and "objectivity". And it gives us a form of "nonsense" in that the grammar of the word "objectivity" does not allow us to sensibly say that objectivity is constituted "within subjectivity".

The autonomy of ordinary language means that anything we might say about our "subjectivity" is already given in the apriori possibilities provided by grammar. Even though new language games are always coming into existence and old ones dropping out of existence, there is nothing we can say about human subjectivity outside of some language game with which we can talk about subjectivity. In the same way, the "objective" has just as much autonomy as the "subjective", its grammar providing an entirely different "logical space" from that of the grammar of "subjectivity". The language games connected with "objectivity" cannot in any way be reduced to those involving "subjectivity". It is understanding language and the nature of logical possibility which overcomes the point of view of epistemological subjectivism, not an opposing epistemological argument. Just as there is a "pain space" provided by the grammatical possibilities of

the word "pain", so there is "subjective space", the logical space provided by the grammar of the word "subjective", and this is entirely different from "objective" logical space, provided by the grammar of the word "objective". The autonomy of ordinary language allows no grounds whatsoever for the genesis of metaphysical scepticism. Neither super-ordinary doubting nor epistemological subjectivism can get a foothold within ordinary language. Both of these lead to metaphysical scepticism only because they both begin with a metaphysical picture of the human situation. But a step like that taken in relativity theory has also been taken here in philosophy: we are unable to imaginatively "picture" the way the world "ultimately is" (a nonsensical statement to begin with), but must now rely entirely on conceptual understanding which operates in terms, not of pictures, but of logical possibilities.

This understanding of the "subjective" is not behaviorism, nor is it any form of scientism or objectivism. For the autonomy of meaning in ordinary language means that the grammar of "subjectivity" has just as much place, and just as much right, as that of "objectivity" or that of "behavior". Just as epistemological subjectivism tries to assimilate all talk of the objective to a category "within the subjective" so behaviorism tries to do the reverse. It wishes to deny the "autonomy" of the subjective by assimilating this to various categories of behavior. But for Wittgenstein both behaviorism and subjectivism are metaphysical points of view which miss the main point - which is the autonomy of meaning within ordinary language. They each try to equate different "logical spaces". Behaviorism tries to assimilate "subjective space" to "object space". Subjectivism tries to either assimilate from the side of subjective space (which leads to either Idealism or metaphysical scepticism); or it tries to maintain an

ontological difference between the spaces (Cartesian dualism). But no ontological conclusions can be drawn: language-using beings live, so to speak, within "logical space", and any attempt to transcend logical space leads inevitably to nonsense. What bridges the gap between behaviorism and subjectivism (as well as differentiates them) is that they are both parts of grammatical space, just as what bridges the gap between subject and object is "grammar", not some unknowable ontological substratum. For these reasons epistemological subjectivism is a form of "nonsense": it attempts to transcend the possibilities provided by grammar through assimilating the grammar of "objectivity" to that of "subjectivity".

Outside of "grammatical space" there is nothing, that is, nothing that we can talk about, for you can only "search", Wittgenstein says, in relation to where you are not (or in contrast to something else that is not the case). Outside of "grammatical space" nothing is the case, and nothing is not the case. We may have the overwhelming impulse to object, at this point, and try to say something about the significance of our "insides", of our "consciousness". But nothing can be said here.

However, the autonomy of grammar does not exclude a sense in which we might be said to be confronted by great "depths" in this regard, depths which are not part of grammatical space. Such "depths", of course, could only be talked about if they were part of grammatical space (and hence contrastable with something not the case). For this reason anything that one says (including, indeed, the word "depths") will be misleading, and perhaps only a kind of "negative theology" is appropriate if one wishes to point in this direction. Indeed, when Wittgenstein touches on such matters (including his several discussions of "what is true about solipsism" in the later writings), he does use a kind of negative theology (a grammatical

analysis revealing the unsayability of anything transcending grammatical space). And this method has led some to see in his later writings a certain kind of logical or linguistic empiricism which obviates all sense of "depth". But this is mistaken. The autonomy of meaning in ordinary language gives us the limits of what can be said - it does not in any way limit our awareness of the unsayable depths of the world.

iv. The Groundlessness of The Human Situation

Nowhere in our discussion to date have we tried to give a precise or final definition of "metaphysics". The definitions we have used, one might say, are working definitions whose meaning emerged within the context of our various discussions. The reason for this is twofold. First, there is no one precise and clear definition of "metaphysics" but only such meanings as emerge in connection with the language games and philosophical patterns of thought within which the word is used. Secondly, in spite of our attempt to clearly underline some of those themes in Wittgenstein's thinking that do not seem to have been given adequate attention in the secondary literature, the last thing we would wish to do is suggest a new dogmatism. We do not wish to rule out the multiplicity of modes of philosophical thinking, nor the many possible ways of doing certain things that people might wish to continue to call "metaphysics". However what is meant by "metaphysics" cannot now be a knowledge or a factual activity. There may be many ways of satisfying the human urge for "depth" within existence which are not claims for providing a special sort of philosophical

"science". The metaphysical urge in man, the urge for depth, is one of the great characteristics of the human spirit. As Wittgenstein himself said: "Don't think that I despise metaphysics or ridicule it. On the contrary, I regard the great metaphysical writings of the past as among the noblest productions of the human mind".[15] However, if philosophy can be broadly characterized as the drive for clarity about ourselves and our human situation, then any form of metaphysical thinking would want to take into account Wittgenstein's powerful insights into the workings of language and the great danger of confusing factual with grammatical matters. For, as we have tried to show, the implications of such possible confusion are truly immense, and include the way we understand ourselves and the human situation in general.

A seeing clearly of the limits of human knowledge in the way Wittgenstein did, and a desire to avoid entanglement in the net of language, may yet leave us free to pursue "metaphysical" language games of many varieties. These may be engaged in with a view to their aesthetic qualities, or perhaps with a religious motivation. Or perhaps the desire for intellectual wholeness can lead to metaphysical syntheses, or to mythic constructions similar to Nietzsche's attempt to create life-affirming broken myths. One may wish to step out of traditional metaphysics and yet perhaps attempt a phenomenological "fundamental ontology" in the manner of the early Heidegger, or perhaps engage in a form of "originative thinking" as with the later Heidegger. Or one may, in the manner of Blake, engage in the artistic construction of symbolic systems. Nietzsche's insight that a new creative engagement with the phenomena is called for

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15. Quoted by M.O'C. Drury in K.T. Fann, ed., Ludwig Wittgenstein - The Man and His Philosophy (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1967), p.68.

is by no means incompatible with a clear understanding of the limits of language. Indeed, when we drop the traditional metaphysical picture that there is one "reality in itself", one certain "way things are" which imposes its concrete conditions on human life (and to which all our intellectual constructions must conform) then we are liberated into a thinking which can respond to the world, in Professor Kuang-Ming Wu's words, "with a mind that is flexible, evocative, and....metaphorical".[16]

A form of metaphysical thinking can be seen even in the attempt to articulate the general outlines of a "Wittgensteinian world-view", an activity in which Wittgenstein himself rarely engages. Yet such an activity need in no way confuse the distinction between factual and grammatical matters. Indeed, the need for an intellectual synthesis, for seeing the world as an integrated whole, is perhaps fundamental to the human spirit and is certainly fundamental to philosophy. A world view such as Wittgenstein's, which focuses on the presuppositional character of meaning, is perhaps unique in that in attempting to understand the nature of language in this way we are simultaneously trying to understanding ourselves and our activity as language speaking beings. There are certain similarities between this attempt to understand the whole of language through encompassing our own activity in our descriptions and the way Marthinus Versfeld characterizes Plato's view of philosophy, a view which Versfeld calls "metaphysics":

> We may say, then, that metaphysics is the desire and pursuit of the whole. For Plato the pursuit of to ontos on is also the individual's pursuit of himself.... It is a kind of thinking in which the subject himself is involved, and in which

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16. Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play, p.83, See Chapter Four, sec. v.

