WITTGENSTEIN AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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SUMMARY

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The thesis consists of seven chapters, the first six give an analysis of Wittgenstein's philosophy with the consequences this has for religious belief and Chapter Seven suggests an alternative to Wittgensteinianism. Chapter One shows that it is necessary to understand the cultural milieu of Vienna from 1900-1918 if the point of the Tractatus is to be grasped, which is the separation of the factual from the ethico-religious spheres. A brief exposition of the Tractatus is given in Chapter Two to show that Wittgenstein fulfilled his intention of justifying the factual/mystical distinction and how, on logical grounds, religious beliefs are relegated to the unsayable. Chapter Three unpacks Wittgenstein's two different doctrines of showing and argues that his first attempt to deal with religious beliefs as intuitions of the inexpressible is unacceptable. Chapter Four describes Wittgenstein's constructivist approach to philosophy and his mythological explanation of religion. This interpretation is also rejected on the grounds that it presupposes some form of conceptual relativism. Chapters Five and Six are concerned with Wittgenstein's third approach to religious belief. In Chapter Five Wittgenstein's later philosophy is described and evaluated. Chapter Six discusses Wittgenstein's lecture on religion and an exposition of Wittgensteinian Fideism is given. It is shown that this method of understanding religious belief is also inadequate. Having exposed the deficiencies of Fideism Chapter Seven argues that it is necessary to invoke a non-pictorial view of 'A religiously-believes p' and shows that certain claims made by religious believers do refer to specifiable states of affairs and are testable. The conclusion is drawn that a proper understanding of religious belief implies that justification of such beliefs should be sought.

KEYWORDS

Wittgenstein. Justification. Religious Belief.

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SECTIONS IN EACH CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is the culmination of four years work (one of which was spent full-time in the University) researching extensively into Wittgensteinian literature and the possible consequences this has for understanding religious belief. When I first began to read certain texts of Wittgenstein prior to embarking on this research it occurred to me that there was a need for a comprehensive account of the influence exercised by Wittgenstein's philosophy on the subject of religious belief since the articles and books that existed, whilst helpful, did not adequately meet this need. As there was no full analysis of Wittgenstein's writings and the bearing these had on religious belief I sought to become acquainted with the whole range of Wittgenstein's remarks and writings and also with that literature directly influenced by them. A deliberate attempt has been made, therefore, to present an analysis of the nature of religious belief against the background of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Throughout the work, however, I have sought to give full weight to the sceptical and critical point of view in order to engage in the contemporary dialogue between philosophical scepticism on the one hand and a contextual/situational interpretation of religion on the other. It will be seen that I have parted company from both.

The modern debate about religious belief centres on the meaning of the language in which that belief is expressed and there is a wide variety of opinion about what the nature of the dialogue between philosophy and religion should be. Those who have adopted an empirical (and usually sceptical) stance towards the use of the language of religion have emphasised the 'intelligibility gap' between what a believer says and a logical understanding of his claims and have concluded that religious claims lack cognitive significance. What has come to be known

as Wittgensteinian Fideism represents one alternative to scepticism and generally agrees that attempts to justify religious beliefs, in the sense of trying to establish the truth of what is believed religiously, are misguided. However, supporters of a fideistic approach argue that the sceptics have been attacking a man of straw. Wittgensteinian fideists insist that the criteria of meaning, truth, and intelligibility are intrinsic to religion and that confusion arises when this is not recognised. It was my intention, therefore, when I began this research to see if this defence of religious belief did offer a coherent and acceptable method of dealing logically and conceptually with the subject. It is important to come to a conclusion about this since any informed view of the matter must attend to the challenge of Wittgenstein and his followers for whose point of view there has been growing support in the last decade but also because if it is correct all that remains for the philosopher of religion is to clarify the logic of a subject which is made impervious to external criticism.

After I had drafted an outline of the plan of the thesis and it had begun to take shape W.D. Hudson's excellent book 'Wittgenstein and Religious Belief' appeared. This has now become a standard work on the subject and it had the effect, not of forcing me to change my approach but of compelling me to rethink some of the arguments. It will be seen that I have included some information omitted by Hudson in connection with Wittgenstein's criticism of Frazer's approach to religion, that I part company with Hudson over certain matters of interpretation and that in the conclusion my thesis moves in a completely different direction. I have, for convenience, referred to Wittgenstein's early, middle and later interpretations of the logic of religious belief and this arrangement is my own. It must not be taken as representing three views which are mutually exclusive. Reference to the literature together with a critical commentary is given in seven chapters.

The first six chapters describe and appraise Wittgenstein's three stances towards religious belief and I have concluded that none of these is satisfactory and that an alternative to fideism must be sought. The alternative, however, is not necessarily to embrace an empirical and sceptical interpretation though there are compelling reasons for accepting certain arguments advanced by sceptics. It seems to me that some attempt must be made to bridge the conceptual-empirical distinction or situational-sceptical opposition and in the concluding chapter I have indicated, by invoking the Correspondence Theory, how religious claims may be shown to be cognitively significant.

The debate will no doubt continue and this thesis is offered as a contribution to that debate with the hope that consideration of the truth of religious claims or beliefs will not be neglected.

CHAPTER 1

The Influence of Viennese Culture on Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy

This chapter seeks to show that the Tractatus is an ethico-religious treatise and that its main point was to justify the separation of ethics and religion from scientific and logical support. This view of the Tractatus is opposed to the notion that the treatise concentrates on problems of philosophical logic, a view which has been fashionable among commentators. I shall argue that Wittgenstein made use of, and modified and extended, the logical techniques of Frege and Russell in order to solve the deeper problem of how to keep apart two realms or spheres of experience, the factual and the ethico-religious. In order to establish this point it is important to obtain an understanding of the intellectual and cultural life in Vienna prior to the writing of the Tractatus. This understanding, illustrated by some recent research and confirmed by Wittgenstein's own remarks, supports the view that the main point of the Tractatus was ethico-religious. Once this view is established, Wittgenstein's argument that no scientific or logical justification can be given for ethics or religion, can be seen to follow more easily. Since the thesis concentrates on the question as to whether it is correct to seek a logical justification for religious belief this opening chapter serves to provide a foundation from which the thesis will be built. In particular, the chapter prepares the way for understanding the Tractatus itself by showing what problems occupied him in Vienna and why Wittgenstein sought to justify the Factual/Mystical distinction. It also shows that to achieve this it was necessary to provide a critique of language.

The chapter divides into four sections:

1. Wittgenstein's family background and character.
2. A brief description of Viennese culture prior to the writing of the Tractatus illustrated from Engelmann and Janik and Toulmin

with reference to Kraus and Loos, Hertz and Boltzmann.

3. Reference is made to Wittgenstein's own remarks to confirm the ethical point of the Tractatus.
4. A conclusion - Wittgenstein's intention was to justify the separation of the factual sphere from the ethico-religious sphere.

1. Wittgenstein's Family Background and Character

Ludwig Wittgenstein was born in 1889 in Vienna into a high and cultural family of Jewish extraction. His grandparents were Protestants, his own official religion was Roman Catholic into which he was initiated by his mother, and he was brought up in a refined and almost puritanical way by Karl Wittgenstein, his father. His family were very musical and his parents' home was a musical centre in Vienna. Brahms was a regular visitor and Ravel actually wrote a piano concerto especially for Wittgenstein's brother. Ludwig himself had a detailed knowledge of German classical music, played the clarinet well, and even considered becoming a conductor. He had an artistically sensitive nature and from his youth had a love for the poetry of Goethe, Morike and Rilke and for the more philosophical writings of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Dostoievsky and Tolstoy. At the age of seventeen he came to England where he became interested in aeronautics and ultimately in the foundations of mathematics. These two worlds of thought, the idealistic and metaphysical on the one hand and the logical and scientific on the other, form the intellectual background to Wittgenstein's early thinking.

Wittgenstein's religious beliefs in these early days are difficult to assess. Schächter[1] says that Wittgenstein was a mystic in one sense but he was not mystical in the sense of 'occupying his mind with mystic-gnostic fantasies[2]'. Before 1914 Wittgenstein appears to have been anti-Christian but he later admitted that Tolstoy's

writings on the Gospels had influenced him[3]. Von Wright tells us that Wittgenstein never embraced the Christain faith but neither was he a pagan like Goethe[4]. Wittgenstein himself tells us that he had never had faith[5] and he regarded most Christian literature as 'rubbish'[6] but in the Engelmann correspondence he shows a 'religious' sensitivity towards life and this is confirmed by the emphasis he places on aesthetic feelings[7]. A poem by Uhland[8] thrilled Ludwig because it contained the unutterable or inexpressible feelings which he had experienced himself. Wittgenstein's interest in poetry, paintings, music, plays and architecture shows how he was attracted to what he liked to call 'the meaning of life' or the 'higher sphere'. Mörike's story, 'Mozart's Journey to Prague'[9] attracted Wittgenstein because it touched on the limits of language through sublime poetry[10]. For the early Wittgenstein, religion belonged to the inexpressible but intuitions of the mystery of life could be obtained through certain feeling experiences.

In his early life Wittgenstein was often seized by fits of deep depression[11] and at such times he found suicide attractive. He often quoted the words of Karamozov, a convicted officer in Dostoievsky's novel 'The Brothers Karamozov', who said, "Hail to the Highest - also within me!"[12] Three of Ludwig's four brothers committed suicide, some prominent Austrians had done so[13] and Wittgenstein himself was led to despair of life[14] because he too had experienced a neurotic sense of inadequacy. He writes "I have on several occasions contemplated taking my own life"[15]. It has been argued that he was a homosexual[16] and that promiscuity caused his guilt feelings but whatever the truth about this delicate matter Wittgenstein did not analyse the cause of his anguish in the dialectical fashion of existentialists. It is as difficult to be sure as to the cause of his intense feelings of failure and frustration as it is to understand precisely what he meant by his expression 'the

meaning of life'. But in spite of his feelings of guilt and his confession that his life consisted of futile episodes, he rejected the Christian faith as the means of salvation with contempt. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein was a religious man if we understand religion in terms of feelings and intuitions and not as someone who has faith in some objective propositional revelation. His sincere interest in the ethico-religious sphere was consistent with certain attitudes found in Austria from 1900-1918 and which had dominated Nineteenth Century religious thought.

2. Viennese Culture from 1900-1918

In order to grasp the main point of the Tractatus it is essential to understand the interdependence of thought and life which was found in early twentieth Century Viennese architecture and art, journalism and jurisprudence, philosophy and poetry, music, drama and sculpture. In Austria the Tractatus was regarded as an ethical treatise and Engelmann has shown how the book represents the solution to problems confronting the cultural thinkers of Austrian society represented particularly in the works of Kraus and Loos. Janik and Toulmin supply us with additional information to support the insights revealed by Engelmann and by the correspondence with Ficker.* The central question being asked in Viennese society was how to reconcile the 'ethical' with the 'logical' or 'factual' spheres. The factual was called the 'lower' sphere and the ethical was referred to as the 'higher' sphere as it transcended the merely factual and actually provided the ground for it. In Vienna, philosophers discussed this problem and since philosophy was interrelated with culture this helps us to see how important it is to know what Wittgenstein had in his mind before he ever met Frege or Russell. This is not recognised by Pears[17] or Anscombe[18]. Wittgenstein was trying to resolve a

*See G.H. Von Wright, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Biographical Sketch. Philosophical Review, Vol. 64.

problem which was troubling his Viennese contemporaries, especially Kraus and mathematicians and physicists in Kakania such as Hertz and Boltzmann who had described physical theories as models of natural phenomena and so regarded theories in mechanics as models or 'representations' of reality. Such a theoretical representation of reality could be shown from within the model. Wittgenstein was attracted to the idea of representing matters of fact by using models, but he was concerned to offer a critique of language which would also embrace the ethico-religious realm represented in the writings of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Tolstoy and in the poetry and music of his day. He wanted to reconcile the methodology of Hertz in physics with the transcendental character of the ethical. The point of the Tractatus was misunderstood by commentators because of the failure to see that the book epitomised the intellectual problems of Viennese art and culture as they existed before 1918. This is not to say that the Tractatus is simply a product of the influence of Hertz, Boltzmann, Kraus, Loos and others, but to insist that it cannot be understood without this background knowledge because they provided Wittgenstein with the problem which he tried to solve. He tried to solve the problem by attempting to draw a line between what can and what cannot be said, between what can be taken as models of reality and what cannot. But why did Wittgenstein think that it was necessary to draw a sharp distinction between the factual and the ethical? To answer this it is necessary to describe the anxiety felt in Vienna in the early years of the twentieth Century.

In many fields of thought in Vienna there was a questioning of methods in art forms as well as in physics. The fundamental problem was that of representation. Certain journalists mingled opinion with fact, and these and other writers, by making colourful use of adjectives

and adverbs, produced the cultural essay (feuilleton) in which objective facts were seen through the emotions and attitudes of the writer. Kraus attacked this method of writing because he felt that such essays destroyed objectivity by falsifying the factual and by failing to 'represent' reality. At the same time the aesthetic or moral sphere represented by values became debased and distorted. Kraus was afraid that this new style of writing would pose a serious threat to Austrian culture. He saw signs of moral degeneration in such trends and became critical of certain magazines and periodicals which used the 'feuilleton' as the method of writing. Kraus himself, who 'was known to fret for hours over the position of a comma'[19], attacked not only the press but poets such as Heine who created conceptual monsters. Even the use of a comma carries a message of the kind of man who uses it. This concern for precise reporting and for good style, which reflects the moral attitudes of the writer, was embraced by Wittgenstein, who shared the conviction that there is a bond between the forms of living, thinking, feeling and the forms of language[20]. The central notion in Kraus is the creative separation of factual discourse from literary art. His aim was to keep the sphere of values distinct from the sphere of facts.

Loos, an architect, criticised the new Viennese style of architecture. He attacked the new use of ornamentation of his day in architecture and design and insisted that artefacts should be simple and functional and unadorned. In art itself artefacts should be kept separate from objects of art; to mingle them is a cultural sin. In design, therefore, he was opposed to applied art and his own buildings were simple, functional and undecorated. True form should 'show' itself in a spontaneous way, not by trying to invent new forms using decoration and applied art, but by keeping distinct the two spheres

of the ethical and the functional. Throughout his life he sought to preserve the intellectual separation of art (which is ethical) from crafts (which are functional). Engelmann says that in Loos we have a perfect paradigm of Wittgenstein's purpose - to keep separate the sphere of values and defend it in an age that denies it[21].

Both Kraus and Loos then defended this distinction between the higher (ethical) and lower spheres and both believed that human culture was based on faith in the existence of a 'higher sphere'. This higher sphere transcends the factual because it depends on values and attitudes and such values are not contingent but absolute. Schönberg, in music, also attacked the 'pseudo-sophistication of bourgeois aestheticism'[22] and Von Hofmansthal[23] in the realm of poems and plays sought to show that ultimate values are inexpressible.

Wittgenstein was brought up in this atmosphere and sought to offer a comprehensive critique of language capable of showing how the strict separation between facts and values could be maintained by using the 'model' idea proposed by Hertz and Boltzmann. He was determined to preserve the idea of the 'meaning of life' against the intrusions of scientific and intellectual reasoning by showing that the higher sphere of values belong to the inexpressible, but though inexpressible it could be experienced intuitively. Applying this to religious belief his plea for a 'wordless faith' was echoed later in 1929 when he said "I can well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrines, in which, therefore, nothing is spoken"[24].

This brief description of what occupied leading thinkers in Vienna between 1900 and 1918 brings out 3 points:-

1. Such thinkers were concerned to keep separate two realms or spheres -

the ethical and the factual.

2. The ethical sphere was important to them.

3. The idea of the higher sphere could not be justified by logical argument but in some mystical sense it 'showed' itself.

Wittgenstein's main concern was to provide a thesis in which these three points could be sustained. Consequently, the final part of this chapter will show that this is consistent with Wittenstein's own stated intentions.