> he puts himself into question.... The metaphysical urge in man is his incurable urge to sanity, and the root of all communication.[17]

The conclusion here, that the urge to wholeness (and the need to put oneself in question as part of the drive to wholeness) involves the "incurable urge to sanity, and the root of all communication", might well be something that Wittgenstein would affirm. The Wittgensteinian drive to clarity is not merely a clarity about isolate aspects of the human situation but is inseparable from a drive to clarify the whole. Of course Wittgenstein's work proceeded piecemeal, and had to be done bit by bit, continually traversing and re-traversing the grammatical landscape. But his drive, as we have seen, was to become clear about language itself and the human situation in connection with language. Joseph Kockelmans expresses something of this drive (which is perhaps in common between Wittgenstein and Heidegger) when he writes:

> Philosophy is concern for the Whole of meaning and the attempt to bring to light the proper meaning of the different forms of experience within the Whole of meaning.[18] It is concerned with the constitution of meaning as a whole.

But for Wittgenstein a clarity about "the Whole of meaning" also necessarily involves a seeing clearly of the immediate phenomena which are right in front of our eyes. (CV pp.39 & 63.) One might say that clarity about the whole of the human situation and clarity about the immediate phenomena which confront us reciprocally illuminate one another. If this is a manifestation of "the metaphysical urge in man",

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17. In The Nature of Philosophical Inquiry, p.52.

18. In Robert E. Wood, ed., The Future of Metaphysics (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p.245.

then metaphysics in this sense is absolutely fundamental to philosophy and to our humanity.

If the perspicuity with which Wittgenstein sees the human situation can be said to include the idea of the "groundlessness" of that situation (as we have argued), then this understanding can and will be strongly criticized from a traditional metaphysical point of view. One such critic is Stanley Rosen in his book Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay.[19] Rosen argues, drawing on Plato, that there is an "intelligibility" to the world that never changes and forms the grounding for all our reasonings and value judgments. (p.170.) In contrast to this, he argues, both Heidegger and Wittgenstein are "nihilists" in that they are both, as he says of Wittgenstein, "advocating the view, typical of post-Hegelian German philosophy, that man makes meaning, and so that there is no basis, external to human agreement, by which to distinguish sense and nonsense". (pp.10-11.) This view that man "makes" meaning, and there is no extra-linguistic grounding to meaning, Rosen suggests, points to a human situation hanging over an abyss of nothingness, an abyss of the irrational, out of which can come, for example, the most frightful social and political results.[20] However, we have seen that an intellectual understanding of the groundlessness of the human situation (and the impossibility of traditional metaphysics) does not have to lead to the feeling that mankind is hanging over an abyss of irrationality. This understanding can also lead beyond itself to a non-conceptual awareness of inexpressible depths within the phenomena,

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19. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

20. As he argues in Chapter Four. Cf. the discussion of this same issue with regard to Wittgenstein (and contemporary philosophy of science) in D.L. Phillips, Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp.160ff.

depths which some of the great mystical traditions have called "sacred", and the awareness of which contains "all the possible values...we humans can conceive".[21] Rosen wishes to ground value in an objective intelligibility behind the changing phenomena to which, he assumes, human reason can penetrate. But such an objective grounding is, as Nietzsche pointed out, by its very nature a devaluation of the changing phenomena in the face of which we must live our lives. However, if we can come upon a sanctity within the phenomena (which can contain all possible value), then we have not come upon anything "irrational" but, rather, that which is simply non-conceptual and entirely beyond the distinction between rationality and irrationality that operates in everyday life.

The picture of human rationality behind Rosen's book would seem to be that of an abstract intellect capable of penetrating to the grounds of intelligibility and of reflecting those grounds in its thought and behavior. But such a view seems circular in that one would already have to be rational in order to penetrate to the grounds of intelligibility, and one would already have to be rational in order to recognize that intelligibility for what it is. But if we are already rational beings prior to such an investigation, why should we need to discover the grounds of intelligibility in order to be able to act rationally in the first place? The fact is human beings do act rationally, as well as irrationally, and each can be recognized as such. But rational behavior is not an abstract paradigm independent of the concrete situations in which our lives are embedded. Rather, what rational behavior is is inseparable from the circumstances in which the behavior takes place. Rationality involves perception within a

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21. D.T. Suzuki quoted in Schurmann, Meister Eckhart - Mystic and Philosopher, p.221. See the discussion in Chapter Four, sec. v.

concrete situation, assessment of possibilities of response, and appropriate response within a range of possibilities. What may be rational in one situation might be irrational in radically different circumstances. Professor Wu, in his description of Hubert Dreyfus' book What Computers Can't Do, gives just such a description of concrete human rationality in contrast to the abstract "rationality" of the computer:

> ...As long as an act is meaningful only in the light of the (changing) situation, not of the rules by which a computer's "acts" are defined, such rules can never be completed. For the rules must include a ceteris paribus condition, that is, "everything else being equal". And what "everything else" and "equal" mean in any specific situation can never be exhaustively spelled out without a regress, as has been minutely explained by Dreyfus. For the ceteris paribus condition is not merely an annoyance caused by the still incomplete formalization of rules. Rather, the condition indicates a background of everyday living practices, which are the conditions of the possibility of all rulelike activity. In the process of explaining our actions we must sooner or later rely on our everyday practices and simply say, "This is what we, as humans, do". All intelligibility must be traced back to our sense of what we are, which is necessarily, on pain of infinite regress, something we can never explicitly formalize.[22]

There is no exhaustive or definitive spelling out of what intelligibility (or rationality) is because "an act is meaningful", in human life, "only in the light of the (changing) situation". Such a view of rationality gives great significance to the concrete conditions of our lives in a way that does not seem to devalue the particular in favor of abstract generalities. It is a step toward that living fully in the world that Nietzsche saw as a requirement for the overcoming of nihilism. Human rationality cannot be formalized or defined in any final way. It goes deeper than that and is part of what human beings do and are. The language games in which the

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22. Chuang Tzu: World Philosopher at Play, p.52.

word "rational" are used have a thousand overlapping likenesses and similarities as do the language games in which "irrational" is used. And we can, in general, tell the differences between the two.

Abstract logic itself, however important, does not define this sense of "rationality" to which Dreyfus and Professor Wu are pointing. This rationality is something which, as Wu says, is part of our sense of what we are as human beings, and goes much deeper than formalized systems of intelligibility. For even these systems of intelligibility can be used in a non-rational or irrational manner. This is pointed out by N.J. Findlay in his article on "The Rationality of Mysticism": "The appearance of logical contradiction in these [mystical] utterances scares away the men of understanding, but men of sense know that logic will do whatever one really wants it to do."[23] Logic, and formalized systems of intelligibility, can be used or misused by a rationality which goes much deeper than these and which is inseparable from our sense of ourselves as human beings.

Rather than standing in need of an intelligibility "independent of human agreement" which lies behind the phenomena, it may be that human rationality will become more fully manifest if the metaphysical picture is dropped altogether. At the end of Chapter Nine we suggested that the pervasive human sickness of resentment might be overcome if we dropped the metaphysical picture, connected with the idea of the Cartesian ego, and came upon a realization of "what is true about solipsism". It may be that this collective view of ourselves as metaphysically private egos, just insofar as it fosters resentment, murderous competition, and contempt of

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23. In John Howie & Thomas Buford, eds., Contemporary Studies in Philosophical Idealism (Cape Cod: Claude Stark Publisher, 1975), p.137.

other persons, to that extent also inhibits human rationality and promotes the irrational. At the very least such a non-conceptual awareness of the depths of existence would neither hinder, nor enhance, the intelligibility of our lives. But in all likelihood such an awareness would enhance rationality by freeing us from the powerful irrational forces generated by the illusion of the ego. In a similar way, Wittgenstein's idea of the groundlessness of the human situation would seem to in no way interfere with the operation of human rationality, whether philosophical or everyday. However, this idea, as we suggested, may point beyond all ideas to the possibility of realization of such a non-conceptual awareness. In that case, once again, rationality might be enhanced through freeing us from those dangerous passions that can be induced by grammatical illusions. Let us look, then, more closely at this idea of "groundlessness" and the way in which it might point towards such a non-conceptual awareness transcending the distinction between rationality and irrationality.