3. How Wittgenstein's Remarks Confirm this View

In a letter written to Ficker[25] about the Tractatus Wittgenstein says, "The book's point is an ethical one.....My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the only rigorous way of drawing those limits .....I would recommend you to read the preface and the conclusion, because they contain the most direct expression of the point of the book". This statement illustrates points 1 and 2 above. The third point is illustrated in letter No. 6[26] in which he claims that the inexpressible will be 'unutterably contained in what has been uttered' i.e. it will 'show' itself. It is important to take particular notice of his recommendation to read the preface and the conclusion if the direct point of the book is to be grasped. Wittgenstein realised that he would not be understood because the main point of the book, which is an ethical one, could not be communicated directly but could only be 'shown' indirectly. His ultimate purpose was to show that the inexpressible meaning of life cannot be disclosed directly but that it manifests itself as the limits of what can be said are shown. Wittgenstein's invitation to look at the preface and the conclusion of the Tractatus is a profitable way to proceed and this advice will now be taken in order to clinch the points just

made.

In the preface he tells us that his intentions are philosophical and not logical and that he sees his task as the clearing away of the puzzles that have plagued philosophers over the centuries. Such puzzles, he believes, are due to a lack of ability to speak clearly. He says, "The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood"[27]. He aimed, therefore, to offer a theory of meaning that would show that lack of clarity led to the so-called puzzles that existed. He says, "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"[28]. In order to achieve his aim it was necessary to draw the limits of language. He says, "Thus the aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather - not to thought, but to the expression of thought"[29]. Kant had shown that thought or reason could only operate within the limits of the empirical world, but Wittgenstein went further and tried to prove that there is a limit to what we can say and not just to what we can think and to show that what lies on the other side of such a limit or boundary 'will simply be nonsense'[30]. He says this can only be done if it is drawn from within language itself. It is impossible to adopt a point from outside language from which to describe it for whenever we speak or describe we are caught within the network of language itself. He ends the preface by claiming to have successfully accomplished his task but adds, "how little is achieved when these problems are solved"[31]. He means, I think, that the most important things which cannot be treated analytically are to do with that

'higher sphere' to which attention has been drawn.

Conclusion

In the concluding propositions of the Tractatus he tells us that the higher sphere cannot be contained within the limits of factual language and therefore propositions about aesthetics, ethics and religion are meaningless since the limits of meaning are the limits of factual discourse. Wittgenstein's attempt to show that ethics and religion lacked factual sense was his way of solving the problems raised in Viennese culture. His thesis was that logic discloses the structure of factual discourse similar to the way the mechanical models of Hertz pictured the physical world, but that even though it is not possible to speak of the higher sphere (6.423) in any language the realm of values is important and can be experienced intuitively[32]. The higher sphere cannot be described in meaningful propositions but it can be 'shown'. The world of values is a transcendental world which lies outside the world of facts and is absolute and unconditional. Ethics and religion belong therefore to the inexpressible. He concludes the Tractatus with the words, "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (7). To pass over in silence means that it is futile to describe ethical and religious insights in factual language and therefore to seek for logical justification for such intuitions. According to Kraus, the effects of poetry, art, music, architecture and writing are produced not by what they say, but by what they manifest of values and the spirit. Wittgenstein likewise endeavoured to show the meaning of life by making it clear that propositions cannot make it explicit.

It is clear, therefore, that an understanding of Viennese culture,

illustrated by recent research, and confirmed by Wittgenstein's own letters and remarks, proves that the main point of the Tractatus was to justify the separation of ethics and religion from factual and logical argument. Having shown that the task which Wittgenstein set himself was to justify the Factual/Mystical distinction, it is necessary in the next chapter to show how Wittgenstein sought to do this in the Tractatus so that a position can be established from which to assess Wittgenstein's argument that it is futile to try to justify religious belief.

CHAPTER 2

The Tractatus and the Distinction Between the Factual and the Mystical

Having shown that knowledge of the Austrian cultural and intellectual milieu illuminates the problem with which the early Wittgenstein was concerned and, having illustrated this from recent research and from Wittgenstein's own remarks, it became clear that his main purpose in writing the Tractatus was to establish the distinction between the factual and the ethical spheres. This chapter now examines his theory of language in the Tractatus to show:-

1. that the factual/mystical distinction is the main point of the Tractatus
2. that the higher sphere, though inexpressible, 'shows' itself.

The chapter sets out to show that Wittgenstein achieved the purpose which was emphasised in chapter 1, since he provided a critique of language capable of showing that questions about ethics and religion cannot be contained in any logical language. This chapter consists of seven sections:-

1. The logical structure of language.
2. The picture theory.
3. The limits of factual discourse.
4. The distinction between 'saying' and 'showing'.
5. The logical notion of showing - its meaning, status and nature.
6. The mystical notion of showing, with reference to the Notebooks and Wittgenstein's lecture on Ethics in 1930.
7. The futility of seeking justification for the mystical.

These sections follow each other logically. Wittgenstein needed to analyse the logical structure of language (1) and did so by means of the picture theory (2) in order to show by means of a logical

formula that factual language is bounded by logical restrictions. (3) It was necessary, however, to save the ethico-religious sphere by showing that it did not require logical underpinning. Wittgenstein sought to do this by means of his doctrine of showing and felt he could justify this separation since in order to demonstrate his own thesis he had to invoke a logical doctrine of showing. (4). Sections 5 and 6 describe Wittgenstein's attempt to do this, but in order to make for a clearer exposition I shall distinguish between his logical doctrine of 'showing' (5) and his mystical doctrine of 'showing' (6). Section 7 draws the conclusion that on the basis of this theory of language it is futile to seek for a logical justification of the mystical.

Wittgenstein's Tractatus was published in German in 1921 and it was translated into English in 1922 by Ogden and Ramsey. Both the original German text and the English translation provided scholars with many problems and a desire for a new translation brought about by a revival of interest in Wittgenstein's early work in the 1950's led to the edition by Pears and McGuiness published in 1961.[1] This is the edition that will be used here. Commentators agree that it is difficult to be certain about Wittgenstein's meaning of certain words. Problems of exegesis arise also because of the difficulty of Wittgenstein's staccato style of writing in which he makes use of short, aphoristic remarks and propositions which are themselves a selection and contraction of lengthier notes written from 1914-1916[2]. For the purpose of this particular thesis such textual difficulties and finer points of interpretation will be ignored since the intention is to establish the main drift of the book in the light of Wittgenstein's declared intention.

The book consists of seven important propositions(number 1 to 7) and the implications of these major propositions together with further comments are made by decimal notation. This structure also creates difficulties since it is not always easy to tell what weight should be given to some of the remarks. To describe it as an 'obscure and puzzling[3] book' is, however, to exaggerate the difficulties. There have been misunderstandings, some of which have been influential but, according to the simple intention to which attention has already been drawn, the main teaching of the Tractatus is fairly clear. Yet Russell, Frege, Sir Karl Ropper and members of the Logical Positivist school failed to understand it. Whilst Wittgenstein admits that he was directly stimulated by the logical studies of Frege and Russell[4], it was philosophy in the more general sense that was uppermost in his mind when he wrote the book. Kant had restricted the capacity of pure reason[5] but had tried to save ethics by explaining it as a postulate of man's practical reason or sense of duty[6]. But whereas Kant drew a boundary or limit to factual knowledge, Wittgenstein set out to enclose factual discourse by drawing logical limits. He did this not only to attack the conceptual monsters such as the 'feuilleton' found in Viennese writing, but also to show that the higher sphere, though inexpressible, was real. He set out, therefore, to draw a line between the sayable and the unsayable.

1. <u>The Logical Structure of Language</u>

Hertz and Boltzmann had put forward the idea that models in physics mapped the limits of what could be said 'from within' the model; such models were direct representations of reality. These models were self-limiting and had a clear structure and form. Wittgenstein tried to do for language in general what Hertz and Boltzmann did

for the language of physics in order to reconcile logic with the ethics of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Tolstoy. Wittgenstein, therefore, needed a model theory of language which had to be a formal model. From Frege and Russell, Wittgenstein obtained a logical symbolism and developed it to serve as the means of providing a general critique of language based on the picture theory of Hertz.

In the opening remarks of the Tractatus, Wittgenstein says that the world is not made up of elements or things but of facts, and these facts are what is the case. The logical world is not the totality of things such as tables and trees, but consists of states of affairs expressed in propositions such as 'the table is in the room' and 'the tree is in the field'. Such states of affairs as are described by propositions are combinations of objects (2.01) grouped in a certain way which, when they are described by language, become facts. When objects combine in a determinate way 'like the links of a chain' (2.03), the way in which they are connected is the structure of the state of affairs. These states of affairs are independent of one another and, since facts are the existence and non-existence of states of affairs, facts are also independent of each other. This totality of facts is the world.

It is clear from these opening propositions that Wittgenstein regards facts as logical in character, and that he is constructing the logical structure of the world. The connection or concatenation of the elements of a picture is called the structure.

Propositions which describe states of affairs represent arrangements of objects in situations. Such propositions are not exact reproductions of facts, but only represent what is essential in them. Objects are designated by names and the logical relationship between them are

represented by logical constants. The elements thus connected are the structure of the models or pictures which refer to reality. Such models name objects and describe configurations. In order to show that certain configurations of objects are possible, Wittgenstein used Truth Tables to provide the logical structure of this formal language. Thus his propositional calculus becomes the scaffolding of language and with the aid of this scaffolding the world is describable. States of affairs or concaterations of objects are thus presented as facts in the form of a logical language. Actual states of affairs that exist in the physical world do not exist necessarily but contingently; in logic itself, however, nothing is accidental. "If a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself" (2.012). The way in which objects are combined is the structure of the state of affairs (2.032) but the form of such a state of affairs is the possibility of its structure (2.033). What exists in reality ~~may~~ might not have existed but the possibility of it either existing or not existing is written into the formal logical structure of language. If a chart was made to show the possible number of ways, in which, say four objects could be combined all their possible combinations are given by logic. Wittgenstein does not work back from existing reality to show that language must have a certain structure in order to represent reality, but is stating the thesis that the possibility of any state of affairs existing is shown in language. Logic covers anything that can be said prior to any possible experience and, in fact, determines what can and what cannot be said about reality. Whether particular things or objects or states of affairs exist in the world is a matter of experience, but the meaning of language is determined by logic so that the meaning of language is not dependent

on whether particular things exist.

Wittgenstein proposes the thesis that the conditions in which it is possible to use meaningful language are determined by the structure which language must have. The possibility of it having such a structure is its form. From Hertz, Wittgenstein derived the notion that models could picture reality and that such models could convey facts about the world. Such language had a clear structure but it also had a mathematical form. Wittgenstein needed a similar model of a logical kind and this he obtained from Frege and Russell. This formal model was built around a theory which, when applied to language, could express the real form of propositions. How the internal structure of language could represent corresponding states of affairs (which also had a determinate structure) by which objects in the world are linked by facts could be shown by such a model. Thus the world of facts is determined by the foundation of logical possibilities, indeed, such a world 'floats in a space of possibilities which is given 'a priori'[8]. Logic discloses the structure of factual language and fixes the limit of it. It would not be correct, however, to think that Wittgenstein was trying to construct a logically perfect or ideal language as Russell thought[9]. He was not trying to replace ordinary language by such a construction and the views of Anscombe[10] and Bernstein[11] in rejecting Russell's interpretation are surely correct.

The Tractatus asserts that the nature of the world can be discovered through an investigation of language. Now, in order to understand how such a language actually represents reality Wittgenstein puts forward his idea of language as a picture or model of reality and he uses this notion to build a scaffolding between language and the world. But without a clear structure it would not be apparent why language could be said to represent particular situations. Wittgenstein analysed the concept of a picture in order to deduce from it what

reality must be like for it to be represented in language. Such analysis had to show what is essentially and logically true about language for it to be a picture of reality. It is Wittgenstein's view that only if propositions are conceived as pictures of reality that their meaning is guaranteed.

2. The Picture Theory

A model or picture shows the arrangement of constituent parts of that which it is trying to represent. A street accident might be pictured by arranging certain models of cars, pedestrians and buildings in order to depict the situation. Similarly, when elements in language are combined together this makes up the structure of the picture (2.032) even though the relationship between the logical elements is not spatial as it is between objects in the physical world. The relationship between objects in any model is the structure of the model, but besides this structure we need other features to make such a structure possible at all. What a picture must have in common with reality in order to picture it correctly is its picturing form (2.15). Pictures then have both form and structure. The actual spatial relationship of objects in the representation or model of a car accident is the structure of the model, but the possibility of the relationship is the form of representation or pictorial form. It is the common element or identical feature in a picture with what it depicts so that a model can be called a picture of the other. It is also the possibility that things represented are related in the same way as the elements in the picture (Wittgenstein was more interested in pictorial form than in the pictorial relationship). Since every picture must have logical form identical to what it depicts, logical form is part of the pictorial form. Propositions do not share spatial form in common with what is depicted, but they must have logical form if they

are to be proper pictures. A picture, however, cannot depict its pictorial form, it displays or 'shows' it (es weist sie auf - 2.172). The logical form of reality cannot be represented in, or be expressed by, another proposition but can only be 'shown' (4.12-4.121). The relations holding between language and the world cannot be demonstrated* A picture, therefore, gets its meaning by the way elements in it are configured together but, if it is to be a proper picture, it must have the possibility expressed by the picturing form of having some identity between it and what it depicts. Such logical pictures may be true or false (2.21), but from the picture itself we cannot tell whether it is true or false (2.224) for no pictures are true a priori (2.225). If we want to discover whether a proposition is true this can only be known experimentally.

Two things are essential to Wittgenstein's picture theory if it is to serve as an adequate model of how language means:-

1. A correspondence theory of truth - a proposition is true or false according to whether it agrees with reality.
2. The assumption that a sufficient isomorphism exists between language and reality - in order to be meaningful a picture depicts a logically possible state of affairs. Wittgenstein's picture theory shows that there is a sufficient isomorphism.

The purpose of philosophy is to be clear about logical form and this is obtained by analysing the logical structure of language and then seeing how such a structure could depict reality. Propositions are therefore

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*This is against Russell's idea that the real world is describable by means of a propositional language.

pictures of reality (4.021) and they show their sense by providing us with a ladder through which we can describe the world. Propositions show how things are if they are true because they correspond to states of affairs which exist, but such propositions cannot say anything about themselves (4.06). If there is no corresponding state of affairs then the propositions may be meaningful but false.

The question of logical constants such as 'and', 'or', 'not' etc. posed a problem to Wittgenstein's picture theory since they did not function as names or refer to anything. Wittgenstein argued that such constants function as signs to change elementary propositions into complex ones e.g. John is ill and Mary is crying. In 4.031 he says, "The logical constants are not representatives; there can be no representatives of the logic of facts". Logical constants do not stand for anything real. Primitive signs (names) refer to objects, constants do not. They designate logical operations similar to the way + and - signs are used in arithmetic. They have no reference ('Bedeutung'), but they do have a sense or meaning ('Sinn'). The constant 'not' does not describe any state of affairs as there are no negative states of affairs. Wittgenstein distinguishes between a picture and a proposition in this respect. One cannot negate a picture, but it can be false, whereas one can negate a proposition[12]. Logical constants are not one of the elements in the picture. The constant 'not' does not name a relation and does not function as a name,for if it referred to an object then to say 'not-not-ρ' would be to make a different assertion from 'ρ' as it would include two names not mentioned in 'ρ'. 'ρ' as a proposition is opposite to 'not-ρ'. To exclude 'not-ρ' is to say 'not-not-ρ' and this is identical with

the proposition 'p' because the law of the excluded middle rules out any third possibility and this law, as Ayer has argued, is sacrosanct[13].

Wittgenstein had to exclude the possibility that 'not' could function as a name or it would contradict his picture theory because names pictured objects. The picture theory is that a proposition says what is the case and if it is a negative proposition it says what is not the case. But we cannot make a different picture for what is not the case from that which depicts what is the case. We cannot make a different picture of the situation's not existing for if we tried to do this we would only succeed in making a picture of what did exist instead. If we can think the sense of the picture then we can think of it either as existing or not existing, but it is the same picture we have whether we say it is or it is not the case. Wittgenstein's solution about negation was to say that 'p' and '$\sim p$' can say the same thing for there is nothing in reality to correspond to the sign '$\sim$'. The propositions 'p' and '$\sim p$' have opposite sense, but there corresponds to them one and the same reality (4.0621). To negate is not to name but to operate with signs and nothing in reality corresponds to the sign '$\sim$'. So he solves the problem of negation by a linguistic operation in which '$\sim$' negates a positive proposition. In the Notebooks he confesses that it is a mystery that we can say 'how things are, and yet we can say how things are not[14]. The mystery is that something not being the case can also be something that is the case and that a picture can present us with something that is the case by also picturing what is not the case. If a proposition has no sense, however, then nothing corresponds to it (4.064), but the presence of 'not' in a proposition does not determine the sense of it*.

*Russell believed that there were negative facts which expressed a negation of predication of a denoting subject.

When we use a propositional sign to negate a proposition we tend to feel that it says something, for the non-existence of a configuration of things seems to make sense to us. Wittgenstein's point is that every picture-proposition has two senses; one describes the existence of a configuration of objects by being a projecting device; the other its non-existence. Both true and false propositions picture the same state of affairs, but we cannot know by simply looking at the picture whether something is true in reality; 'p' can either be true or false. Someone may say 'It is raining' when it is not and he may say 'It is not raining' when it is, so we must be careful to distinguish the terms 'true' and'false' from affirming and negating in the Tractatus. Logical meaning is found in the structure of the proposition, but the referential meaning depends on the signs which function as names and on the possibility that the proposition points to some state of affairs.

3. The Limits of Factual Discourse

Wittgenstein worked his way from the outer limit of language back towards the centre in which the nature and structure of propositions is analysed. He showed that logical constants make elementary propositions into complex ones, but he also needed to show that complex propositions are extensions of elementary propositions and that they cannot express anything not stated by the elementary propositions. Such elementary propositions were not observation statements[15]. Unlike Russell, he gave no examples of elementary facts but assumed that they must exist in order to picture states of affairs. In proposition 5 he says "A proposition is a truth function of elementary propositions"; so the truth of complex propositions is determined by the truth of the propositions of which they are composed and the falsity of them is determined in the same way. This is parallel

to the notion that logical compounds are taken to be truth-functions of simple formulae. For example, we can reduce 'p and q' to 'p', 'q'. Wittgenstein drew up some truth-tables to show how one could tell immediately whether complex propositions were true or false. It was necessary to do this because the complex propositions which make up everyday language are too complicated to be able to tell immediately whether they are true or false. Consider, however, the complex proposition '$p \vee q$'. This can be shown in a table:-

p q	$p \vee q$
TT	T
TF	T
FT	T
FF	F

Here the truth ('T') or falsity ('F') of the complex proposition depends on whether 'p' and 'q' are true or false (4.31, 4.442, 5.101). With this logical device it is possible to see from the elementary propositions whether or not the complex propositions are true or false. Having extracted elementary propositions from the complex propositions of ordinary language, Wittgenstein used his truth-tables to show how the limits of factual language could be plotted. Such limits were determined by truth possibilities for, given all the possible truth values for the symbols a proposition contains, it can be determined which of these are truth possibilities. With this instrument he could also deal with tautologies and contradictions and these will now be discussed.

At 4.46 he says, "Among the possible groups of truth-conditions there are two extreme cases" i.e. limiting cases; one is tautological (4.46)

the other is that of contradiction. Between these two limits exist all the meaningful propositions capable of giving a true or false picture of the states of affairs. A tautology such as 'Either it is raining or it is not raining' ('p $\vee \sim$ p ') is necessarily true, but it tells us nothing about the weather. Frege had distinguished between sense (meaning) and reference ('Sinn' and Bedeutung'), but held that 'Sinn' denoted something. Wittgenstein disagrees with this and argues that logical relations need not refer to anything in reality and yet contain a meaning. A proposition has sense ('Sinn') and this lies in its logical notation, but only if it has the possibility of referring to a state of affairs. So Wittgenstein distinguished between two sorts of meaning which pictures must have. They must be able to refer to something in reality ('Bedeutung'), but how elements combine to form a model or picture in a proposition is their sense ('Sinn'). For a picture to be meaningful it must have both 'Bedeutung' and 'Sinn' - its meaning is both determinate and experimental[16]. The meaning of a proposition, in order for it to serve as a picture of reality, is logically distinct from its truth or falsity and must be meaningful before its truth or falsity can be discussed. If elements in a picture, however, have no corresponding objects then the proposition is meaningless. Tautologies have no referential meaning, but are not nonsensical (4.4611); they are 'not pictures of reality' (4.462) and to negate them is impossible. These propositions gain their sense from elements in the propositions if the signs are arranged in a logical way. The logical system itself, however, depends upon the truth-tables. Leibniz had suggested that necessary propositions are true for all possible

worlds and Wittgenstein here seems to identify the subject of 'a priori' truths as the structure of the world. According to Lazerowitz this view was transitional in Wittgenstein's thinking and later he abandoned it[17]. Tautologies, then, do not describe states of affairs but are, nevertheless, meaningful but this cannot be said about contradictions (4.464). "Contradiction...vanishes outside all propositions: tautology vanishes inside them" (5.143). Logical form limits the whole of logical space and by analysis of the structure and form of propositions, contradictions are seen to fall outside significant propositions.

Wittgenstein thus mapped the logical boundary of factual discourse in a rigorous fashion. Logic is prior to any representation of how the world is and this plots the limits of the world. To recognise these limits is to see what can be said. Any propositions which attempted to reach beyond the limits of logic tried to say the unsayable by failing to recognise the limits implicit in the formal rules of logic. But, according to Wittgenstein, besides what could be describable by propositions there was something which, although it could not be expressed by propositions, could be 'shown' ('gezeigt') and this for him represented the cardinal problem of philosophy. At this point it is necessary to extricate the logical doctrine of showing from the Tractatus and enquire into its meaning, status and nature.

4. The Distinction Between 'Saying' and 'Showing'

The brief sketch made so far of some of the features of the picture theory serves to give us a basis from which the distinction between saying and showing can be described. If we want to find out whether

a proposition is true we have to understand it, 'to know what is the case if it is true' (4.024). This, however, cannot be said because 'it is a condition of our being able to say something (we must know the logical structure, the sense, of a proposition before we can actually use it in language)'[18]. A picture itself cannot be pictured - its pictorial form can only be 'shown' (2.172). Logical form limits the whole of logical space and these limits can only be 'shown'. Yet Wittgenstein speaks of propositions representing and agreeing with reality. This cannot, however, be 'said'. In 4.022 he says that a proposition 'shows' itself. In his view it is impossible to reproduce the relationship between the picture and that to which it refers or between a simple and a complex proposition because propositions cannot state the relationship, but they can 'display' it. The distinction between 'saying' and 'showing' thus lies at the heart of the Tractatus because Wittgenstein is attacking traditional philosophy which had tried to connect language with reality and this, he argued, had only succeeded in creating puzzles. Wittgenstein has analysed the logic of, what Sellars calls, a perspicuous[19] language by means of elementary propositions and truth-functions in order to demonstrate how language works when we use it to make true and false statements. In order to describe it, Wittgenstein has had to use another language which Bernstein calls[20] a ladder language. In 6.54 Wittgenstein says, "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)"*. The propositions in the ladder language are

* He got this illustration from Schopenhauer's "The World as Will and Idea" II., p. 256. See Ref. No. 45.

different from the language which 'says'. The language in which names are names of particular objects and where predication is represented by a configuration of names shows how different naming is from saying. It is, therefore, futile to discuss abstract entities or universal concepts as if they were objects or as if by talking about them we were compelled to believe in their existence. He presupposes the existence of elementary propositions as a logical necessity. In 5.5562 he says, "If we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who understands propositions in their unanalysed form must know it". In 5.5571 he says, "If I cannot say a priori what elementary propositions there are, then the attempt to do so must lead to obvious nonsense". Rationalism and idealism are ruled out of court. Wittgenstein has constructed a clear logical language for stating facts and has done so by determining the elements that are necessary for the symbolism of such a language to have meaning, but, in doing so, he has used a 'ladder' language in which such concepts as objects, naming, picturing, picturing form, propositional sign, etc. are used. These ideas could only be elucidated in the ladder language and, according to his own thesis, this is nonsensical since he has stepped outside factual language in order to demonstrate his claims. This leads us to the notion of 'showing'.

5. The Logical Notion of Showing

In Wittegenstein's ladder language a number of things are said to 'show' themselves, some of which have already been referred to. It will be useful to group these together at this point so that we can enquire into the meaning, status and nature of the notion. The form

of the picture 'shows' itself (2.172); the name as a sign of a thing when applied 'shows' what is not said in the sign (3.262); symbols 'show' their meaning (3.326, 3.32 ff) - because no propositional sign can be contained in itself (3.332); the proposition 'shows' its sense by showing the logical form of reality (4.022, 4.121); logical constants such as the negating sign 'show' their meaning (4.064); tautologies 'show' their meaning since the nature of them is shown by the signs alone and no third proposition can describe the logical relation between 'p' and 'not p'; the limits of language are 'shown' because the limits of language are the limits of my world (5.62); all the propositions of logic, including the relationship between a simple and a complex proposition (6.12), 'show' themselves. In the concluding propositions Wittgenstein tells us that ethics can only be 'shown' (6.421), the feeling of the world as a limited whole 'shows' itself (6.45), and mystical feelings which cannot be put into words, make themselves manifest ('Dies zeigt sich'); the mystical is shown (6.522). Consideration of these concluding propositions follow this section.

Wittgenstein admits that his own propositions attempt to say what could only be 'shown' because he had determined in a metaphysical way what the world must be like by employing a general theory of meaning. What he has said about factual language and about the distinction between the factual and the mystical are not factual propositions and in his own terms are nonsense. Wittgenstein's critique of language is based upon logic rooted in propositional calculus theory. This logic makes it possible to describe the world, yet paradoxically, according to the Tractatus, what a model must have in common with reality

in order to picture it correctly cannot be put into words. He realised that an acceptable metaphysical theory had to show that certain relations actually held between language and reality in order to make a formally defined calculus serve as a propositional picture. But according to his own thesis this could not be demonstrated. Philosophers who try to describe the relationship between language and the world step beyond the limits of language. To avoid this Wittgenstein appeals to his doctrine of 'showing'. (Russell had believed that while the structure of a language was inexpressible in that language another language having a different structure could express it).

The meaning of Wittgenstein's logical notion of showing is connected with his basic idea that logical form shows itself in the rules of logic which must be recognised, accepted and used correctly. In 4.0141 he says that there is a general rule by means of which a musician can obtain the music from the musical score and that this constitutes the inner similarity between different things. This rule is the law of projection for translating the language of musical notation into the language of gramaphone records. In 5.512 he appeals to common rules which govern the construction of logical notation and in 5.514 he says that once a notation has been established it will contain a rule which will govern the construction of all propositions. To say that one language pictures another is to say that there are rules by which we can construct one from the other. A picture cannot present or say what it is as a picture, but can only depict it by pointing to the rules of how we apply pictures. Language presupposes its own picturing-character which is shown by the rules we use and these rules lie at the boundary of understanding. To understand a symbol we need

to know the rules for its use because they constitute its meaning. Logical form was used by Wittgenstein as that which a picture or model had in common with reality if it were to serve as a correct picture. This, however, could not be further described or put into words.

The status of Wittgenstein's logical notion of 'showing' seems to be that it is a necessary condition of factual language. The necessary conditions of how language connects with reality, or of language itself, cannot be put into words. Wittgenstein believed that the only way to deal with the question as to what conditions a formal calculus required in order to serve as a propositional function, was to appeal to something which, in the final analysis, 'showed' itself. In providing a picture or model by which the actual relation between language and reality could be seen, he realized that in the end such a relationship was ineffable. One just had to see the possibility of picturing facts by propositions having the same logical form. One cannot see the light one is seeing with![21] Propositions can picture reality, but not at the same time describe how they describe it. Given the picture theory of meaning, it makes sense to hold this view.

The nature of this logical notion of showing is more difficult to understand. It seems at first glance to be an appeal to what is obvious or self-evident. This should be discounted since Wittgenstein rejected appeals to obviousness and criticised Russell and Frege for appealing to self-evidence as criterion of logical propositions (5.1363, 5.4731)*. On the contrary, Wittgenstein seeks to uncover

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* Kenny thinks Wittgenstein misrepresents Frege[22] and is inconsistent since he also appeals to self-evidence when criticising Frege - see 5.42.

something hidden when he appeals to his doctrine of 'showing' because what is hidden lies at the boundary or limit of language and transcends it. It requires insight to recognise that if true propositions picture a state of affairs they cannot at the same time describe their own relation to the world. For Wittgenstein, no axiomatic system can by itself say anything about the world and in the end his model had to be transcended. The model showed the limits of what could be said, but in order to grasp the significance of his whole theory Wittgenstein makes an appeal to insight. Wittgenstein's logical notion of showing points to the fact that in order to understand how language can picture reality we have to presuppose things which cannot be said. This is not to say the same thing as defenders of ostensive definitions have said when they maintained that in the end we can only point to what we mean. The conclusion to be drawn about the nature of what Wittgenstein means by what is 'shown' is that it is an axiomatic and unconditional presupposition and not a substantially necessary truth. The notion of showing can only be understood by those who have climbed the steps of the ladder of logical language and from the limits of the factual see the need to transcend it in order to use it.

6. The Mystical Notion of Showing

Wittgenstein's use of the idea of showing reaches its culmination in the concluding propositions about aesthetics, ethics and 'the mystical'. These final remarks form an integral part of the Tractatus and represent his main purpose in writing and are not to be regarded as a mere appendix to his critique of language . They are concerned

with the 'higher sphere' which was of profound concern to Viennese thinkers.

The 'higher sphere' is connected with a transcendental 'I' or 'will' because the limits of language are the limits of 'my' world. Wittgenstein regards the self as the metaphysical 'I' and distinguishes between this concept and that of the thinking, imagining subject (5.631) and between this self and any object of experience or of any entity in the world (5.632). The 'I' is regarded as an Archimedean point from which everything else is seen and is something, therefore, that 'shows' itself (5.62). It stands over against the world as an inexpressible limit (5.63-5.641). It cannot be represented in a state of affairs nor encountered in any experience.[23] Wittgenstein rejected the views of Kant and Schopenhauer that we can draw the limits of what can be thought or known by considering the nature of the thinking subject. The 'I' is compared to an eye which cannot see itself (5.633). To identify the limits of what I can say about the 'I' is to appreciate the limits of language.

Wittgenstein also gave value-judgements a transcendental character. The 'I' shows itself in aesthetics when an object is regarded as an object of contemplation and when such intuitions transcend any logical analysis. The willing self (like the metaphysical self) as the 'bearer of the ethical' cannot be described in words. It is not just the willing self that eludes description, but also the content of ethics. In 6.41 he says, "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it no value exists - and if it did exist, it would have no value". There can be no ethical propositions because ethics is transcendental (6.421). By ethics Wittgenstein means

aesthetic judgements as well as moral attitudes to life since the work of art is the object seen 'sub specie aeternitatis;' and the good life is the world seen 'sub specie aeternitatis'. Ethics is a condition of, or attitude to, the world[24]. An artist looks at objects with a 'happy eye'[25] because the beautiful makes him happy and 'since what makes man live happily is ethics, ethics and aesthetics are one'[26].

The world of aesthetics and values is also closely linked with religion. Wittgenstein says, "Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That what exists does exist"[27]. From the Engelmann correspondence, from the Notebooks, and from a later lecture[28], Wittgenstein equates values with 'the life of the spirit'. An unspiritual person is someone who has abandoned the right attitude to life. Ethics as transcendental is contrasted with what is worldly. Dilman correctly points out that Wittgenstein was 'primarily interested in spiritual values when he spoke of ethics'[29]. This is clear in Wittgenstein's lecture on Ethics where he defines ethics as the enquiry into what is valuable or really important and what is really important or 'what makes life worth living' is to discover the 'meaning of life'. He contrasts the trivial and relative sense in which we use the word good with the 'ethical and absolute' sense in which we use the word. He conflates ethical and religious language for he says that the moral man is the 'spiritual' man. Values are to do with having a sense of wonder, or having the experience of feeling absolutely safe, or feeling a sense of mystery at the existence of the world. The miracle of existence, however, cannot be talked about and any talk about the absolutely miraculous is nonsense. It is important to notice both the similarities and additions to the Tractatus here. In the

Tractatus he does not discuss the notion of the mystical arising from an awareness of guilt or of feeling safe or from feelings of personal inadequacy, but he had mentioned these things in the Notebooks and that he included such feelings under his idea of 'the mystical' is made clear in the Engelmann correspondence.