When we introduced the notion of "groundlessness" in Chapter Six, we emphasized that Wittgenstein seems to recognize that his repeated use of this idea with reference to the whole of language was itself an unusual and , indeed, a "metaphysical" use of the word (except, of course, that there is no confusion here of fact and grammar). For the notion of "groundlessness" may conjure up a picture of something missing, of a kind of metaphysical emptiness, just as the idea of a "grounding" for the whole of language may conjure up the picture of a reality-in-itself (of a ground beyond and behind ordinary grounds and everyday meanings of the word "ground"). Wittgenstein seems to emphasize the word "groundless" or its synonyms in his writings in order to emphasize the way in which the

character of his thinking is diametrically opposed to the search for grounds which characterizes the Western philosophical tradition, including his own Tractatus. But ultimately he recognizes, we saw, that it makes no sense to say either that language is supported or unsupported. (L32 p.104.) He simply wishes to insist that "the rules of grammar are not a deduction from the nature of reality". (L32 p.104.) If, however, we have taken the "step like the one taken in relativity theory" (OC 305), then we realize that the pictorial imagination is useless in connection with our attempts to understand the nature of the world or of human consciousness. And just as the imaginative picture of knowing can be entirely misleading and does not get us any closer to understanding knowledge (OC 90), so the imaginative picture of objects requiring a ground functions like the pre-Copernican argument that the world could not be spherical since people on the underside would always be falling off. The requirement of a ground is simply a metaphysical picture that must be dropped and superceded by conceptual understanding, just as the idea of "groundlessness" involves another metaphysical metaphor designed perhaps to initiate a new way of thinking that is diametrically opposed to the old picture. But ultimately it should be realized that language (and the human situation) is neither grounded nor groundless, neither supported, nor unsupported.

By emphasizing that the human situation is "groundless", we have also wished (in the spirit of Nietzsche) to point beyond that aspect of nihilism which undermines the integrity of the phenomena by looking for something behind the phenomena which functions as their ground. Like Goethe, Wittgenstein wished to take the phenomena at face value, not to "penetrate" them in one way or another. (PI 90.) Recognition of the autonomy of the everyday is an essential requirement for the overcoming

of nihilism as Nietzsche understood it. In addition to this, the metaphor of "groundlessness" can help refocus that aspect of "the metaphysical urge in man" which looks beyond the world to discover the meaning and value of human life; it is that metaphysical urge which may see no meaning or depth in the immediate phenomena and which may look behind them for an indication of "spiritual depth" to existence. But if it becomes clear that there is nothing behind the phenomena, so to speak, and that everything is in place just as it is (that nothing is missing, not human rationality, not the possibility of religion, not genuine ethical behavior, and not the possibility of genuine knowledge) then it also may be that the metaphysical urge in man can be refocused in such a way as to illuminate the spiritual depths to existence which are directly in front of our eyes. As we have seen in connection with Mahayana Buddhism, for example, the highest blessedness and salvation can be identical with the world of becoming, birth, and death.[24] The idea of a groundless human situation can be helpful in pointing beyond nihilism in this way as well. For as Nietzsche made clear, one of the greatest sources of nihilism in the modern world was the feeling of the meaningless and valuelessness of existence that invaded our consciousness after the waning of traditional religion when we were left in a totally secularized and seemingly one-dimensional world. But as we have seen, Wittgenstein's world is by no means one-dimensional: it has the character of great depth, and there are many passages in his writings pointing to this depth.

However, this remains an aspect of Wittgenstein which is extremely difficult to indicate in any account of his "world-view". One can describe

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24. See Chapter Four, sec. v, and e.g. Humphreys, The Wisdom of Buddhism, p.127.

the general outlines of a world view, but what is non-conceptual and inexpressible cannot be described. The "mystical" in this sense is not and cannot be part of a "point of view", for it includes no object or reality towards which one might adopt a perspective. Hence, there can be no relativism, no agreement and disagreement in this connection. The incomparable and inexpressible literally cannot be compared nor expressed. What we have called the "depth" to Wittgenstein's world is not part of a point of view which he may have adopted on this or that philosophical issue. We are moving here in an entirely different dimension. However, since Wittgenstein himself characterized awareness of "what is true about solipsism" as "of enormous importance" (MLN p.311), it would seem that any general account of his philosophy should at least try to point in this direction.

There are several excellent general accounts of Wittgenstein's philosophy that have been published, but these often omit a sense of this extremely important aspect of Wittgenstein's sensibility. One such general account is Ernst Konrad Specht's book on The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy.[25] Specht sees Wittgenstein's discussion of the impossibility of a private language and his other writings connected with solipsism (p.11) as merely the attempt to deal with one more philosophical problem - "the question about the reality of other people":

> Wittgenstein seeks to prove that there cannot be a private language, but that all talk about mental states is from the beginning bound up with our external modes of behaviour, but it does not consist exclusively in the description of these modes of behaviour. From this position Wittgenstein throws light on the problem of solipsism: the question about the reality of other people. Other people are revealed to us

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25. D.E. Walford, tr., (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969).

> simultaneously with our intersubjective language. Their reality is a fact rooted in our language and in our forms of life, neither requiring nor admitting a justification. (p.22.)

However, we have seen that Wittgenstein wished to dissolve traditional philosophical questions, not solve them. Perhaps "the question about the reality of other people" is only a question, only a philosophical problem to be solved, from the point of view of the isolated Cartesian self. If one comes upon an entirely "new way of thinking", free of grammatical confusions, and perhaps concomitant with an awareness of "what is true about solipsism", then this question becomes a non-question. Wittgenstein isn't trying to solve a philosophical problem, he is trying to "shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle".[26] If "whatever consciousness (there is) spreads over all human bodies", and we are no longer tempted to speak of "my consciousness and his consciousness" (LPE p.282), then there is no question about the reality of other people. The question is seen merely to be the reflection of grammatical confusion.[27]

In spite of this tendency to interpret Wittgenstein's writings within traditional philosophical categories, Specht does have an essential insight into the significance of Wittgenstein's philosophical reflections. He gives a name to Wittgenstein's view that there is no extra-linguistic grounding for

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26. PI 309. For the connection with "what is true about solipsism" see LPE p.300.

27. Although Wittgenstein's formulation here points to something which illustrates the point being made, we will see below that it is only a preliminary (and hence slightly misleading) formulation in that it omits the absolutely essential idea of the "emptiness" of all things, including selves. The latter is found, for example, in the Prajnaparamita Sutra: "Consciousness is void and void is consciousness; void does not differ from consciousness, consciousness does not differ from void. Whatever is consciousness that is void...whatever is void, that is consciousness." Quoted in Thomas Merton, Mystics & Zen Masters (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1967), p.241.

our categories by calling it "a linguistic "Constitution Theory", in which language is not derived from the world of objects but is somehow involved in the construction of objects". (p.25.) And he gives at least a token recognition to Wittgenstein's desire to step out of metaphysics by saying that Wittgenstein held an "ontological neutrality": "he implicitly presupposes a very wide concept of object involving no preliminary ontological decision". (p.87.) Specht sums up this "constitution theory of objects" in the following way:

> Our investigations into the construction and function of language-games have now shown the following: a language-game is a totality in which linguistic sign, object and human activity constitute an indissoluble unity, so that an object-constitution is undertaken simultaneously with the drawing up of the rules of the linguistic sign. The rules of the language-game, its grammar, simultaneously determines both the use of the linguistic sign and the essential features of the object. Wittgenstein expresses it thus: "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is." (P.I. 373)....
>
> In Wittgenstein...we are concerned with a constitution theory in which the constitution of objects is effected within and by means of the language or the linguistic actions of man; the ontological structure of the object is fixed in the spontaneous drawing up of a language-game simultaneously with a specific sign usage. (pp.184-85.)

These paragraphs capture the essential unity of language, human action, and world which must be presupposed, prior to all questions of truth or falsity, if meaningful discussion of the facts is to be possible. But in spite of this important insight, Specht fails to see that Wittgenstein is attempting to drop the metaphysical picture (of an in-itself to things) altogether. He criticizes Wittgenstein for having an unduly restrictive conception of the range of "philosophical problems" without taking Wittgenstein at his word that the "philosophical problems" are really a matter of grammatical confusions. Hence, he is able to propose a more "systematic" investigation of the sphere of objects in order to make

progress with regard to the question of exactly what an object is and how they are related to language:

> This conception of the nature and genesis of philosophical problems is of course very one-sided, because Wittgenstein never considered the idea of a systematic investigation of language-games and the objectivity constituted in them. As a result he fails to notice all those problems, for instance, which pose themselves in the systematic investigation of a sphere of objects and which are by no means insoluble. (p.188.)

And in the same critical spirit Specht discusses the problem of the origins of language, the question "how do language-games first arise?", and says that "this is a problem that every constitution theory is confronted with". (p.182.) He continues:

> These theories start at a certain level of object-articulation and from this position they explain the relation of spontaneity and receptivity. They then transfer the results obtained to the lowest level and thus eventually arrive at a completely unarticulated "primitive matter", where one can no longer speak even of objects or of something.
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> Even Wittgenstein does not satisfactorily solve this problem. It is true that he speaks of the facts of nature and of the physiological data upon which all drawing up of language-games must rest, but they too, of course, are only revealed linguistically.
>
> One probably has to assume that Wittgenstein presupposed a certain strata of data pre-existing language, but that he held it for impossible to determine these data from our linguistic level. (p.182.)

With this interpretation of Wittgenstein we are once more involved in the metaphysical picture, the picture of a reality-in-itself or "a strata of data pre-existing language" which involves us in the danger of that metaphysical scepticism which Nietzsche saw clearly the need to overcome. We are back in the scepticism and relativism of the modern world which sees every philosophy and every world-view as another perspective on a single reality that is there but which we are never quite able to reach. We have

seen that Wittgenstein says repeatedly that he is putting forward no theories and that philosophy is not a factual activity but a purely apriori descriptive one. Yet Specht turns Wittgenstein's presuppositionalism into a "constitution theory" and speaks as if the philosopher were a kind of scientist of language, working on theories in order to solve "problems" such as explaining the relation between "objects" as they appear in language and the "strata of data pre-existing language".

In contrast to this way of assimilating Wittgenstein to traditional philosophical categories, the way of looking at Wittgenstein suggested by Hatab and Brenner in their article "Heidegger and Wittgenstein"[28] is much closer to the mark. They point out some parallels between Wittgenstein's views in this regard and Heidegger's notion that when we come to the origins of language we move out of the realm of "problem" into a sense of "mystery" connected with "the primordial presence of Being":

> In order to learn, the child must react to the teaching in a certain way.... And he must react to the training he is given in such a way that his elders respond to what he does as a case of "going on in the same way." This is the "agreement in judgment and forms of life" that makes language possible (PI 241-42).
>
> This fundamental agreement is, for Wittgenstein, a proto-phenomenon...something to be described, not explained. For here an "explanation" (of, e.g., the fact that we agree in calling A and B shades of the same color) will simply reintroduce the same problem at another level (e.g.: "We agree because we go by the same rule;" "But what explains the fact that we are in harmony about how to apply the rule?...")
>
> Thus, Wittgenstein would agree with Erickson that there is a sense in which the transition to peculiarly human (linguistic) modes of behavior must remain a mystery. Indeed Wittgenstein's proto-phenomenal "agreement in reactions" is comparable, we suggest, to what Heidegger called logos: that inexplicable, pre-ratiocinative, "gathering" which is at once

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28. Lawrence J. Hatab and William Brenner in International Studies in Philosophy, XV, 3, 1983, pp.25-43.

> language and the primordial presence of Being....
>
> Heidegger and Wittgenstein share a sense of irreducible mystery surrounding language - a mystery disclosed in the ultimately unsatisfying character of all explanations and definitions in language. (pp.32-33.)

To think in terms of the explanatory picture that there "must" be a strata of data pre-existing language is to miss that at the borderline of language there is a transition to a completely different dimension from that in which explanations take place. It is not that our explanations fail us and we are left with an unknowable reality in itself. Rather, as Hatab and Brenner suggest, the unsatisfying character of all explanations "discloses" something: it discloses in Heidegger's language "primordial presence", a "presence" in which there is nothing to explain and no theories to be made precisely because we are in a completely different dimension from all explaining and theorizing.

Wittgenstein is giving no theories, not only because any theoretical issues could be handled better by some form of science, but because any "theory" about the relation of language to the world would involve more metaphysics and epistemology. But the metaphysical picture that there "must be" such a relation is itself another grammatical confusion. In Chapter Six we examined the foundations of his later thought in detail in order to make this clear. There we saw him continually restate in one form or another his insight that language has no "ground" and that metaphysical thinking must be dropped:

> We try to cover up the beginning of our reasoning; but actually reasoning never started. (L32 p.104.)
>
> It is nonsense to ask "What would it be like if I did not understand language?" (L32 p.114.)
>
> What is spoken can only be explained in language, and so in this sense language itself cannot be explained. (PG p.40.)

> I must begin with the distinction between sense and nonsense.... I cannot give it a foundation. (PG pp.126-27.)
>
> The grammar remains a free-floating calculus which can only be extended and never supported. (PG p.313.)
>
> You can't get behind the rules, because there isn't any behind. (PG p.244.)

Wittgenstein does not say that we are unable to get to the "pre-existing data" which are behind the rules of language. He says there "isn't any behind" to language. It is the metaphysical picture on which the human imagination has often been fixated which insists that there must be a behind or a ground in a way similar to the everyday notion that for an object to remain standing it must be supported by some "ground". When we come to the borderline of language we move beyond what can be pictured into the realm of what Heidegger calls "mystery".

This is one of the things that the metaphor of "the groundlessness of the human situation" attempts to convey. It is not that there is a hidden metaphysical ground that we cannot know; rather, there is no ground. "A picture held us captive", Wittgenstein says, "And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably". (PI 115.) The idea of an in-itself is just such a picture. But if we take a step in philosophy akin to that taken in relativity theory we will realize that no imaginative pictures of the human situation are possible. We are free of being held captive by those pictures generated by our grammar and are now also free to follow the dictates of conceptual understanding. And, finally, we are perhaps then free to become open to the possibility of a non-conceptual awareness. Explanations come to an end in an ungrounded way of acting (OC 110), but beneath that way of acting there are not hidden or unknowable realities: there is nothing beneath that way of acting:

> What counts as a reason for an assumption can be given a priori and determines a calculus, a system of transitions. But if we are asked now for a reason for the calculus itself, we see that there are none....
>
> A turn of phrase which masks the beginning of the chain of reasons. (The creator as the explanation at the beginning of the world). (PG pp.110-11.)

Wittgenstein does not say that there are unknown or unknowable reasons for the calculus itself, he says there are no reasons for it. It is logically the same, this passage points out, as that question which looks for an explanation for the existence of the world. There is no explanation for the existence of the world. There is nothing behind the world.[29] This requirement of an explanation is itself perhaps due to a metaphysical picture which holds us captive.

A metaphor drawn from Madhyamika Buddhism may be illuminating in this connection: the notion of "emptiness".[30] It can be said that for Wittgenstein the fullness and immediacy of the phenomena which confront

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29. "God", in much religion, certainly does not function in the role of an "explanation" for the world. Compare Wittgenstein's remark that "When someone who believes in God looks around him and asks "Where did everything I see come from?"...he is not asking for a (causal) explanation.... He is expressing an attitude toward all explanations." (ROC p.58.)