Wittgenstein's teaching about the mystical is also linked with the idea of God (6.432). In the Tractatus he does not say that we are dependent on God, but he does say, "God does not reveal himself in the world" (6.432). In the Notebooks he says, "To believe in God means to understand the question about the meaning of life...to believe in God means to see that life has a meaning" (N.B.8/7/16.p.74). To have a sense of wonder at existence or to see that life has meaning is to believe in a transcendent God, so that God is taken to be the transcendental condition for making sense of attitudes, intuitions and moral awareness. This indescribable and inexpressible Transcendence stands over against the 'I'. Wittgenstein's idea of God is undeveloped, but seems to be that of traditional theism. His picture theory of meaning ruled out theological speculation as the signs contained in theological propositions had no proper reference. For Wittgenstein, God was ineffable and such ineffability naturally falls outside the possibility of contingent propositions. The kind of necessity God must have in order to be God is not specified by Wittgenstein. Religious language is, accordingly, a misuse of language for 'the solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time' (6.4312). Schopenhauer* and Kant had placed

* For a useful exposition of Schopenhauer see Gardiner[30]. It is difficult to be certain what Schopenhauer meant about the border of what can and cannot be said and by what he meant by experience or intuition.

ethics and religion beyond 'theoretical reason', but Wittegenstein placed them beyond language. Wittgenstein's mysticism, however, is described in Schopenhauerian terms. There is no theological puzzle to be solved by analysis (6.5). The important subject of religion is not a subject for discussion at all and once all the possible questions of science have been answered there are no questions left and silence is the answer (6.52). Religious belief belongs to the inexpressible because the unconditional and absolute must lie beyond factual language.

Wittgenstein's teaching on religion has sometimes been described as pantheistic, but I believe this is mistaken. He does say, "God is the meaning of the world"[31] and that we can call the meaning of life or the world 'God'[32], but these remarks must be understood in their proper context. He asks, "What do I know about God and the purpose of life?" and answers, "I know that this world exists. That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field. That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning. That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it...that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world. The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God. And connect with this the comparison of God to a father"[33]. A pantheistic interpretation of such a passage seems to rest on a misunderstanding because he does not identify God with the world, but with the meaning of the world and this must lie outside it. It is easy to understand how a pantheistic interpretation of religion is attributed to Wittgenstein because of the odd way in which he expresses himself. He says, "How things stand, is God. God is how things stand"[34]. Pears thinks this is pantheistic and claims that for Wittgenstein God is equated with the world[35]: Zemach argues that for Wittgenstein God

is the essence of the world in that God is the world's form and meaning[36]. He says "Factuality is what makes the world a world. Factuality lies at the basis of the whole Tractatus and it is, if I am not greatly mistaken, what Wittgenstein names[37] God". It is difficult to see how this squares with Wittgenstein's belief in the 'higher sphere'. In the Notebooks Wittgenstein says, "We are in a certain sense dependent and what we are dependent on we call God"[38]. The whole note says, "To believe in a God* means to understand the question about the meaning of life. To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter. To believe in God means to see that life has a meaning...we <u>are</u> in a sense dependent, and what we are dependent on we call God. In this sense God would simplybe fate, or, what is the same thing: the world - which is independent of our will. I can make myself independent of fate. There are two godheads: the world and my independent I"[39]. In this 'Double Godhead' theory he appears to equate the world with God. According to my reading of this he is saying that God cannot reveal himself in the world since its meaning must lie outside the world i.e. God transcends the world. Schopenhauer's ghost appears to lie across the Notebooks more than it does in the Tractatus and it is likely that the Tractatus modifies the position expressed in the Notebooks. But even in the Notebooks religion is said to arise from a sense of wonder or of personal guilt and inadequacy and not through the facticity of the world. He says, "Only from the consciousness of <u>the uniqueness of my life</u> arises religion"[40]. In seeking to explain Wittgenstein's difficult remarks it is possible to suggest that for Wittgenstein both 'God' and 'I' lie outside the world since they are

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* In a two-month period Wittgenstein used the word 'God' a dozen times, but in the Tractatus there is but one remark in 6.432 N. Garver agrees that 6.423 repudiates the Notebooks. See essay No. 7 on Wittgenstein's Pantheism. Essays on Wittgenstein Ed. by E.D. Klenke, University of Illinois, 1971.

transcendental conditions of ethics and logic. Neither 'God' nor the 'I' can be represented in states of affairs and cannot be regarded as objects of experience. Both stand over against the world as an inexpressible limit. Both are, therefore, transcendental. To believe in God is to understand the question about the meaning of life for God is the meaning of the world or of life. God, as transcendent, cannot reveal Himself in the world since reference to God cannot be a picture of what is the case. The meaning of all facts and values lies beyond the limit of what can be said. Von-Wright's rejection of a pantheistic interpretation of Wittgenstein's religious remarks seems to be correct and it is important, as he says, to understand this[41]. Dilman's remark that God's transcendence is contrasted with the devil's worldliness supports this view[42]. It would have helped if Wittgenstein had written more clearly about the matter.

Whatever the correct interpretation of the Notebooks, in the Tractatus Wittgenstein says plainly that God does not reveal himself in the world (6.423). His purpose in saying this was to show that the object of philosophic inquiry is also 'the object of religious feelings'[43]. This does not mean that logic is a form of theology[44], but that since the world consists of all the facts it has semantic meaning and this meaning must refer to something which can only be shown by transcending the picture. But there is also a non-semantic use of meaning and this is used to refer to God or 'the mystical', but this cannot be elucidated further (6.522). To discuss the non-semantic meaning of the miracle of existence is impossible. To search for an understanding of the 'meaning' of meaning is to do metaphysics and this is impossible.

Wittgenstein's own logical system led him to realise that he had tried to say what, on his own grounds, can only be 'shown'. His own propositions are elucidations of his theory of 'showing'. He has used a meta-language to describe his clear language based upon a strict truth-functional device and within such logical language propositions of his meta-language could not appear. Every proposition of the Tractatus is, therefore, meaningless because it is metaphysical, but Wittgenstein believed that his own propositions provided a definitive solution to the problems that troubled his Viennese contemporaries. He concludes the Tractatus with the words, "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (7), substituting the word 'silence' for Schopenhauer's 'nothing'[45]. He reveals an attitude to existence which cannot be analysed or even communicated. Somehow the penny needs to drop for us to see it.

The Tractatus does establish the distinction between the factual and the mystical on the basis of the picture theory and thus Wittgenstein fulfilled his aim of preserving the distinction between the 'lower' and the 'higher' spheres. According to the Tractatus, therefore, religious belief is non-cognitive in character since it either makes no factual assertions or if it does such propositions refer to impossible states of affairs. McPherson says that Wittgenstein's view that in religion we are asking questions that cannot be answered is 'to see the pointlessness of religion'[46]. On the contrary, Wittgenstein's notion of 'wordless faith' is advanced in order that the point of religion can be grasped. The effects of poetry, art, music and architecture, together with one's intuitions of what is good, are produced not by what they say, but by what they manifest or 'show' about values and the life of the spirit. He 'showed' the meaning of life by making it clear that propositions cannot make it explicit.

7. The Futility of Seeking Justification for 'The Mystical'

If the picture theory is the correct way of showing how language represents reality and, if logical language is concerned exclusively with contingent states of affairs, then no contingent or experimental propositions could represent religious beliefs. It is, therefore, futile to try to give intellectual justification for either ethics or religion and any attempt to do so trivialises such subjects.

Having shown that the aim of the Tractatus was to provide a critique of language capable of establishing the distinction between the factual and the mystical, it is clear that Wittgenstein justified this distinction in the book. Such justification, however, is acceptable only if three propositions are correct:-

1. That the referential picture theory of meaning is correct.
2. That the mystical notion of 'showing' is tied to the logical notion of showing.
3. That the doctrine of the inexpressibility of the mystical is itself coherent.

It is now possible to assess the credibility of Wittgenstein's attempt to show that religious belief is inexpressible and therefore non-justifiable. If the three propositions fail to hold then anti-Wittgenstein arguments can be invoked against the notion of the inexpressibility of religious beliefs.

CHAPTER 3

The Rejection of the Tractatus Method of Dealing with Religious Belief

Having shown that the Tractatus did achieve Wittgenstein's purpose of providing a theory designed to make secure the factual/mystical distinction and having shown that this theory culminated in his doctrine of showing, it was demonstrated that two varieties of that doctrine are to be found in the Tractatus. In this chapter Wittgenstein's approach to'the mystical' is evaluated and arguments are advanced to show that the Tractatus method of dealing with the ethico-religious sphere is unacceptable. In particular, his method of dealing with religion is shown to be inadequate. Criticisms of the picture theory, upon which the justification of the factual/mystical distinction is based, will be given briefly in the first section of the chapter. The argument that the Tractatus contains two different and unrelated doctrines of showing will be examined in the next section and shown to be the case. The third section homes in on Wittgenstein's mystical doctrine of showing in particular and seeks to show that it is incoherent and self-contradictory. In the final section, reference is made to similar arguments advanced by other writers and these are also shown to be inadequate. The conclusion will be drawn that an appeal to the notion of inexpressible mysticism as the recommended way of justifying religious beliefs is to be rejected.

1. The Picture Theory is Unacceptable

The Tractatus thesis is based on two assumptions, each of which is questionable and these will be discussed in this section.

(i) The assumption that language acquires its meaning in one way only - through picturing reality, that its purpose, therefore, is to state facts and that it is referential in meaning (that 'names' designate 'objects' and that such objects are simple).

(ii) The assumption that language has a clear, logical structure like the language of mathematics.

It will be argued that to describe the relationship between language and reality as one of picturing is both inappropriate and unacceptable.

According to the Tractatus, language not only pictures reality, but it is implied that picturing is the very essence of language. The arrangement of elements in a situation may be pictured by arrangements of elementary parts of language so that the simplest elements in language (excluding logical constants) are said to be names which refer to objects. The meaning of a word thus consists essentially in a situation or state of affairs to which the word refers. Propositions (which consist of elementary constituents joined together) which state facts picture the facts which they state. A central place in this theory is given to 'naming'. In criticism it has been pointed out:-

(a) that there are many words that are not names of anything;

(b) that there is more than one way of talking about a thing and, therefore, many ways in which it could be understood. If the word 'bat' is uttered this could be used to signify different things and even if it was clear from the context that it signified one particular object it could still be taken to mean different things. e.g. 'Take a bat', 'buy a bat', 'I want a bat', or 'not that bat' etc. If the word 'bat' was uttered during a cricket match, it could mean many different things. It might be used as a verb. To say that a word 'names' an object does not show how words get their meaning nor how words mean.

(c) The assumption that language must have the clear logical structure the Tractatus assumes it has is to be rejected. Wittgenstein argues that the propositions can be shown, by analysis to be built up from elementary parts according to precise rules and that language does have this logical structure. In the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein's retraction represents a more flexible approach to the meaning of language. In the Tractatus, he introduced the notion of language-meaning in terms of mathematical logic. This was not something waiting to be discovered in language itself, but a preconceived idea (P.I. 107)[1] invented to solve some of the puzzles being considered by Russell. The notion that there are simple elements called 'names' which refer to 'objects' cannot be made to work. The notion that there must necessarily exist exact logical relations between the different things we say is unhelpful, misleading and false. We cannot specify in advance of the use of language all the grammatical and logical conditions to determine what something could mean. The rules for using language are diverse and the forms of language are flexible and various. In ordinary language many propositions are adequate and their meaning requires no further analysis (P.I. 60). In his later writings Wittgenstein rejects logical atomism and all similar attempts to seek for a crystalline pure language (P.I. 108). There is no precise logical structure hidden beneath language and no final analysis of forms of expressions is possible. The search for a hidden structure imposes on language preconceptions which it doesn't possess.

(d) To say a word has no meaning when nothing corresponds to it is to confuse the meaning of a name with the bearer (P.I. 40). If a 'slab' is destroyed the meaning of the word 'slab' is not.

When a man dies the bearer of the name dies, but not the meaning; things may pass out of existence but we can still find a meaning for the words.

From these observations it follows that the meaning of a word cannot be regarded as consisting in the simple reference of a name to an object. Questions about meaning are different from questions about who, or which thing is meant. Questions about reference only arise in cases where the meaning is already known and questions about the meaning of a word are questions about the use of a word. A word which has a constant meaning can be used to refer to many different particular things and we can find words with different meanings but with the same reference, e.g. 'he', 'John', 'the man'. It is doubtful whether there are elementary propositions in which names stand for objects and in any case the meaning of a proposition does not become clearer if it is broken down into more elementary or atomic propositions, e.g. 'John is ill and Mary is crying'. The meaning of this complex proposition does not become clearer by analysis into separate simple elements, indeed it may lose its meaning.

(e) Negating sentences. The picture theory does not hold for these, e.g. 'the cat is not on the mat'. It is impossible to say what is the situation pictured for it is possible to imagine an infinite number of possible situations in which the statement 'the cat is not on the mat' is depicted.

(f) Hypothetical propositions. Propositions may be true and meaningful even when none of its clauses reflect an existing situation, e.g. 'if John is ill, Mary will be upset'.

(g) False Propositions. According to the picture theory a false proposition should have no meaning since it does not represent any states of affairs i.e. the proposition cannot be a situation of the kind portrayed.

(h) The confusion behind the picture theory is that of Meaning and Reference. Sometimes we use the word 'means' to talk about the sense of an expression and sometimes to talk about reference, e.g. 'I meant John when I described the best man' is a referential expression, but in 'John is a liberal', if someone asks what this statement means we are concerned about the sense or meaning of John's political allegiance and not about who we are referring to. I have already pointed out that (i) questions about reference arise only where the meaning is already known and (ii) that the same word can be used to refer to different things and (iii) that words with different meanings may have the same reference and (iv) that when things pass out of existence the signifying words do not.

It follows that the pictorial conception of meaning as we have it in the Tractatus is an inappropriate and unacceptable model of the meaning of language, how it is used and understood. Language does relate to reality, but it is unhelpful to speak of this relationship as that of picturing. In criticising naming and picturing it follows that meaning cannot be regarded as consisting in the reference of names to objects. Language does not get its meaning in one way and this invites us to consider the notion of the diversity of meaning in terms of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. The relationship between language and reality is more complex than the Tractatus allows. In the Investigations (P.I. 23, 66) he stresses the many different kinds of language-use and repudiates assumptions that the essential characteristic

of language is to state facts by means of a picturing relationship. His later writings show that:

(i) logical analysis is not needed for meaningful communication, and;

(ii) that there is not one single account of the way words function.

(i) A further difficulty is the ambiguity of Wittgenstein's notion that one cannot <u>say</u> what picturing is, but that it can only be <u>shown</u>. The Tractatus thesis goes beyond what can be said because Wittgenstein's own propositions are not elementary propositions nor reducible to them. To give an exposition of logical atomism and to conclude that logical atomism is nonsense <u>is</u> nonsense. According to the Tractatus there are no substantially necessary truths, but in trying to say the unsayable Wittgenstein treats his own propositions as if they were substantial and necessary. The whole argument of the Tractatus is contradictory since Wittgenstein claimed to be setting forth a definitive theory and yet he says its truth can only be shown. The thesis is also circular since his metaphysics of silence is underpinned by a logical critique which is itself dependent on metaphysics.

2. <u>The Two different and Unrelated Doctrines of Showing Examined</u>

The attempt to justify the factual/mystical distinction is based upon the picture theory which is also grounded in Wittgenstein's concept of showing. Now, if it can be demonstrated that to 'show' in aesthetics, ethics and religion is different in meaning from the logical form of showing, then anti-Wittgensteinian arguments can be invoked against the notion of Wittgenstein's belief in mystical silence.

Pears[2] and Hudson[3] have argued that the two notions of showing which appear in the Tractatus seem to be linked by nothing more than a

verbal coincidence or consist in only a negative point of analogy. Clearly, Wittgenstein regarded both the logical notion and the mystical notion as ineffable and made his appeal in both cases to intuition. The hard distinction, however, which he draws between the factual and the mystical is not identical in meaning with the distinction which is drawn between language and reality.