Hatab and Brenner characterize Wittgenstein's attitude to explanations in the following way: "If we place a phenomenon in an explanatory system, whether scientific or metaphysical, our desire for explanation may persist, for something must always remain unexplained, given.... The "Why?", the Question, is therefore replaced by the Exclamation ("How extraordinary that the world should exist!").... The attitude, namely, that all explanations (whether scientific or metaphysical) are ultimately unsatisfying. This seems to have been Wittgenstein's own lifelong attitude." ("Heidegger and Wittgenstein", Ibid., p.28.).

30. For some background in connection with this term see the article by Hsueh-Li-Cheng, "Nagarjuna, Kant and Wittgenstein: The San-Lun Madhyamika Exposition of Emptiness" in Religious Studies, Mr 81, 17,67-85. Contrary to what we are now suggesting, Cheng argues that the notion of "emptiness" is not applicable to Wittgenstein's philosophy.

us (which collectively we call "the world") is simultaneously an emptiness. There is nothing behind the phenomena however overwhelmingly present they might be, precisely because they are also "empty". To put this in the manner of Nagarjuna, reality-in-itself, that is the world, neither exists nor does not exist.[31] This is not an explanation but a pointing to something of which Wittgenstein seems to have been aware. This is why Wittgenstein can say there is nothing behind the rules, that language cannot be explained, that our reasoning never started, etc. Language cannot be explained because there is no explanation. All explanations take place within language. But the fullness itself is simultaneously an emptiness: there is nothing behind the fullness. The phenomena are not appearances of anything more basic, nor any reality in itself. What we are calling the "depths" of the phenomena neither exists, nor does not exist. These depths are overwhelmingly present, yet they are empty. One of the ways that this can be pointed to is through the idea of "groundlessness": which ultimately means, in this connection, neither grounded, nor ungrounded.

Here Wittgenstein's consistent theme that "explanations come to an end somewhere" can take on a new meaning. Meaning, indeed, must be presupposed before we can begin to theorize or explain anything at all. But insofar as we are confronted with the sheer overwhelming presence of the world, there is nothing to explain. The sheer presence of the world, as "what is true about solipsism", is too close to be gotten into language. There is only that fullness-emptiness, prior to language, which neither exists nor does not exist. The attitude of wanting to explain, like the

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31. See Cheng, p.67ff, also Thomas, Op.Cit. p.225. For an exposition of the Buddhist doctrine of fullness-emptiness, see Shizuteru, Op.Cit., pp.9-37. See also the literature in the bibliography connected with "Wittgenstein and Zen" or "Wittgenstein and Mysticism".

metaphysical picture of an in-itself which often accompanies it, has already missed this sense of presence. Wittgenstein, in one of his many criticisms of this attitude, exclaims, "Why don't we just leave explaining alone?" (Z 614.) Part of his criticism of this attitude is that it forever misses that fullness-emptiness of the world which is sufficient unto itself. There is nothing here to explain and nothing can be explained. The human situation is groundless in this sense. We are in the presence of the fullness-emptiness of the world and we ourselves (where the unsayable depths of consciousness are concerned) are empty and without a grounding. At this level no explanations are possible, nor desired anymore. Language comes to a standstill in the emptiness, and the sufficiency, of the non-conceptual present.

v. "Truth" - An Epilogue

Our study of the question of "truth" in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein has led to several significant, perhaps even surprising, results. It has made it clear that "truth" only functions meaningfully within the human language games and practices in which it is embedded. The word "truth", therefore, like the word "reality" or the word "mind", has no extraordinary status which would permit it to be prescinded from ordinary discourse in such a way as to allow a general theory which provided a criterion of truth or falsity for all such discourse. The word "truth" has a multiplicity of meanings in language and a grammar which nearly always (except perhaps in certain religious language games) opposes it to an antithesis, the "false". Its grammar intersects as will with the grammars of the words "proposition", "agreement with reality", "usefulness", "coherence", and perhaps many other words. But in no case is its grammar, that is the

rules for its use in various language games, identical with that of any of these words. For this reason there are many perfectly legitimate senses of the word "truth", and any "criterion of truth" would emerge in terms of the language game and the context in which the word is being used. The criterion of truth in a physics lab would be different from the criterion of truth in a courtroom, although there would certainly be overlapping similarities and differences between these uses that would allow us to meaningfully say they are both concerned with "truth". But there is no "real" definition to the concepts we use, for there is no "essence" to the world, nor to any aspect of it. As Wittgenstein puts it: "Whenever we try to talk about the essence of the world we talk nonsense." (L32 p.110.)

What this means is that ordinary language is autonomous in a way perhaps hitherto unrecognized in the philosophical tradition. Meaning is constituted in ordinary language and has a presuppositional status in that there is no way to speak about "facts", or "truth", or "reality" unless there is a grammatical context already in place that gives meaning to the discussion. New language games can always come into existence, but these do not come into existence because human beings have penetrated to a new level of pre-existing ontological data. Rather, such new games are as ontologically "groundless" as the older ones which might be dropped or replaced. We cannot sensibly ask for the grounds of meaning in the world because our language must already have meaning in order to ask such a question. Such questions only result in our tracing around the outline of that very grammar presupposed in asking the question. The presuppositional status of meaning closes the hermeneutical circle in this way. And to the extent that there can be no pointing to a transcendental grounding for grammar, we may call our grammar "arbitrary":

> Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary. (PG p.184.)

But to call grammar "arbitrary" in this way is not to indicate any sort of relativism or scepticism but only to point to the senselessness of a metaphysical grounding for that grammar. The autonomy of meaning as constituted in ordinary language takes us out of any metaphysical scepticism or relativism. And ordinary scepticism and relativism are nothing to be feared but rather essential to the quest for clear reasoning, knowledge, and understanding. Within the autonomy of ordinary language the words "certainty", "knowledge", and "truth" have just as much meaning, and just a significant center of gravity, as do the words "doubt", "scepticism", and "relativism".

For this reason it is clear that the notion of "metaphysical truth" is a confusion if the word "truth" in this phrase is intended in a factual sense. The idea of a reality outside of our language games which our formulations might truly describe involves a confusion of factual matters with apriori grammatical ones. This idea involves a metaphysical and imaginative picture which a conceptual understanding of the logic of language exposes as such. However, our study of the many ways in which factual and experiential propositions can be taken up into the symbolism of the language and given an apriori grammatical status makes clear the tremendous difficulties involved in distinguishing factual from conceptual matters in many particular cases. And the possibility that certain experiential propositions may oscillate between a factual and an apriori status means that we must be continually on our guard not to involve ourselves in new metaphysical illusions.

Just as the idea of "metaphysical truth" (truth about reality in itself) taken in a factual way involves grammatical confusion, so Nietzsche's idea that "there is no truth" involves the same misunderstanding of the autonomy of meaning within language. Grammatically the statement is an impossible combination of words. For a truth claim is made that seems to deny all truth claims. The reason for this paradox is that the denial of "truth" here is used in a typically metaphysical way, without an antithesis. To say that "All is false" is not to realize that the grammars of the words "true" and "false" intersect with one another and are dependent on one another. For there to be falsity, there must be truth, and for their to be truth, there must also be illusion. With the recognition of the autonomy of ordinary language, metaphysical scepticism as a nihilistic point of view is overcome. "Truth" is reestablished, no longer as a metaphysical ultimate, but still as a meaningful and precious possession of the human project.