When dealing with the logical notion of showing Wittgenstein says that in order to be meaningful language must be a picture of what is the case. Propositions in that language must refer to reality and by investigating the rules we can see how they refer to it. To understand the logic of a proposition we need to have a proper rule system and by this it is easy to see all the possibilities in which the signs can be configured. By this method we understand the logical structure of the proposition. Such propositions, however, cannot represent what they have in common with the state of affairs they purport to represent and this cannot be informatively stated, but only shown[4]. This instantiation of logical form is clearly different in meaning from the mystical notion of showing. The logical notion is concerned with the necessary conditions for using fact-stating language. The mystical notion is not the necessary condition for using factual language, but is concerned with transcendental 'meaning of the world', the 'I', the 'will', 'death', 'God', and 'the problem of life'. Wittgenstein's concept of the 'higher sphere' is not derived from his discussions about logical form for one could accept either doctrine without necessarily accepting both. Furthermore, the logical sense of showing is tied to the idea of picturing, the mystical sense of showing is not, but is concerned with the 'higher sphere' of the ethico-religious. Also, the mystical sense of showing is shown by

types of feelings of the transcendent and is unsayable and to use language about it is to trivialise it; this cannot be said about the logical notion of ineffability. The distinction in meaning becomes clear once understanding of the nature of the mystical is obtained and, therefore, a more detailed examination of the mystical doctrine of showing will now be undertaken.

3. The Mystical Notion of Showing is Incoherent and Self-contradictory

By 'mystical' Wittgenstein includes some subjects which are usually kept distinct and in the concluding propositions, together with other remarks, it is possible to gather some idea of what he meant whilst recognising the problems of exegesis. When he discusses the subject of the mystical he is not talking about certain necessary conditions of using significant language nor referring to the relation between the world and language. He talks about (1) the sense or meaning of reality and (2) the value of the world. But within these two ideas he uses a number of different notions expressed by different phrases and it isn't easy to be clear about his exact meaning:-

1. There are expressions of feelings or intuitions about the world and life:
   (i) The experience of wondering at the existence of the world; that it exists.
   (ii) The experience of feeling absolutely safe whatever happens.
   (iii) The experience of being conscious about the uniqueness of 'my life'.
2. The mystical is said to show itself in Art, Music, Architecture, Poetry and Literature when an effect is produced which transcends the factual.
3. The mystical is said to show itself in Action when the unsayable can be seen (Engelmann,[5] Hudson,[6]) by the way we live. (I believe this point is exaggerated and finds little support in Wittgenstein's

writings.

4. Any absolute value is said to 'show' the mystical.
5. Seeing the world of facts as a whole is said to 'show' something of the mystical as the world of facts is reflected upon and thus transcended. To transcend this world is to apprehend another reality. Religious experience arises through seeing the facticity of the world and this points to a transcendent meaning which is 'God'.
6. The mystical 'shows' itself (in the Notebooks) when a man has an awareness of guilt and personal inadequacy. Malcolm[7] and Anscombe[8] draw attention to this.

A number of difficulties arise here because of the vague way in which Wittgenstein expressed himself and even if some idea is formed of what Wittgenstein meant, it becomes clear that what he had to say about the mystical is not only incoherent, but is actually self-contradictory.

In the Lecture on Ethics[9] Wittgenstein says that expressions used to describe experiences of wonder and feeling safe are misuses of language. In the paper Wittgenstein says, "Now I want to impress on you that a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through all ethical and religious expressions. All these expressions seem, prima facie, to be just similes" and later he says that as soon as we drop the simile and try to state the facts which stand behind it, there are no such facts. He concludes that what at first appeared to be a simile 'now seems to be mere nonsense'. Wittgenstein here admits that he cannot identify what it is he experiences when he wonders or feels safe and therefore the essence of such expressions is deep nonsense. It should be noted that Wittgenstein uses the word simile in an unusual

way unlike such expressions as 'He was as quick as lightening' where facts can be described. Wittgenstein is using expressions such as 'I wonder at the miracle of existence' in a special way which he admits is also a misuse of language. Redpath[10] suggests that if one can say that something is a sort of wonder, that itself constitutes a fact. In the lecture Wittgenstein rejects the idea that ethics could be treated scientifically and insists that everything he says about the absolute is nonsense[11].

The notion that ethics cannot be discussed logically is to be rejected. Hudson points out that discussing moral issues often results in better practice[12] and Redpath[13] argues that if Wittgenstein's view was taken literally it could lead to moral attitudes which reasonable men would find repugnant. Wittgenstein's argument for the rejection of all ethical propositions is arbitrary. Questions about values are certainly different from questions about facts, but it requires something better than the picture theory to rule out the theoretical possibility that such questions cannot be discussed. And if value judgments express something, the possibility of identifying that something must be raised. If we reject Wittgenstein's restriction of language to factual boundaries then the way is opened for ethical propositions. It is far from clear that such language would trivialise morals, indeed it may well help to improve them.

It is not just Wittgenstein's rejection of ethical propositions that is unacceptable, but also his treatment of other aspects of the mystical. In his appeal to intuition, Wittgenstein provides no criteria for being able to identify a mistaken intuition. And it follows that no way is provided for being able to distinguish between

a true and a false belief. It is impossible to distinguish spurious beliefs from legitimate ones if appeal is made solely to intuition. Paradoxically, Wittgenstein expresses his own feelings of wonder, of feeling absolutely safe, and his sense of inadequacy, in language. In doing so he ought to be able to give cognitive content to that which is said to be the object of the feeling. An expression of feeling or intuition or experience is different from a sigh. This point is crucial. In the Tractatus (3.2) he says that his own propositions express thoughts and that a man's thoughts should be expressible in propositions. If what is thinkable is sayable then the content of thought is expressible. Feeling experiences presumably include thought and as such are both sayable and contingent. It is contradictory to appeal to an ineffability of intuition whilst at the same time to insist that what is thinkable is sayable.

Secondly, if Wittgenstein insists that it is 'shown' in an expressible way, it is difficult to see how the properties of what is shown are to be identified. Hudson[14] asks whether those who do not see as Wittgenstein sees are like colour-blind people who cannot see red. Even if the property of what is shown could be identified, it would have to be a 'non-natural property'[15]* and Wittgenstein's expression that the mystical shows itself would be tautologous. Something that is inexpressible and indefinable, about which no evidence can be given, is surely incoherent.

It is argued that Wittgenstein suggests that the mystical might show itself in action when the unsayable is seen. Once more this raises

* Wittgenstein could perhaps produce a defence against Hudson in terms of 'agreement' c.f. Zettel and On Certainty. See ref. 1, Chapter 4.

the question as to how it would be logically possible to identify it without mistake. If certain ideals are examples in action to be copied by others, Hudson argues that we must be able to give reasons which would be acceptable to everyone and which would be recognised by everyone without mistake.[16] If what is being experienced or felt or shown in action is the mystical then Wittgenstein's appeal to obviousness is not only in direct conflict with his logical notion of showing, which is something that has to be uncovered by analysis, but the problem of identification is insuperable.

The most difficult notion of the mystical, however, is Wittgenstein's idea that to see the world as a limited whole is to reach beyond the world to 'God' outside time and logical relations. This notion is not of something in addition to other things, but is discoverable at the limit of thought and language. Apparently an effect is produced in us as we look back on the world of facts and are able to apprehend another reality. Just as the meaning of factual language can only be 'shown' by the picturing form, the meaning of the world can only be 'shown' as something that transcends the world. The 'mystical' is the ground of the possibility of factual language, but does not itself enter into such language. It is difficult to follow Wittgenstein here, but if the above is a correct description of what Wittgenstein had in mind there is a subtle shift of the use of the word 'meaning'. Wittgenstein crucially uses two senses of the word 'meaning' to make this point. 'Meaning' in the first sense refers to semantic meaning and is related to the logical notion of showing. In the second sense Wittgenstein uses it to talk about the purpose of life. For this reason the mystical sense in which the meaning of the world

is taken to be the ultimate purpose of life represents an illegitimate extension of his logical use of showing. To say that the totality of propositions discloses a Transcendent reality and to call this 'God' conceived as the meaning of life is not something Wittgenstein gives reasons for believing, but is a preconception introduced to give theological support to the already incoherent and contradictory remarks about the mystical. Furthermore, he establishes no criteria by which we can move legitimately from ordinary human experiences (which is what he takes his intuitions to be) to talk about a transcendent God who is ineffable in a different sense from the ineffable necessary conditions of significant language.

The conclusion drawn by Wittgenstein is that it is logically impossible and morally repugnant to seek to provide intellectual justification for ethics and religion since, according to his theory, these transcendental ideas lie outside the boundary of language and are by nature inexpressible. Wittgenstein thus believed that he had satisfactorily demonstrated the distinction between the representational and the mystical. Such an argument is to be firmly rejected since:-

1. The picture theory fails to show how words mean.
2. There are two distinct doctrines of showing.
3. The mystical notion is incoherent and self-contradictory.

It follows that anti-Wittgensteinian arguments can be invoked against his view that it is wrong to seek justification for ethical statements and religious beliefs.

4. Views Similar to Wittgenstein's are also to be Rejected

In this concluding section reference will be made to certain appeals to intuitions or experiences and to the claim that these provide

the best foundation for religious belief. It will be shown that such appeals are inadequate because they are logically incoherent. As the picture theory relates to contingent propositions which represent what is true or false (i.e. what happens to be the case), it follows that traditional metaphysical theology is ruled out if the theory is true. Clearly a proposition about a God who transcends the world cannot be a picture of what is the case[17] and it follows that the propositions of theology are not significantly descriptive. Consequently, an alternative to traditional natural theology has been sought and an argument to God has been advanced from a consideration of religious intuitions and experience. Wittgenstein's concluding propositions in the Tractatus invite us to examine the possibility that it is possible to have inexpressible feelings of the ineffable which (1) stand in no need of further justification and which, (2) constitute true religious belief.

A number of thinkers have been attracted to a similar view. Lewis has argued that whilst we cannot specify properly what constitutes an intuition of a Transcendent Being, it is mediated through prophets, priests and poets as the conscious mind is shown its limitations[18]. Wittgenstein's attraction to the illumination shown through poetry and music is similar to this. Daly argues that there is mystery in all knowing, something that is, in ordinary concepts, not expressible in contingent terms[19]. He (and Lewis) differ from Wittgenstein since he thinks that metaphysical knowledge is possible, but he agrees with Wittgenstein that there is an element in religion which is indescribable. This theology of feeling has a long ancestry but was made fashionable in the nineteenth Century by Schleiermacher[20] and also by

Ritschl[21]*. Wittgenstein's idea of the whole standing over against the 'I' is akin to Schleiermacher's belief that the essence of religion could be found within man's finite experience of the world as he submits to the Transcendent standing over against him[22]. Belief in God is controlled by what a man feels[23] so that to say there is a God who is Transcendent is to say something about man's inner experience. K. Barth has pointed out that for Schleiermacher the truth of religion was best conveyed through wordless music or poetry because the divine or the mystical is ineffable[24].

This appeal to religious intuition and experience has found support in the Twentieth Century. Otto's 'The Idea of the Holy'[25] is an enquiry into the non-rational faculty in religion**. It has an affinity with Wittgenstein's idea that religion is concerned with a feeling experience of the Transcendent. Otto analysed the non-rational part of religion or that which cannot be put into words. Men have feelings of awe and mystery when they participate in worship or in religious ceremonies or have experiences of holiness or religious dread in 'holy' places. This feeling of holiness cannot be adequately described by language and is awakened rather than taught.

The Tractatus idea that religion has to do with 'what cannot be said', therefore, has encouraged some to locate the nature of religion in non-rational and incommunicable experiences. McPherson originally accepted the Tractatus teaching on this and argued that religion rested on a non-rational factor of the kind discussed by Otto[26], but he later

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* For a good account of this see (1) J. Richmond, Faith and Philosophy. Hodder and Stoughton, 1966 (2) H.R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, Fontana, 1964. Nisbet and Co., 1937 (2nd Edn.).

**He also recognised the rational side of religion but was more interested in the numinous experience of 'mysterious tremendum et fascinans'. He is criticised in N. Smart, Philosophers and Religious Truth, S.C.M. 1964, 2nd edn., 1969, p. 113.

denied the inner experience theory[27]. Mystics of different religious persuasions have appealed to inner experiences of rapture, bliss, and enlightenment in which they have claimed to have had direct experience with something that cannot be thought or spoken. The inner light idea of the Quakers, the awakening of 'Zen' or Satori, Shankara's monistic enlightenment, Sufi mysticism, and many other appeals to intuition are illustrations of the notion that the divine reality is not known through verbalised thought, but is experienced directly through some feeling experience, because for such mystics experience of God is beyond words.

This approach to religious belief is wholly unsatisfactory and is to be rejected for the following reasons:-

1. Such accounts often ignore the content of intuitions and experiences. Some criteria are needed to allow us to distinguish between, say, the claim of Aldous Huxley, who believed that he had a Beatific Vision as a result of taking mescaline, and the experience of St. Paul on the Damascus road. If someone claims to have an experience or intuition of the Transcendent or God we are entitled to ask for some specification of what God is. Religion is made invulnerable by saying that it consists of experiences of the absurd (Kierkegaard) or of the paradoxical (Barth) or what is mysterious (Lewis), but if it is a genuine experience of God it must have content and be capable of verbalisation and conceptualisation if the charge of illusion is to be withstood. By appealing to an indescribable mysticism as Wittgenstein and others have done, the door is open to all sorts of zealots. If it is said that such experiences are private and not communicable, nor susceptible to

public testing or discussion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to test between valid and spurious intuition. Unless the content of what is experienced is disclosed in language, the distinction between true and false belief disappears.

2. Mystics do write and talk about their intuitions and Wittgenstein himself used language to refer to the 'higher sphere'. If such reference is to be retained it must be justified in some way. Wittgenstein talked of 'God' and if by this he meant to refer to the Source and Origin of all possibility and not 'the actualization of a possibility'[28], it is pertinent to ask if the word 'God' is being used as a proper name or an improper name or what. Those who try to justify such talk and at the same time make their appeal to intuition or experience, sometimes suggest that the language of religious experience is analogous to poetry or to symbolism or interpret it existentially. Ramsey argues that religious language is 'logically odd' and that to treat all religious language literally is to fail to understand it[29]. No doubt poetry is a 'useful antidote to the craze for straightforward language'[30], but a skilled poet can present a false set of beliefs[31]. In order to be able to test for nonsense in religion we need to know that to which the analogies and pictures and symbols refer. Some religious uses of language are meaningful as poetry or as symbolism, but if they are translated into assertions they must make semantic sense. Much existential interpretation suffers from the same lack of clarity.

3. When Wittgenstein and others appeal to experiences they often fail to recognise that the word 'experience' is used ambiguously. Flew points out that experience includes emotions, perceptions,

beliefs, convictions, and dispositions as well as imagination, dreams, visions, and the like[32]. If there is such a thing as religious experience, whether it is expressed as feeling absolutely safe or whatever, it must include thinking and, according to Wittgenstein, if something is thinkable it is sayable.

4. If it is accepted that religious intuitions and experiences are authentic experiences which include thoughts, it would not follow necessarily that such experiences were experiences of 'God'. Miles[33] thinks that it is never correct to say 'A had an experience of God' because we do not normally say 'A had the experience of...' followed by a proper name. It is, he claims, legitimate to say 'A had the experience of God's presence'. Mitchell tries to get round the problem by suggesting that the word 'God' functions as an improper name because the use of 'God' is not based on acquaintance with the being it denotes as it is the case with 'Tom'[34]. Miles[35] and Durrant reject this[36]. The attempt of Miles to justify experiences of God's presence fails to show that such experiences can be clearly understood in the sense of being an experience of a Transcendent being. If religious experiences are commended as descriptions of human intuitions or feelings, it is difficult to see how reference to God can be made meaningful without some independent considerations. If, on the other hand, mysticism is conceived in purely human and natural terms, the term 'God' either becomes superfluous or a pantheistic interpretation of religion must be accepted. Both views exclude traditional theism.
5. The argument from religious experience to God is not absurd if we could know on other grounds that God exists[37], but it does rely on 'other credentials'[38], such as some authority or revelation etc.[39] It would seem that a religious believer must be able to establish on

other grounds that God exists before any sense can be given to the notion of a genuine religious experience of the Creator of the world.[40] The Tractatus position excludes this as a possibility, but it would appear to be the only way of connecting religious intuitions or experiences with a Transcendent Being. To take this way would be to seek to justify religious belief by invoking some argument independent of the claim that religious experiences are self-authenticating[41].

The conclusion to be drawn is that so-called intuitions or feelings of the Transcendent God do stand in need of justification since (1) they must be expressible if they have content and (2) if they refer to God we need to know on other grounds that God exists and (3) that in order to be able to distinguish between true and false beliefs and between genuine and spurious experiences some criteria independent of such beliefs and experiences need to be provided. These observations reinforce the criticisms already made in this chapter against appeals to intuitions and experiences of the 'mystical'.

Wittgenstein's early view that religious belief can (1) only be indirectly communicated because it is unsayable and (2) that religion is a matter of right intuitions or feelings and (3) that religious propositions confuse logic and poetry, is, therefore, to be rejected. This chapter concludes the analysis of Wittgenstein's early teaching about religious belief. A different view from this was explored by Wittgenstein on his return to philosophy after a period of absence from academic life. The next chapter deals with this new approach.

CHAPTER 4

Wittgenstein's Middle-period Philosophy and its Application to Religious Belief

This chapter describes Wittgenstein's changing views about the meaning of language on his return to philosophy and the consequences this has for religious belief. This mid-stream philosophy illustrates, not only the continuity between the so-called 'early' Wittgenstein and his later writings[1], a continuity argued for in recent work[2], but also the discontinuity between the calculus theory and his later ideas. The change from the calculus theory towards a constructivist* or functional approach to the question of language can be discovered in these 'mid-stream' writings and was directly influenced by Brouwer's** lecture in 1928 (March)[3]. Wittgenstein's new interest in philosophy led him to study the language of mythology and his views about these matters are illustrated in certain remarks[4] which he made about Frazer's analysis of primitive religions[5]. Wittgenstein's philosophical writings, together with these religious remarks, will be evaluated to show that according to Wittgenstein:-

1. Language is autonomous and does not depend on the empirical world.
2. Its meaning is based on human conventions and rules.
3. We can gain philosophical understanding by looking at primitive language which must not be judged by something external to it.
4. We get this understanding by tracing connections between one type of language and another.
5. Mythological and religious language are not explanations of how the world works.

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* Constructivism is the theory that the meaning of a sentence is explained in terms of the conditions regarded as appropriate for its employment.

**L.E.J. Brouwer, a Dutch mathematician, lectured at the invitation of the Vienna Circle.

6. The 'inexpressible' or 'mystical' now permeates all language.

7. It is futile to seek justification for religious beliefs .

A brief summary of avowed Wittgensteinian 'Fideists'* and their critics will be followed by a discussion of the difficulties presented by Wittgenstein and his supporters and arguments will be advanced to show that this second approach of Wittgenstein to religious beliefs is also unacceptable. The chapter divides into eight sections:-

1. An introduction.
2. The impact of Brouwer's lecture on Wittgenstein.
3. Attack on Tractatus' views with reference to Philosophische Bemerkungen [6] and Philosophische Grammatik[7].
4. An exposition of Wittgenstein's Remarks on Frazer's "Golden Bough".
5. The consequences these remarks have for religion.
6. A summary of supporters and critics of these views.
7. Reasons for rejecting this approach.
8. A conclusion.

The introduction seeks to connect the middle-period philosophy with that of the Tractatus period and this turns upon an understanding of Brouwer's constructivist theory which is dealt with in the second section. This prepares the way for the mid-stream writings in particular which are used to illustrate Wittgenstein's growing dissatisfaction with the calculus theory and which was to lead Wittgenstein to a different approach to the meaning of language. These changing ideas were applied by Wittgenstein to the subject of religion and section four reveals Wittgenstein's second method of dealing with religious beliefs by stressing its mythological character.

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* A term coined by Nielsen to describe those who argue that language-games are self-contained and who, therefore, subscribe to conventionalism. K. Nielsen, "Wittgensteinian Fideism". Philosophy XIII No. 161, 1967.

The consequences and implications this view has for religion are evaluated by an examination of those writers who both support and attack Wittgenstein's constructivism and this is undertaken in sections five and six. The reasons advanced by Wittgenstein and his supporters for accepting some form of conceptual relativism which his view implies are criticised in section seven and the conclusion is drawn that the mythological interpretation of religious beliefs is mistaken.

1. Introduction

In the Tractatus Wittgenstein had tried to say the unsayable, but he believed that he had put forward a correct and definitive theory of language through which all the problems of philosophy could be solved. He regarded his own propositions as 'rungs on the ladder to enlightenment'[8]. Believing his theory to be correct Wittgenstein gave up philosophy. This has been contested by Engelmann[9], Bartley[10], Toulmin and Janik[11] and Hudson[12] who argue that Wittgenstein did not really quit philosophy but deliberately chose to express 'the higher sphere' through action. This is an attractive suggestion, but it must be rejected since it was shown that Wittgenstein's idea of the mystical is connected with feelings rather than with action and since Wittgenstein actually says that he did leave philosophy[13]*. His interest in philosophy was re-awakened when he heard Brouwer's lecture. This is the view of Dummett[14], Baker[15], Hacker[16] and Richardson[17] and is convincingly argued by them.

During his absence from philosophy he took a job as a teacher and his unhappy experience in this profession was followed by another

* He says, "For since beginning to occupy myself with philosophy again, sixteen years ago". He wrote these words in January, 1945.

disappointment when he worked as a gardener. In 1926 he met with Schlick, Carnap, Waismann and Feigl to discuss the verificationist theory of meaning*; a theory which, having entertained for a short time, he eventually rejected. Since he never discussed the application of this theory to religion, this part of his developing philosophy lies outside the scope of this thesis. In any case, he never committed himself to the logical positivists' identification of verification procedures with the truth or falsity conditions of propositions, but he did continue discussions from 1930-1932 with Schlick and Waismann and these were published[18]. The really important turning point in Wittgenstein's life and in particular in his desire to examine the question of language again is to be traced to Brouwer's lecture in 1928.

2. The Impact of Brouwer's Lecture on Wittgenstein

Brouwer rejected Frege's realism and argued that mathematics and language in general derive their meanings from human conventions. He showed that mathematical knowledge could never be exact because its necessity lay in rules which had been agreed and was not derived from the empirical world. He was supported by Gödel whose theorem (produced in 1931) demonstrated that theorems can be produced which cannot be shown to be either true or false[19]. Brouwer extended the argument to include language in general and held that the philosophy of language is reflected in the philosophy of mathematics and vice versa, so that if conventions can be shown to play the role of rules in an abstract system such as mathematics then the notion of following a rule connects the philosophy of language with the philosophy of

* He was actually reluctant to take part in the discussions.

mathematics. According to Brouwer, linguistic conventions or rules regulate all language, but they represent the result of agreements made by human beings and there is no possibility of justifying such conventions. To know the meaning of any language all that is required is to describe the conventions and to know how to apply these. Neither mathematics nor philosophy can, therefore, be justified empirically. The consequences of this constructivism or conventionalism are:-

1. Philosophic activity cannot give a foundation to language.
2. Language requires no justification since it is freely created.
3. To know the meaning of a word we need only to describe the rules and to know how to apply them.

Brouwer developed these ideas in later papers[20] and continued to stress that mathematics, science and language should be regarded as human activities which can only be understood within a social context and that the rules which determine the meaning of these things have no foundation outside themselves.

These ideas gave Wittgenstein the inspiration to take up philosophy again and formed the content for much of his thought in the 1930's. Dummett shows that Wittgenstein's 'Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics' is constructivist in approach[21]. In this work Wittgenstein gives illustrations to show that the acceptance of a proof involves a decision to use a rule (R.F.M., II, sect. 26-30) and that there must be agreement about accepting certain techniques and calculations (R.F.M., II, sect. 74-76). The technique of calculating and the rules of calculation cannot be justified by any appeal to general facts of nature (R.F.M., V, sect. 14). Wittgenstein draws two conclusions:-

* Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics contain passages taken from Philosophische Bemerkungen and Philosophishe Grammatik.

1. No philosophical criticism of language is possible, but one can clarify the grammar or conventions of language (R.F.M., V sect. 13).
2. Philosophy cannot give a foundation to mathematics or language.

3. Attack on Tractatus' Views with Reference to Philosophische Bemerkungen and Philosophische Grammatik

In 1929 Wittgenstein had started to write Philosophische Bemerkungen and in it he still argues that we must use logic to investigate language (P.B. p. 52), but he begins to show that there are many ways in which language can be used and is used. In it (and in L.W.W.K.*) Wittgenstein expounds verificationism and retains some aspects of the picture theory. He argues that philosophy acquires the nature of the picture by analysing the rules of language (P.B., p. 85). He attacked the notion that generality could be represented by means of truth-functions and he rejected his early version of logical atomism (P.B.p.301). He does discuss, however, the possibility that mathematical language may be conventional and dismisses the view that the meaning of language can be discovered by some kind of ideal logic (P.B., pp. 105-114). Here we see Wittgenstein in a transitional stage of thinking and he suggests a functional theory of meaning at one point (P.B. 59).

It was not long before the picture theory itself came under attack. Sraffa convinced Wittgenstein that not all picture language itself could be reduced to that of logical form. During a conversation in a train Sraffa stroked his chin and asked Wittgenstein, "What is the logical form of that?". According to Von Wright's[22] interpretation of the incident Wittgenstein was asked what the grammar of the gesture was, but whatever the truth about the incident (Von Wright is

* L.W.W.K. or Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis. Ed. F.B. McGuiness. See ref. no. 18 this chapter.

usually reliable) it is clear from Wittgenstein's writings in the early 1930's that he was becoming interested in non-logical language and in particular, in the social contexts of language. In 1932 he started to write Philosophische Grammatik, his longest work, in which he attacks logical atomism and the search for an ideal language (P.G.p65). He began to explore the notion of language-games and family resemblances (P.G. pp. 289-295) which were to have a central place in his later writings. In P.G. 67 he uses the illustration that a word is like a tool or like a lever in the cabin of a locomotive - it gets its meaning in the way it is used. He criticises the idea that the meaning of a word represents a thing or a fact to which it corresponds and argues that one should not confuse the bearer of a name with the meaning of it (P.G. 63-4). He also questions ostensive theories and says that if we say 'tove' as we point to a pencil, a learner would not know whether the word referred to its hardness or to the fact that it is one (P.G. 60). The abstractionist theory of learning concepts is rejected. The meaning of the word 'red' cannot be explained by pointing to a red object and saying 'red' because this presupposes that the learner already shares the life of the word 'red' (P.B. 209) and possesses the criterion of correctness in order to identify it. By invoking mental images the meaning of colour-words is not demonstrated. The meaning of words cannot be defined by a reality outside language itself whether of things or of ideas in the mind. In order to understand a word or a name we need to know the skill of using it and this can only be understood in a context of a system of linguistic and non-linguistic activities. The picture theory cannot explain how children acquire concepts nor explain how words have a determinate

meaning. Taylor[23], who follows a functionalist line, states that questions about meanings are about the use of a word in general and questions about reference only arise in cases where the sense or meaning is already known. Questions about the meanings of words are different from questions about who or which thing is referred to. Wittgenstein now realised that the Tractatus account had failed to distinguish these things.

In the Philosophische Grammatik Wittgenstein discusses the picture theory and asks us to consider the different senses in which a picture is said to represent something. He compares a picture of a recognisable historical scene with a picture of a social occasion in a village inn which might represent a particular occasion or none (P.G. 164). In this 'genre' picture, if the artist wished to convey to us what it meant he would need to explain the picture to us. The first picture (a historical occasion) refers on the other hand to a particular situation or event. He makes the point that there are different kinds of pictures and any picture could mean many different things so that the pictures themselves do not actually tell us what they mean. A picture can be used to show what is the case or what might be the case or what is to be the case (P.G. 212), or it might not refer to anything in particular and from the picture alone it is impossible to tell what it means. Applying this to propositions Wittgenstein concludes that pictures can serve as models for sentences only when we can conceive the pictures as being able to tell us something in words and they cannot do this. The Tractatus view is rejected because assimilating propositions to pictures fails to explain how propositions do the work they do. The picture theory

cannot explain what gives propositions a determinate meaning.

The most fundamental result of Brouwer's influence on Wittgenstein was the rejection of any kind of realist conception of meaning. Wittgenstein insists that the elements of language cannot be defined or explained either by invoking the picture theory or by any kind of referential theory. He points out that the connection between language and reality can only be explained by words and says, 'language remains closed in upon itself, autonomous' (P.G. p. 97). Neither the grammar of mathematics nor the grammar of language are accountable to reality. Now if the meaning of language is not based upon any extra-linguistic reality (apart from human agreements) it would obviously be wrong to ask for a justification of it. This constructivist account limits us to describing the conventions which determine the meaning of particular utterances. The meaning of language is determined by the circumstances which are conventionally taken to justify its use. Being able to apply language is also a criterion of understanding it (P.G. 25). The rules for the use of a word determines its meaning (P.G. 133) and a description of these rules constitutes the grammar of the word (P.G. 23). Such rules cannot be identified independently of their use and application.

These 'mid-stream' writings show that neither logical atomism nor the picture theory can provide us with an adequate theory of meaning. Positively Wittgenstein argues that:-

1. Language is autonomous and not determined by objects or essences.
2. Its meaning is based on conventions and rules which are freely chosen by communities.

A new idea, possibly inspired by Sraffa, was to take Wittgenstein once again into the subject of religious belief. The idea was that philosophical understanding can be gained by looking at gestures and

rituals in order to connect the languages of different cultures. A discussion of this new thrust will open up an examination of some remarks Wittgenstein made concerning religious beliefs and will illustrate Wittgenstein's different approach to religion from that of the Tractatus period.

4. An Exposition of Wittgenstein's Two Sets of Remarks

In the Blue[24] Book (B.B. 17) Wittgenstein says that the study of language-games is the study of primitive forms of language. He says, "We shall with great advantage look at primitive forms of language if we wish to study the problems of whether propositions agree or disagree with reality". This interest in primitive language, and in particular in the language of mythology and symbolic action, led Wittgenstein to consider the religious language of primitive people. He wrote some remarks in which he traces the kinship between our own mythological expressions and the deep symbolism of primitive people in order to criticise the notion that such language should be treated as if it were scientific and explanatory. He wrote two sets of remarks about Frazer's 'The Golden Bough'*, one in 1931 and the second in 1936. These remarks illustrate Wittgenstein's belief that the meaning of concepts cannot be defined by a reality independent of language so that his consideration of religious mythology is to be understood as part of a general discussion about philosophy. In the Remarks he uses the word 'Gebrauch'** (custom) when he refers to the 'use' of language and this indicates why social anthropologists have found these Remarks interesting. After a brief exposition of the salient points in the Remarks, therefore, a discussion will follow in

* Sir J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, A Study in Magic and Religion. MacMillan, 1922.

**The word is used in P.B. 14; P.G. 23; R.F.M. IV.5. and many times in P.I.

which the consequences that these Remarks have for social anthropology and for philosophy and religion will be considered. I shall try to bring into sharp focus the view that alternative conceptual systems can stand on their own conventions and then criticise the notion.

Wittgenstein's first point is to reject Frazer's view that primitive man's beliefs are mistaken interpretations of reality. He says, "Frazer's account of the magical and religious notions of men is unsatisfactory: it makes these notions appear as mistakes" (p.28). Wittgenstein thinks that Frazer has misunderstood the language of religion. Secondly, Wittgenstein asserts that there is a deposit of mythology in all language including our own and it is, therefore, wrong to judge another culture's language by invoking our own. He says that the religious actions of an ancient priest-king are no different in kind 'from any genuinely mythological action performed today' (e.g. burning an effigy, kissing a photograph, confessing sins, throwing coins into water and wishing, swearing at a car that won't start. Wittgenstein argues that magic is a way of expressing wishes (p.31) and this is, of course, what modern men do when they throw coins into water or curse the car. Wittgenstein accuses Frazer of having a narrow spiritual outlook (p.31) since his 'explanations' of ancient magical practices fail to recognise the mythological language he has to invoke to 'explain' them. Frazer had suggested that magical observances were 'dictated by fear of the ghost of the slain', but Wittgenstein reminds us that we use words like 'soul' and 'spirit' in our own vocabulary (p.35).

This leads to a third point made by Wittgenstein. Ritualistic and mythological language is an expression of what is most important to man. He says, "That a man's shadow, which looks like a man, or that

his mirror image, or that rain, thunderstorms, the phases of the moon, the change of seasons, the likenesses and differences of animals to one another and to human beings, the phenomena of death, of birth and of sexual life, in short everything a man perceives year in, year out around him, part in his thinking (his philosophy) and his practices, is obvious, or in other words it is what we really know and find interesting" (pp. 32-33). Our interest in the mysteries of existence link us with men of all ages and the language in which it is expressed shows the kinship we have with primitive man.