Our critical analysis of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism led us to identify two roots of that scepticism, related to one another, and each involving a form of metaphysical thinking. The first source of the conclusion that "there is no truth" involves a super-ordinary doubting similar to Descartes' methodology in the First Meditation. In order to find any item acceptable as genuine knowledge, this super-ordinary doubting requires a super-ordinary certainty which transcends the bounds of everyday factual language and makes the requirements of knowledge metaphysical ones. This super-ordinary doubting refuses to accept the everyday certainties in which our lives are immersed (as an unquestioned context for meaningful knowing) and calls these certainties into question by asking questions like "How do I know these are my two hands?" As we have

seen, this super-ordinary doubting has not understood the presuppositional status of the everyday certainties: that these certainties have a linguistic role, intertwined with everyday language games, which puts them in the position of providing a meaningful context for all questions of doubt, truth, or falsity. To try to stand outside this context is to try to transcend the presuppositions of meaning; it is the attempt to ask a meaningful question outside of meaning. Doubt gradually loses its sense here and becomes meaningless. We are involved in a metaphysical doubting where the normal antithesis of doubt, namely certainty, is not allowed to operate. We are trying to ask a question where no questions can be asked.

The second source of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism again involved a Cartesian point of view: it involved a picture of the human being as a private subjectivity whose contact with the "external world" is only through images constituted within that subjectivity from stimuli supposedly emanating from "outside". Once we begin with this picture, and once we think of knowledge as something constituted within such subjectivities, we seem to be faced with an insurmountable barrier between ourselves and the possibility of any genuine contact with an "external world" of which we would like to have knowledge. For whatever the stimuli (whether sight, hearing, touch, etc.), we are aware that these create in us only more subjective images, and that there is no way to compare the image directly with "external reality" to decide upon its truth. Indeed, since there is no way to transcend this subjectivity (that isn't simply more subjective imaging), we can never even know whether such an "external reality" exists. We are in danger of traditional solipsism, the danger that wreaked havoc with Descartes' attempt to lay the foundations of genuine knowledge in the Meditations. We are also in

danger of Nietzsche's metaphysical scepticism, of the idea that all knowing involves only the perspectives formed within a human subjectivity, and of the impossibility of ever transcending that subjectivity in a way that is not merely the formation of additional subjective perspectives.

Recognition of the autonomy of meaning within ordinary language dissolves the confusions involved in metaphysical scepticism and can dissolve the root problem of the Cartesian picture of human beings as private subjective egos. For outside of ordinary language no questions can be asked and nothing can be said, and within ordinary language human beings are not private subjective egos but fully part of a public world the meanings of which are constituted in language. "Privacy" here has a meaning in contradistinction to what is not private. Privacy is only ordinary privacy and it can be seen that the seeming necessary privacy of the subjective ego involves a metaphysical picture which has no antithesis: there is nothing public in this Cartesian world, only ever further private images. The word "I", like the words "mind" and "subjectivity", is a notation in a public language the meaning of which is generated through its use in various language games. Even if the use of such words involves some form of reference, it is a reference within the ordinary public world, not a reference to something metaphysically transcending that world.

To speak of something transcending the public world of meaning is not to speak of something unknowable or metaphysically hidden, it is to speak nonsense. Beyond the public world there is only silence. Even the attempt to point to "what is true about solipsism" must terminate in silence. What is inexpressible may confront us with overwhelming intensity. However, "it is not a something, but not a nothing either!". (PI 304.) There are no realities in themselves that are metaphysically hidden. There is no

ultimate "truth" to which we can never attain. Perhaps the pervasive phenomenon of "resentment", which Nietzsche said must be dissolved if we are to move beyond nihilism, could not even get a foothold in human life if people began to live in the face of this inexpressible silence: within, so to speak, the immediacy of the timeless present.

The autonomy of meaning within ordinary language means that persons, like truth, are directly accessible. Neither metaphysical scepticism, super-ordinary doubting, nor the picture of private subjectivity can get a foothold where ordinary language is concerned. Getting clear about language in this way can lead beyond nihilism in a way that Nietzsche thought was essential: it can restore the integrity of the everyday world, and it can reinstate the autonomy and integrity of our language games involving "truth". Both the idea of a "metaphysical truth" and the idea of a "metaphysical scepticism" call into question the autonomy and integrity of the everyday. But the integrity of the phenomena are restored, not through any new discoveries, but from getting clear about what has been in front of our eyes all along.

It should be clear, however, that the fact that Wittgenstein's philosophical descriptions point to a restoration of the integrity of ordinary truth, while simultaneously indicating the confusion behind the idea of "metaphysical truth", in no way calls into question the possibility of what Nietzsche called "creating truth". If Nietzsche's idea of "Dionysian" or "artistic" truth can be linked simply with the language and forms of life that might result from a transfigured human relation to existence - and separated from the metaphysical scepticism that it was conceived to overcome - then there would seem to be no harm, from a Wittgensteinian point of view, in speaking of the possibility of "creating truth". The way

people talk about the world and the kind of language activities in which they engage has its roots, not in the character of the world, but in human action. (OC 110.) "In the beginning was the deed", Wittgenstein continually affirms, and if creativity can be seen as one of the fundamental wellsprings of human action, then the possibility of totally new language games using the word "truth" in entirely new ways is clear. "Truth", in this sense, would not be created by an individual, even a superhumanly creative individual (unless, of course, people collectively adopted a way of speaking initiated by such an individual). Yet Wittgenstein not only recognizes the possibility of the development of entirely new ways of speaking, he recognizes that a creative few may initiate such changes:

> Human beings are deeply embedded in philosophical - i.e. grammatical confusions. Freeing them from these presupposes tearing them away from the enormous number of connecting links that hold them fast. A sort of rearrangement of the whole of their language is needed.- But of course that language has developed the way it has because some human beings felt - and still feel - inclined to think that way. So the tearing away will succeed only with those in whose life there already is an instinctive revolt against the language in question and not with those whose whole instinct is for life in the very herd which created that language as its proper expression.[32]

When Nietzsche spoke of the creative power within human existence as a transforming potentiality that can lead to entirely new values, and when he spoke of a transformed mode of being-in-the-world as expressing new and hitherto unheard of truths, he was giving a symbolic rendering to what we called the "eschatological" potentialities within human life. Wittgenstein's pointing to the possibility of a "rearrangement of the whole"

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32. Quoted by G.H. von Wright in Brian McGuinness, ed., Wittgenstein and His Times (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.113.

of language can also be termed "eschatological" in this sense. Rearrangement of all our ways of speaking could only be connected with new and unheard of forms of life. For example, Wittgenstein says that "the word 'I' belongs to those words that can be eliminated from language". (VC p.49.) What would it be like if there was no such word in our language and none felt to be needed? A completely new form of life, and completely new kinds of "truth", might be involved. Such a revalued way of thinking and speaking might well reflect a transfigured mode of being human, one, perhaps, in which sanctity and integrity would be found, for the first time, in everyday living and in the immediate phenomena.

When the idea of a certain "way things are" that imposes its concrete conditions on human life is called into question, the primacy of human action, and the possibility of human action, are raised to a higher level. In both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein action is seen to be more fundamental than any supposed realities in themselves. In both, we have a sense of the eschatological potentialities within human existence. Just because "truth" has no final essence or definition, one might say, and just because of the autonomy of the ordinary language games in which it functions, the possibility of the creation of "new truths" remains open for human beings. This can indeed be called "creating truth", yet perhaps such an eschatological openness into the future requires a concomitant openness at the heart of the human relation to existence. By dropping the "being" standpoint and the picture of a tyrannical "in-itself" assumed to lie, either knowably or unknowably, behind the phenomena, human beings may come (as Nietzsche suggested in his metaphors of the "alchemist" or the "artist-child") into a creative engagement with the phenomena open to the eschatological potentialities within the everyday. The primacy of human

action, therefore, is by no means the primacy of the human will, but rather action in a mode characterized by openness and response, a creative "play" in which the giveness of the phenomena becomes an integral part of the very possibility of genuine action.