A final point made by Wittgenstein in the first set of Remarks is that one way of obtaining philosophical understanding of the language of other cultures is to trace connections (p. 35) between words used in different societies, e.g. 'ghost' and 'soul' or 'spirit'. Wittgenstein was to develop this idea of comparison in his final work[25].

According to the First Set of Remarks, ancient mythological actions and beliefs did not represent a view of some objective reality which sophisticated men could describe as wrong ideas about 'the physics of things' (p. 33). This fails to recognise that we cannot criticise another culture without using our own criteria, but also represents a misunderstanding of the language of belief. Wittgenstein does not accept that any particular view of reality is true. He says, "every view is significant for him who sees it so". He concludes the First Set of Remarks by repeating an earlier remark that primitive man did not, as Frazer taught, act from opinions (p. 37).

In the Second Set of Remarks,Wittgenstein does not use the analogy of language and primitive ritual as he does in the First Set of Remarks.

He considers the Beltane Fire Festivals celebrated in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century. According to Frazer, these festivals were a survival of the primitive practice of human sacrifice. Wittgenstein rejects this historical explanation of the meaning of the Festivals (p. 40) because such an explanation reduces the mystery of what men were doing (p. 41) and this connects with the strangeness of what we feel in ourselves. He admits that historical connections have some value, but these do not explain the meaning of symbolic actions. The philosophical points are that (1) the events of life and our response to them influence what we identify as language and (2) very often the most important language is by nature non-theoretical and non-explanatory. Such mythology would be misunderstood if it were to be regarded as representing correct or incorrect ideas of reality. In the Second Set of Remarks he does not refer to any principle by which different mythologies or paradigms can be linked, but simply tries to get us to imagine what living within a different language-system must be like. To say something meaningfully is not determined by knowledge of the language which we carry in our minds, but solely by whether or not it can be applied in our life. Philosophical language, like mythological and symbolic action and ritual, is an expression of a perspective in which men live and think and act. It is, therefore, wrong to reduce language to a logical form and evaluate it in a set of propositions which can be regarded as true because it is an expression of a way of life. This echoes the teaching of P.G. that linguistic rules are adopted by different communities to regulate discourse and represent the limit of justification. To know the meaning of rituals and language we need simply to observe and describe the conventions. To understand the

meaning of language in any society we must not imagine that there is some independent reality to which language must conform, but attend to describing the conventions and rituals of culture.

What has been discovered from the mid-stream writings during Wittgenstein's transitional period of thinking, together with what he says about religious beliefs, can now be summarised and evaluated.

1. Language-use cannot be limited to logical language.
2. Referential theories fail to explain the meaning of language.
3. Language is autonomous and requires no justification.
4. It is based on conventions and rules freely chosen by people.
5. Such rules represent the limit of justification.
6. We can gain understanding by looking at primitive language.
7. By tracing connections we get insight into conceptual understanding.
8. We discover that mythological language should not be treated as mistaken views of reality.
9. Religious beliefs are not, therefore, explanatory hypotheses.
10. The criteria for what is meaningful is contextual.
11. Symbolism and mythology can only be understood in their interaction with action and attitudes and these express what men feel deeply about.
12. The 'inexpressible' or 'mystical' now permeates all language[26] - this does away with the distinction between logically factual language and the 'meaningless' language of ethics and religion.

5. <u>The Consequences These Remarks have for Religion</u>

Some might want to draw the conclusion that since philosophical activity cannot provide a justification of language it is wrong to give a justification for religious language in particular[27]. This would be premature. Apart from recognising that the meaning of

religious beliefs could not be justified by any empirical criteria, Wittgenstein does not extend his argument to include a consideration of religious language in particular, or by comparing it with scientific language. What Wittgenstein does provide us with is the theory that we can have paradigms or models for conceivable alternative systems of language and world-views and that it is futile to try to criticise other systems of belief. He invites us, instead, to describe the conventions and rules for application of particular systems of language and to understand these in their social context. His mythological interpretation of religious belief implies also that since mythological expressions do not represent true or false views of reality, the question of the truth of religious beliefs can only be decided from within a closed system of belief. This means that it is wrong to regard a religious belief as an explanation of how things are.

6. A Brief Summary of Supporters and Critics of this Approach

Winch[28] has argued that the criteria of meaning and of logic arise out of social life. He agrees with Wittgenstein that there is no extra-linguistic reality by which we can judge what is real or unreal, for language itself creates the intelligible and the real. There is, therefore, no independent and general conception of reality by which to judge any particular contextual conception of the world[29]. He goes further than Wittgenstein in distinguishing between various universes of discourse and insists that the scientific and religious modes of discourse each have their own criteria of intelligibility, rationality, coherence and meaning. He admits that he has been influenced by the Two Sets of Remarks about Frazer[30] and he uses these ideas to argue that the languages of different cultures and

particular language areas within a culture have their own contextual meaning. For Winch there can be no agreed criteria of correctness about religion if that is taken to imply that there is some universal and neutral truth by which all particular beliefs may be compared. He criticises Evans-Pritchard[31] for saying that Azande belief was unscientific and mistaken and he disagrees with MacIntyre[32], who (agreeing with Evans-Pritchard) says that by invoking our own criteria we can criticise Azande belief since our way of thinking is superior[33]. MacIntyre says that the view of Winch leads to a 'total relativism'[34], a charge which Winch not only rejects but of which he accuses MacIntyre![35] MacIntyre argues that to understand a concept involves not sharing it and he is prepared to reject Azande magic (and Mediaeval Christianity) as incoherent because it depends upon a social context which has disappeared[36]. Winch develops a functional theory of meaning in which the meaning of something is derived from its use and is attacked by MacIntyre for failing to recognise that some uses afford no sense. MacIntyre insists that agreeing to follow a rule is not sufficient to guarantee that the rule makes sense[37]. Both Winch and MacIntyre, however, agree that it is wrong to look for any justification of religious belief and MacIntyre argues elsewhere that religion is only justified by accepting some kind of religious authority and by that he means that it lacks any real justification[38].

Phillips[39], an avowed Wittgensteinian, claims that sceptics (like MacIntyre) do not really understand religious belief. He agrees with "The Remarks" that religious belief is not an interpretation of how things[40] are and contends that the conception of religion 'standing in need of justification is confused'[41]. He argues with Winch that the criteria of intelligibility and of reality cannot be

given outside a particular conceptual system and that there is no paradigm of rationality to which different types of rationality conform. For Phillips, religious concepts determine how things are; that is, they constitute reality. Religion, therefore, does not need to be shown to be intelligible or stands in need of being shown to be true since 'intelligibility' and 'truth' amount to agreements about conventions and use of language and that is contextually decided. He is opposed to any form of scepticism as represented by Neilsen[42], Martin[43], Flew[44], and Hepburn[45], but is also critical of any apologetic defences of religion such as those given by Crombie[46], Hick[47], and Mitchell[48].

Brown[49], Hudson[50] and Malcolm[51] are all critical of attempts to justify religious language by invoking so-called neutral criteria. Brown argues that we cannot think of reality standing over against conceptions of reality as the objective criteria of their adequacy and not only argues for the autonomy of language in general, but also for the autonomy of religious language itself. Hudson agrees with Brown's first point, but finds evidence in Wittgenstein's later writings to reject the notion that religious discourse is completely separate from ordinary language[52]. He criticises those who believe in scepticism and says that although a sceptic can be psychologically within religious belief, no valid argument or evidence can be produced to show that he can be logically (conceptually) within religious belief[53]. He attacks Nielsen[54] and Martin[55] and questions whether two general meanings can be attributed to words like real and rational, one meaning which is contextually determined and another which is neutral. He does think, however, that it is conceivable to imagine an 'overall conceptual structure' in terms of which it would make

sense to ask 'Is God real?'[56] Malcolm thinks that the demand for justification of religious beliefs represents a total misunderstanding of religious concepts. He supports the view that religious language has its own kind of logic and, following Wittgenstein, he thinks that evidence is irrelevant to belief. He insists that faith excludes belief that something is the case.[57]

There are differences of emphasis and even fundamental differences between the various supporters of a general Wittgensteinian position and, as a discussion of the issues involved depends upon Wittgenstein's later writings and in particular on his 'Lectures and Conversations'[58], this will have to be deferred until this material has been evaluated. However, certain difficulties which emerge from Wittgenstein's 'mid-stream' writings and from his 'Two Sets of Remarks' can be dealt with here. Reasons will be given for rejecting his general approach on the basis that the view can be neither coherently stated nor consistently believed since it involves an acceptance of some form of conceptual relativism.

7. Reasons for Rejecting this Approach

It has been argued by Charlesworth[59] that Winch's view of language is a radical form of relativism and that this is unacceptable. Trigg[60] accuses Winch, along with social anthropologists and Wittgensteinians in general, of being guilty of conceptual relativism. His charge has been denied by Beattie[61], but Trigg[62] continues to lodge the criticism against those who insist on the differences between conceptual systems. It is Trigg's belief that relativism can neither be stated coherently nor held consistently and this is the view I shall defend in rejecting Wittgenstein's notion of self-contained conceptual systems. Four points will be made.

1. Wittgensteinians and conceptual relativists in general believe that we cannot talk of any independent reality since our view of reality is conditioned by our concepts and our beliefs reflect these concepts. It follows that we cannot appraise the beliefs of another culture nor decide whether the claims of one culture are more correct than the claims of another. Now it is Trigg's view[63] that this cannot be advanced as a serious argument without contradiction. To say that there is no such thing as reality, but only different conceptual realities is to make a claim that purports to be objectively true and yet the relativist cannot accept that any particular view of reality is true. If two different societies S and S^1, have different concepts C and C^1 it is impossible to say there is a correct way of seeing the world. Yet paradoxically Wittgenstein and his followers believe their view is correct. If one is confined within one particular conceptual system it is impossible to state this view objectively since it merely expresses the view of one particular system. This is a circular argument and any proposition that is put forward to express it must either assume a neutral standpoint (which is ruled out) or presuppose the truth of what it asserts. To say that a scientific view or a primitive view reflects different ways of talking which cannot be compared assumes that relativism is correct, but that is the very issue that needs to be resolved. To assume conceptual relativism in order to state the thesis, an objectivity is claimed which the assumption will not allow. An absolute claim is made about something that is relative and relativists cannot avoid being absolutists about relativism. It is impossible to demonstrate conceptual relativism on any

rational grounds since relativists make reasoning relative to a system also. But to attempt to make reasoning itself relative cannot be done on any rational grounds without self-contradiction. Whatever view is held about the correctness of Bartley's theory of comprehensively critical rationalism, this would still hold*. Propositions which state the thesis of conceptual relativism are inconsistent with it.

2. Wittgenstein argues that the real issue is whether the meanings of words are defined for us by a reality outside language. Whatever we make of the constructivist theory (and I will return to this in chapter 5), the question of whether language reflects a true description of the world is surely crucial. The question of truth must not be assimilated to that of meaning. Language is not autonomous if that implies that we cannot be wrong about the facts. Wittgensteinians argue that mistaken beliefs can only be identified within a society and not from outside it. But this also begs the question since if 'A' believes something different from 'B', in society 'S' this assumes that 'A' and 'B' understand truth to be independent of what others think and believeand this is what conceptual relativists cannot accept. According to the relativist there can be no distinction between thinking or believing something true and its being true. This is to confuse language with reality. Wittgenstein argues that the Azande beliefs were not interpretations of the world, but this

*See W.W. Bartley III, The Retreat to Commitment (London, 1964) and for criticism W.D. Hudson, Religious Studies Vol. 9, 1973, pp. 339-350 and J.W.N. Watkins 'Comprehensively Critical Rationalism' Philosophy (Royal Inst. of Phil.), 1969, Vol. XLlV, pp. 57-62. For a defence of Bartley see J. Agassi, I.C. Jarvie, Tom Settle, 'The Grounds of Reason' Philosophy (1971, Vol. XLVl.)

fails to recognise that beliefs must connect with how things are if they are beliefs which purport to be true. Now, if the beliefs of each culture are reduced to an esoteric game in which it is impossible to judge the truth of what is believed because we have no common ground for arguing about which concepts of the world are correct, then no appeal can be made to facts or to reason or to evidence of any kind and truth is made to depend on what people believe. This is clearly mistaken since something can be the case whether it is believed or not. If this were not so we would have no way of denouncing flat-earth theorists or the practice of human sacrifices or witch-doctors or whatever. Pre-Copernicans did believe that the sun really did go round the Earth and they were wrong. Psychologically, we need to be able to know how other societies think if we are to be able to appraise them, otherwise social anthropology is impossible. Conceptually, we must be able to do this otherwise we shall be forced into the extreme position of Phillips[64], who refuses to criticise barbaric practices and Beattie[65], who thinks that rain-making magic and the practice of sacrifice was dramatic rather than instrumental. These unfortunate conclusions are drawn because of the confusion that exists between conceptual investigation and reality itself. The view that reality does not exist apart from people's concepts and beliefs makes reality relative to language and regards 'reason', 'facts' and 'evidence' as stemming from previous conceptual beliefs. This is not only to misunderstand the nature of reality, but represents a falsification of belief as well. All beliefs must have the possibility of being true or false. What reality is like and how we conceive it are separate questions and to confuse the nature of concepts with questions about things themselves is

misleading. Different societies may have different beliefs and use different paradigms to describe the world; they may see the world in different ways, but what they see is one world. How they view the world is a separate question from how the world is. We must not confuse the questions of the existence and nature of concepts with the questions about the world itself. It is possible to have a concept of something that does not exist (a unicorn) and it is possible that something may exist of which we have no concept. If the concept of God was to fall into disuse the question of God's existence could still remain.

3. If Wittgenstein's view is correct any form of scepticism is impossible and yet there have been many who, having embraced certain beliefs, find that they can believe them no longer and, still understanding what constitutes such belief, become sceptics. If there is no neutral way of assessing the incompatible beliefs of different societies then it is impossible to choose between Azande witchcraft, voodoo, Sufi mysticism and Zen Buddhism. Wittgenstein is led to this position because he equates religious beliefs with religious concepts and since no justification can be given for the conventions of language in general, no justification can be sought for religious beliefs in particular. But if this were correct we could say that in a polytheistic culture many gods exist, but God does not and cannot be said to exist in an atheistic culture. On this view it is not possible for God to exist and for men to disbelieve it and for God not to exist and for men to believe that. It is difficult to see how superstition could be identified and on what basis zealots and imposters could be criticised. It is my view, on the contrary, and one that

will be argued for in the final chapter, that certain things may be true whether they are believed or not and certain things may be false which are believed to be true and that this applies to religious beliefs as well as to beliefs in general. On Wittgenstein's view it is difficult to see how anyone could ever become a religious believer since he could not first understand something and then commit himself to it and it would be equally difficult to explain how someone could give up a belief whilst understanding those who still believe.

4. It was stated that Wittgenstein did not segregate language into various self-contained logical systems, but one can understand why some have discovered the basis in Wittgenstein's mid-stream writings for separating 'scientific' language from 'religious' language. It is doubtful whether this can be shown from Wittgenstein's writings as High[66] demonstrates. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein is guilty of making a rigid distinction between a scientific description and a religious one and throughout his life he continued to support such a distinction. This constitutes a failure to recognise that science itself is not based upon neutral observations and neutral data, but is a selective process requiring a fiduciary framework. Recent philosophy of science has shown that the notion of science as an impersonal process of arranging given data into ordered wholes and using a neutral language in order to describe this process is a myth. Science is presuppositional and paradigmic, though this must not be taken to extremes. It is true, however, that concepts have contextual meanings and misunderstandings arise from a failure to recognise the differences between concepts across subject boundaries

(e.g. time, length). What needs to be recognised in this difficult area is that 'scientific' and 'religious' concepts do depend upon words used in their ordinary sense. Indeed, technical meanings are recognisable and made distinct because of the difference quite often between their special use and the everyday general meaning. So whilst it is necessary to map the logical boundaries of subjects, it is dangerous to talk about the 'logic' of science and the 'logic' of religion. But once we are tempted to think of paradigms or models for alternative conceptual systems and world-views, it is a short step to accepting that this can be extended to particular conceptual systems within one society. It is but a short step to complete subjectivism. This is the endemic danger of relativism. Religious language and religious beliefs are not totally distinct from other kinds of discourse, but have links with non-religious belief and with the language used to express it. "Religious language is language used in a particular context", says Trigg[67]. It is possible to understand someone else's beliefs and be able to evaluate their contextual background and deny the truth-claims made. The notion of truth in human language is fundamental as one main function of language is to communicate what is the case. The conceptual relativist does use language across the supposed contextual barriers (as Wittgenstein did himself) and once we learn the language of another culture we can decide to reject what they say because the same truth-conditions exist for different types of statements. This enables us to compare different conceptual systems and on a rational basis (to avoid relativism) to choose between them. What is

implied by conceptual relativism is that truth depends in some way on its meaning and this is not amenable to empirical tests. If this is so then truth is analytic by definition and this must be rejected*. Quine and Tarski have provided a better alternative.**

Conclusion

In Wittgenstein's 'mid-stream' writings, Wittgenstein comes to a different conclusion about religious belief from that of the Tractatus period. He no longer regards the 'mystical' as beyond language, but as permeating all forms of language. But by a different method Wittgenstein arrives at the same conclusion that it is futile to seek justification for religious belief.