There is another very important sense of the word "truth" about which both Wittgenstein and Nietzsche might agree. It is what might be called an "existential" sense of truth, a sense in which the passion for truth, and the ruthless desire to live in terms of the truth, is a higher form of "truth" than any mere correspondence between our propositions and some reality or other. In this sense of the word, "truth" would be a characteristic of persons (a characteristic of their concern, integrity, and desire to live in a certain way) rather than of propositions. Perhaps this sense of the word "truth" would be what Kierkegaard meant by the phrase "subjective truth":

> When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship: if the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.[33]

Our detailed study in Chapter Two of Nietzsche's attitude toward truth, and his passionate life-long concern for truth, indicates that Nietzsche "lived truth" in this existential sense. Perhaps most great men and women know this existential meaning of the word "truth". One finds it in such varied thinkers as Plato, Aristotle (one think's of his remark in the Ethics: Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas), Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, and Nietzsche. It was also found in Wittgenstein:

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33. Robert Bretall, ed., A Kierkegaard Anthology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p.211.

> Wittgenstein's severity was connected, I think, with his passionate love for truth. He was constantly fighting with the deepest philosophical problems. The solution of one problem led to another problem. Wittgenstein was uncompromising; he had to have complete understanding. He drove himself fiercely. His whole being was under a tension. No one at his lectures could fail to perceive that he strained his will, as his intellect, to the utmost. This was one aspect of his absolute, relentless honesty. Primarily, what made him an awesome and even terrible person, both as a teacher and in personal relationships, was his ruthless integrity, which did not spare himself or anyone else.[34]

It can be said, therefore, of both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, that they lived truth, thought truth, and did truth. This is not a sense of the word "truth" which is ancillary to more fundamental senses connected with propositional statements about reality. The autonomy of ordinary language means that this sense of "truth", the sense in which persons rather than propositions can be true or false, is just as genuine within its own language games as any other sense of the word. And as Kierkegaard pointed out, truth in the "objective" sense is always an endless approximation process in terms of which we can never say that we are in complete possession of the truth. But truth as a mode of relationship and concern, truth as a person, is something we are capable of attaining in this life here and now. Rather than have truth as something we can stand outside of and utilize, it is possible to be a person of truth. In his article "Metaphysics in Our Time" Marthinus Versfeld expresses beautifully something of this sense of what we are calling "existential truth":

> Nietzsche remarked: "It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of - namely the confession of its originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious autobiography." This is true in

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34. Malcolm, A Memoir, p.27.

> some respects. But it does not imply that philosophers have always masked or deluded themselves, nor is the process necessarily unconscious. We cannot think about what we are and know, without thinking about when and where we are and know. The only delusion is the claim to an inhuman objectivity, and the hope of prescinding from the situation in which we think and write. In the last analysis it is not philosophies but philosophers who are true or false. Truth is in the last resort a Person.
>
> For if we merely have truth it becomes a utility, to be employed by agents who stand outside of it in determining how to employ it. But the only reason for speaking the truth is the truth of reason itself. Philosophy, as Aristotle said, is useless. It is useless because persons are useless and because God is useless. They cannot be treated as utilities. It belongs to the realm of play rather than of work because it is a gratuitous activity. If philosophy is a gift it is because man and philosophy are entirely gratuitous. There is no purpose beyond persons. And what we are as persons is something we do not know.[35]

Perhaps those language games which speak of truth as a "person", or of "existential truth", may gain precedence in the future from their current usage in isolated philosophical writings. Perhaps at some point people will lose interest in scientific "progress" and the language games involving "propositional truth" may fall into relative disuse. Then truth, like philosophy, may be seen to belong "to the realm of play rather than of work", and Nietzsche's vision of an artistic and playful relation to existence will have been actualized in a world where people, rather than ideas, are true or false.

Perhaps even language games will evolve in which "truth" will mean something more primordial than propositional truth: a "truth" within which we live our lives, but which might not admit of objective representation. The autonomy of ordinary language, and the primacy of action, make such visions possible.

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35. In Joseph Bobik, ed., The Nature of Philosophical Inquiry (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), p.64.

APPENDIX A

KANT'S CHAPTER ON "PHENOMENA AND NOUMENA" IN THE FIRST CRITIQUE

Section "A" of this Appendix gives a general outline of Kant's thinking in this chapter (as we find it in the "B" edition of the Critique) so that it is possible to get a general picture of of his argument and of what are perhaps his final views. Section "B" then compares the broad structuring of each edition of the Critique in order to indicate the major changes made between the two editions. Finally, section "C" focuses on that key part of the chapter (A249-53 = B305-309) where Kant shows great ambiguity about the meaning of the word "noumenon" and where he makes major revisions between the two editions. These changes alone indicate the difficulties faced when reflecting on the distinction between "phenomena and noumena".

A. OUTLINE SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER IN THE "B" EDITION

1. General intent of the chapter.
   a. A summary of the "Analytic". (B295)
   b. Intent: that the understanding comprehend "the limits of its employment". (B297)

2. Review of the reasons why "the categories" can have only empirical and not transcendental employment.
   a. Their only application is to objects of a possible experience. (B298)
   b. The "meaning" of a pure concept is only in relation to an object. (B299-300)
   c. Conclusion after examining some specific categories. (B303)

3. "Noumena" in its positive and negative senses (inserted into the B edition only).
   a. Kant introduces the notion of "noumena" in terms of two senses of the word (which he here doesn't seem to distinguish). (B306)
   b. Distinction between the object in itself as a purely indeterminate concept and as a determinate concept.

(B307)

c. The corresponding distinction between "noumenon" in its positive and negative senses. (B307)
d. The doctrine of sensibility (the "Aesthetic") is likewise the doctrine of noumenon in its negative sense. (B307)
e. Doubtless there are intelligible entities, but our concept of noumenon (negative sense) has nothing to do with these. (B309)

4. The possibility of knowledge of the noumenon.
   a. The negative noumenon as both a "limiting" and a "problematic" concept but still as a "necessary" concept. (B310)
      1) Our understanding extends "problematically" beyond the realm of appearances, allowing us to have an idea of limits to that realm. (B310)
      2) As a limiting concept "noumenon" is bound up necessarily with the limitations of sensibility. (B311)
   b. In this negative concept of a noumenon, our understanding acquires a "negative extension". It is not limited to sensibility but set limits to sensibility. (B312)
   c. But it also sets limits to itself in recognizing that noumena cannot be known through any categories of the understanding. (B312)

5. The Understanding and the Sensibility as inseparable for knowledge.
   a. They can only determine objects in conjunction with one another. (B314)
   b. One basic idea of the Critical Philosophy being that intuitions without concepts are blind and concepts without intuitions are empty. (B314)
   c. If we doubt this, we are challenged to make synthetic judgements by means of the categories alone, for example, with the concepts of "substance" or "cause and effect". That third thing (or necessary intuition) is lacking to carry us beyond our concept to the object. The third thing must be possible experience, and the only possible experience for humans is empirical experience. Thus we can never make a judgement concerning things in themselves or noumena. (B315)
   d. But the concept of noumenon as problematical or negative "leaves open" a place for intelligible objects and serves, "like an empty space", only to define the limitations of our sensibility. (This last being essential to the Critical Philosophy.) (B315)

B. COMPARATIVE STRUCTURING IN THE "A" AND "B" EDITIONS

In the following, the corresponding numberings in the "A" and "B" editions are placed side by side in each column to reveal the segments that were added or omitted in each edition. Major changes were made in three areas, indicated by Roman numerals I, II, and III.

	A EDITION	B EDITION
	236-241	295-300
I	241-242	(omitted in B)
	243-244	301-302
II	245-246	(omitted in B)
	246-248	303-305
III	249-253	305-309 (Omitted in B: only discussion of the transcendental object. Added: full distinction between positive and negative senses of "noumenon".)
	254-260	309-315
	End.	End.

C. TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT AND NOUMENON IN THE "A" EDITION: OMISSION "III" INDICATED ON THE ABOVE CHART[1]

This outline of the discussion in A249-253 will indicate just how problematic the concept of "noumenon" was for Kant. He does not make

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1. Page numbers to Norman Kemp Smith's translation (St. Martins' Press edition) are indicated with the notation "Sm." before the page number. The phrase "Transcendental Object" is abbreviated "T.O.".

fully clear the relation between what he calls "the transcendental object" and the concept of "noumenon", nor does he settle on a univocal definition of the notion of "noumenon" itself. As a result we find Kant struggling with several senses of the word and a resulting ambiguity of meaning. We will indicate these senses parenthetically (within brackets) at the appropriate places in the outline.

1. Noumena are objects of intellectual intuition as opposed to appearances (which are objects of sensuous intuition). (A249, Sm.265-66)
   a. The Transcendental Aesthetic has already established "the objective reality" of noumena.
   b. "For if the senses represent something merely as it appears", then it must be possible that the understanding represent things as they are.

   ["Noumena", sense one: the object of a possible intellectual intuition.]

2. However, this last contradicts the basic assertion of the Critique "that the pure modes of knowledge yielded by our understanding are never anything more than principles of the exposition of appearance, and that even in their a priori application they relate only to the formal possibility of experience". (A250, Sm.267)

3. "It is true that all our representations are referred to some object, but this is only the T.O., i.e. a something = X, "of which we know, and with the present constitution of our understanding can know, nothing whatsoever, but which...can serve only for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition." (A550-51, Sm.268)

4. There is a reason why we are not satisfied with the T.O. alone, but add to the phenomena a noumena "which only the pure understanding can think". This is the doctrine of the Aesthetic which in limiting sensibility to appearance presupposes the things in themselves which are not appearance. This also follows from the very concept of an appearance which indicates (as a concept) a relation to "something in itself, that is, an object independent of sensibility." (A251-52, Sm.268-69)

   ["Noumenon", sense two: the thing behind appearances.]

5. This results in "the concepts of a noumenon. It is not... in any way positive, and is not a determinate knowledge of anything, but signifies only the thought of something in general, in which I abstract from everything that belongs to the form of sensible intuition". (A252, Sm.270)

["Noumenon", sense three: "the thought of something in general". (In what way different from the notion of "transcendental object"?) However, this sense of noumenon, he says, is "empty"]

But, for this noumenon not to be "empty", but to "signify a true object", "I must...have ground for assuming another kind of intuition, different from the sensible in which such an object may be given." However, the possibility of this (though it is impossible for us) has neither been proven nor disproven. Thus it is "still an open question whether the notion of a noumenon is not a mere form of a concept...." (A252, Sm.270)

6. "The object to which I relate appearance in general is the T.O, that is, the completely indeterminate thought of something in general. This cannot be entitled a noumenon; for I know nothing of what it is in itself, and have no concept of it save as merely the object of sensible intuition in general...." (A253, Sm.271)

[So, it might seem that we are left only with a T.O. which is not a noumenon.]

CONCLUSION - In both Editions:

7. However, even though the "objective reality" of this concept cannot in any way be known, it involves no contradiction, and is "at the same time connected with other modes of knowledge that involve given concepts which it serves to limit". (A254-55 = B310-11, Sm.271-72)

[Therefore, there is a fourth sense: "noumenon" as "a limiting concept".]

It is "problematic" and is a "limiting concept" "which is bound up with the limitation of sensibility":

"...The concept of a noumenon is necessary, to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge. The remaining things, to which it does not apply, are entitled noumena, in order to show that this knowledge cannot extend its domain over everything which the understanding thinks. But the less we are unable to comprehend how such noumena can be possible, and the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us empty. That is to say, we have an understanding which problematically extends further, but we have no intuition...through which objects outside the field of sensibility can be given...." (A254-55 = B310-11, Sm.271-72)

APPENDIX B

SOLIPSISM AND RELATED THEMES IN THE WITTGENSTEIN CORPUS

The following identifies the locations where "solipsism" (or related themes) are discussed by Wittgenstein. For many of these locations a brief quotation is provided which indicates one of the essential points Wittgenstein is making at that place.

When Wittgenstein actually uses the words "solipsism" or "solipsist", this is indicated by a capital "S1" in parentheses. If the word is used twice, the notation is "S2", three times "S3", etc. The "Related Themes" which are connected with "what is true about solipsism" for Wittgenstein, and which are also referenced here, are as follows: (a) The use of "I", (b) The use of "I am in pain", (c) The notion of "private experience", (d) The notion that "I have sense data", (e) The use of "I have toothache", (f) The idea that "visual space has no owner", (g) The subject of "the ego" and personal identity, (h) The "myth of the inner picture". For "h" (Wittgenstein's reflections on the question of the "inner picture") only a few of the many possible references are given. Also, although the question of "what is true about solipsism" is related, in Wittgenstein's thinking, to questions of ethics and religion, no references are provided here for his additional reflections concerning ethics or religion.

NOTEBOOKS: 1914-1916

1. pp. 49-50 (S1) (cf. p.51 & 52)
2. pp. 73-76
3. pp. 80-89 (S2)

"...In an important sense there is no such thing as the subject...." (p. 50)

TRACTATUS

1. 5.6-5.641 (S2) (cf. 6.4-6.54)

"There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas." (5.631)

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN AND THE VIENNA CIRCLE

1. Section headed "Solipsism" (pp. 45-50)
2. p. 107 (cf. pp. 68-69, 92-93)

WITTGENSTEIN'S LECTURES 1930-1932

1. pp. 80-81
2. p. 112 (S1)

"Mind and matter is a division in experience." (p. 80)

PHILOSOPHICAL REMARKS

1. pp. 84-96 (S2) (cf. pp. 15 & 17)
2. pp. 100-104

"Visual space has essentially no owner." (p. 100)

WITTGENSTEIN'S "LECTURE ON ETHICS"

1. pp. 8-10 (on feeling "absolutely safe")

WITTGENSTEIN'S LECTURES 1932-1935

1. pp. 21-25 (S9) (See also material in "The Yellow Book" (1933-34), only part of which is included here.)
2. pp. 60-63

"What the solipsist wants is not a notation in which the ego has a monopoly, but one in which the ego vanishes." (p. 22)

"I have tried to convince you just the opposite of Descartes' emphasis on the "I"." (p. 63)

NOTES FOR LECTURES ON PRIVATE EXPERIENCE

1. pp. 275-320 (all 45 pages) (S4)

"The idea of an ego inhabiting a body to be abolished." (p. 282)

MOORE'S LECTURE NOTES: 1930-1933

1. pp. 306-312 (S8)

"...No ego is involved in thinking or in having toothache." (p. 309)

THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS

1. pp. 6-8
2. pp. 57-74 (all 17 pages) (S14)
3. pp. 178-179 (cf. pp. 174-75)

"I can give you no agent that thinks." (p. 6)

ZETTEL

1. #s 401-402
2. #s 542-560

REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY (VOL. I)

1. #s 299-314 (cf. #s 359 & 378)
2. #s 559-586
3. #s 809-824
4. #s 938-939 (cf. # 1089)

REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY (VOL. II)

1. #s 109-116
2. See also the many sections in this volume on "thinking and understanding" as not being "inner processes".
3. #s 557-570
4. (cf. #s 586, 642-650, 662-668, 715-719)

"...One mustn't allow oneself to be deceived by the myth of the inner picture." (# 109)

""I cannot know what is going on in him" is above all a picture." (# 569)

REMARKS ON COLOUR

1. p. 13
2. p. 33
3. pp. 57-58
4. p. 60

PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

1. # 24 (S1)
2. #s 243-317 (on the question of "private experience")
3. #s 375-428 (includes discussions of "private language" and "the grammar of the word "I"") (S2)
4. pp. 220-224 (contra "the picture of an inner process")

"...The visual room cannot have any owner." (# 398)

""I am in pain"... Now in saying this I don't name any person." (# 404)

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