Wittgenstein's mid-stream view is that no justification can be given for language as its meaning is based on agreed conventions and is to be contextually understood. If this is applied to the language and beliefs of other societies, it is wrong to regard their beliefs as explanatory hypotheses or therefore as mistaken. Religious beliefs are treated by Wittgenstein in this second approach to the subject as mythological expressions of what men feel deeply about and it is his view that they do not represent true or false descriptions of reality. This view of the matter has been rejected since 1) it relies upon a view which can be described as conceptual relativism which cannot be stated without self-contradiction or circularity and which confuses questions of meaning with questions of truth and which also confuses concepts with reality itself; and 2) it regards religious beliefs

* See R.J. Haack's criticism of Conceptual Truth in 'Conceptual Truth' in "Philosophies of Education", Philosophy. C.U.P. Ed. R. Bambrough, April, 1976, Vol. 51, No. 196, pp. 159-176.

**See Chapter 7.

as mythological expressions of attitudes and actions and this fails to do justice to the descriptive and assertive function of religious language and ignores, therefore, the distinction which is drawn between true and false belief.

In his later writings Wittgenstein developed his constructivism more systematically and within this framework he said some important things about religious belief. Chapter 5 will be concerned with a description of this philosophy and the penultimate chapter of the thesis will evaluate the logic of fideism which springs out of Wittgenstein's later writings about philosophy. Wittgenstein's more detailed writings on the subject of religion will be evaluated and his third method of dealing with religious belief will be discussed and once more rejected. If the criticism of Wittgenstein's last method of dealing with religious belief is successful and the ghost of fideism is laid, the way is opened for an alternative approach to the subject. This will be given in the final chapter. Chapters 5 to 7, therefore, move the discussion forward to consider the implications of Wittgenstein's final attempt to describe the logic of religious belief.

CHAPTER 5

Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy

In this chapter Wittgenstein's later philosophy is described so that a base can be established from which to evaluate the logic of religious belief. Wittgenstein's later ideas have had a fundamental impact on the subject of religion and any discussion of the subject today must give some consideration to the arguments he has advanced. I shall outline the philosophical positions Wittgenstein attacked, analyse the new concepts he used to expound his ideas, indicate the difficulties involved in his philosophy and point out the possible consequences his views have for religious belief. The chapter is introduced by some comments about Wittgenstein's later style of writing and this is followed by four sections. Certain consequences are then pointed out in the conclusion. Traditional philosophical positions are attacked in the section on Understanding, Meaning and Mental Processes. The second section on Language, Meaning and Rules seeks to examine Wittgenstein's teaching on the place of rules in the formation and use of concepts. The new concepts of 'Language-Games', 'Forms of Life' and 'Family Resemblances' which Wittgenstein uses in order to express his ideas will be described and evaluated in the third section and the difficulties implied by these notions are pointed out in the fourth section. The consequences implied in these later arguments will be identified in the concluding section of the chapter.

In 1933-4 Wittgenstein put down his changing ideas about language in two sets of notes which later became known as the Blue Book

and the Brown Book*. He began writing Philosophical Investigations in 1936 and this was completed by 1948. From 1945 he compiled some remarks which he also finished in 1948** and in the last eighteen months of his life he responded to Moore's philosophy in 'On Certainty'. He also put some finishing touches to 'Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics' which was begun in 1937. As Philosophical Investigations (P.I.) contains the fullest expression of his later ideas, I shall concentrate almost exclusively on this work and use his other works only where they illuminate the points I wish to make.

Introduction - The Style of Philosophical Investigations

In the Preface to the Investigations, Wittgenstein says that Ramsey and Sraffa had influenced him in his changing ideas of philosophy and if the influence of Brouwer's lecture on Wittgenstein is added to this it is easy to see why he moved away from the Tractatus approach to language and began to investigate the living forms of language. The style in which he expressed these new ideas corresponds to his avowed intention of describing language rather than explaining it. In the Preface he says the book is an album containing a number of sketches of landscapes to get us to see how language actually works. Instead of the Tractatus' method of logical analysis expressed in a series of propositions, we are exhorted to describe the way language

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* These were dictated to students between 1933 and 1935. They had the title "Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations'". B. Blackwell, 1958.

**Zettel. tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. Von Wright. B. Blackwell, 1967.

actually works by means of pictures, illustrations, reminders, comparisons, analogies and hints. The Investigations has no rigid structure, but consists of a succession of brief, loosely-connected paragraphs and remarks. Binkley accurately describes it as an album 'full of many pictures, snapshots, sketches and mementos[1]. Wittgenstein sketches the landscape of living language and also invents artificial languages in order to show that language can be viewed in many ways. It is a kind of impressionist way of depicting language by turning it this way and then that way in order to cure us from 'aspect-blindness' (P.I. II. xi p. 213).

In Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein uses many literary forms including metaphors, similes, analogies, models, images, myths, illusions, epigrams and aphorisms set in a series of dialogues that appear to lack coherence. Warnock[2] says it is full of unanswered questions, unamplified hints, and imaginary dialogues. Wittgenstein uses many illustrations such as those of games, tools, levers, machines, chess pieces, coloured squares, diagrams and various other signs and symbols in order to illuminate the way living language works and also as Zabeeh[3] puts it, 'to exorcise certain metaphysical ghosts'. It is perhaps poetic licence to describe the album as 'more like a dream than a treatise'[4], but it could be described as a vision since in it Wittgenstein is trying to change our way of seeing (see Zettel 461). He says, "We must do away with all explanation and description alone must take its place" (P.I. 109). The Investigations are illustrations (Abbildungen) of how conceptual and philosophical confusions arise.

Wittgenstein regarded the proper task of philosophy as that of bringing words back from a metaphysical to an everyday use (P.I. 116). He now regards philosophy as a 'battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (P.I. 109).

These remarks, however, should not encourage us to think that Wittgenstein does not provide any theories or ideas which can be stated. In order to criticise other theories he adopts a certain stance which can be identified and which needs to be justified and it is, therefore, possible to state the arguments he advances. In the sections that follow I shall attempt to describe these arguments.

1. Understanding, Meaning and Mental Processes

In this section the philosophical positions upon which most traditional philosophy had stood are criticised and indicate why Wittgenstein rejected any form of essentialism. I shall show that, according to Wittgenstein, various forms of referential theories fail to explain meaning, that the search for the essence of language is misconceived and that there is, therefore, no straightforward relation of language and the world.

Wittgenstein's main concern was to show that the presupposition that 'meanings' derive from objects or from mental processes fails to show how language works. The Investigations begins with a statement from Augustine's Confessions* which shows how a child learns to use words. Augustine's theory was that in learning language, children acquire the notion that words name objects and that objects are signified by words and that sentences are

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* Confessions, I.8.

combinations of such names. Augustine's theory was presented as if the child understood the ostensive explanations of adults and actually learned the signification function of words by this means (P.I. 32). Wittgenstein asks us to think of a simple language game (L.G.) in which someone is given a slip of paper on which the words 'five red apples' are written and is told to go to a shop to fetch them. Wittgenstein asks how we understand the written mark 'five' or 'red' or 'apples' and shows that these three words are different kinds of words which are used in different ways. Each word signifies something different, is taught in a different way and has a different function. The meaning of words cannot, therefore, be reduced to one identical form. Nothing is gained in trying to understand the meaning of a word (B.B. p.1) or a natural sign (P.I. 10) by assimilating different expressions (P.I. 14). Some signs do function as names of objects, but not all do (P.I. 27). In dealing with the question of the meaning of words, Wittgenstein uses a simple Language-Game in which Augustine's naming theory seems to work. A builder uses names - blocks, pillars, slabs, and beams and when he calls out the words, an assistant brings them to him (P.I. 2). In this Language-Game communication is by command, but the assistant does not ask something's name (P.I. 27). In sections 28-36 Wittgenstein explains that a child cannot either ask about the naming process nor understand ostensive explanations. Ostensive teaching of certain words does not explain how words are understood. Explanation of ostensive learning only takes place if the teacher says, "That is called a book". There is a difference between training and explanation. One does not always point to objects in order to give

names to them or in order to learn language. There are no ostensive definitions for words such as 'or', 'one', 'number', 'sorry', etc. The relationship between language and the world is not that described in logical atomism or in the Tractatus.

The 'naming' function of certain words poses further problems. Wittgenstein uses a number of illustrations to show that we do not explain the meaning of colours, shapes, numbers or even physical objects ostensively, though we may point to something when teaching some words. In order to understand the explanation, "This number is called two" (P.I. 29), the learner must be familiar with other concepts. Also a child can only ask what a thing is called if he is already familiar with a linguistic background in which the naming device is known. If we say, "This is the King" in a game of chess, a learner can only understand this statement if he knows what a piece in a game is (P.I. 31). Wittgenstein makes the point that to understand an ostensive explanation requires a mastery of other concepts. In order to understand what the colour word 'red' signifies, the child must already possess the colour concept in order to recognize that it is the colour of an object we are referring to and not its size or what it is made of. If the child learns to use the word 'red' from the moment we pointed to a red object, all we have succeeded in doing is giving him a word or sign for a concept he already possessed (P.I. 33-36). One has to know something else in order to understand the name of a thing because naming presupposes a context (P.I. 33). Wittgenstein attacks the theory that we obtain our concepts one at a time through abstraction. He also attacks the notion that we grasp the meaning of a word when we grasp the relation between the name and the thing signified.

This is the folly of essentialism. When we say the word 'x' signifies, names or means something, we are tempted to think that there is a unique relation between two different things, a word and an object. Wittgenstein draws two conclusions from these remarks. First, the way we acquire concepts and the way we explain the meaning of them are not one and the same thing and secondly, that abstractionism does not explain concept-formation. These conclusions led him to attack a number of other ideas and items which overlap and criss-cross but which belong to the essentialist theory. In attacking this theory Wittgenstein says he did not intend to propose another theory of meaning, but a different method of doing philosophy. Since, however, he does develop a different approach to the question of meaning, it is necessary to be clear what Wittgenstein does advance.

Feyerabend[5] suggests that there are at least five items in the theory which Wittgenstein attacks:-

1. The word - object idea - that meanings exist independently of the use of language (P.I. 1-36, 90, 97, 120).
2. The search for an ideal language.
3. The search for the essence of the relationship between a sign and that which it signifies (P.I. 92) discoverable by analysis.
4. The analysis is checked, by appealing to experience, for its correctness. The essence can be experienced as a mental picture, a sensation, a phenomenon, a feeling, or an inner process. The presence of this picture gives meaning to the words and enables us to perform correct activities such as reading, deriving, understanding, calculating, thinking, hoping, intending and believing.

5. In order to teach a language we need to connect words and meaning.

Wittgenstein set out to destroy this theory by showing that it rests on a mistaken understanding of the way language functions. The referential theory of meaning (inspired by Plato and Augustine) was given formal precision by Russell, Schlick, Carnap and the early Wittgenstein himself. The question of meaning was treated in terms of how words refer because of the desire to connect language with the world. It was fostered also by the way the word 'means' was used to raise questions not only about meaning or sense, but about reference. The word 'meaning' came to be used illicitly to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word (P.I. 40). Wittgenstein now says that it is a mistake to confuse the meaning of a name with the bearer of it (P.I. 40). The word 'Excalibur' still posesses a meaning even if the sword is broken in pieces and if no object corresponds to the name (P.I. 39). When a man dies the bearer of the name dies, but not the meaning (P.I. 40). He admits that the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer (P.I. 43), but this cannot be used to describe how all words 'mean'. Instead of the early picture theory of meaning, Wittgenstein shows that ostensive definitions or explanations can be variously interpreted (P.I. 28) and that it is a mistake to search for meanings outside language itself.

The referential theory of meaning is sometimes, however, interpreted in the sense that understanding the meaning of a word or sentence is to experience a mental state or event such as a

thought, idea or image which occurs when we hear the word or sentence. Knowing the meaning of a word is to be acquainted with such mental states or events. According to the theory, ideas, thinking and understanding are to be located in some inner ethereal state or process so that words are said to represent mental pictures and the meaning of a word is equated with some sort of mental process or image. Instead of looking to objects in the physical world as the source of the meaning of concepts, this theory refers to mental entities or mental processes as the basis of meaning. In rejecting the theory Wittgenstein argues that in order to recognise a 'red' apple we do not need to carry an image of red in our mind because such an image would not help us to find a red apple without invoking an infinite number of images in order to know that our image was the correct one. We need to know if the image is correct i.e. that it means a red apple and this cannot be done by calling to mind another image. At some point we have to recognise the red apple itself (B.B. pp. 14 ff.). In the Investigations (P.I. 80 ff.) Wittgenstein shows that images do not give meanings to words and cannot function as pictures of reality. If we are capable of acting automatically when we are told to fetch a red object, there is no need to introduce images or thoughts to show how we understand the meaning of the concept 'red'. If the mental process theory is accepted (that meaning is a mental process involving images) this implies that we can never actually tell whether another person is using the word correctly unless we know what images he has when he is told to fetch a red apple. The notion that we should look for meaning as if it were an additional thing to the words used is rejected (B.B. p.65). This 'source of bewitchment' is

attacked throughout Wittgenstein's later writings (P.I. 115). Wittgenstein does not regard thinking as an incorporeal process which gives life and sense to speaking (P.I. 338). He criticises the view that such words as "understand", "think" and "believe" stand for distinct mental events corresponding to each of the words. Wittgenstein uses many illustrations to show that comparing, recognising, understanding, reading, and deriving do not need mental processes to give them their meaning. Mastery of a language does not consist in having some mental idea, but having the skill to use it. We do not decide whether a man uses a word correctly or find out what he means by investigating his imagery; we simply notice whether he uses it as we do. Particular circumstances justify one in saying that 'I can go on' with a series of numbers. No hidden essence is revealed by stripping away the differences from particular cases of reading (P.I. 156-164). Sensations do not count as criteria for the activity of reading (P.I. 160). What lies behind the ability to read, to understand, to calculate, 'to go on' or to derive are the particular circumstances only. Essentialist philosophers sought for some common element in trying to answer the questions, "What is the meaning of a word?", or "What is language?", or "What is thinking?", or "What is understanding?", or "What is believing?". For Wittgenstein, the temptation of seeking substantival answers to such questions should be avoided and he concludes that the meaning of language, or thinking, or understanding or believing exists with the signs and is the use made of the signs in particular circumstances. He did not object to the fact that thinking takes place (which is a matter of psychology), but to the essentialist theory that the meaning of

that thinking is something to be understood in addition to the public uses of signs and without which the signs themselves would not be meaningful. The search for essences led to Platonism, Dualism, Russell's atomism, the Tractatus theory, and various forms of phenomenalism and nominalism. Wittgenstein's conclusion is that there can be no scientific investigation of what a word really means (P.I. 109). This 'craving for generality' (B.B.B. p. 17) is roundly rejected. Wittgenstein's illustrations and arguments seem to demonstrate clearly that various forms of referential theories will not do, that the search for the essence of language is misconceived and that since there is not one uniform way in which we understand how words signify there is no ideal straightforward relation of language and the world. This section thus shows that Wittgenstein rejected the referential theory. He rejects the notion that name = bearer, he inveighs against abstractionism, criticises the theory of ostensive definitions and rejects any form of mentalism.

2. Language, Meaning and Rules

In the first section the essentialist doctrine was shown to be unable to explain how words are understood and how they get their meaning. Understanding, meaning and language-use contain no hidden essence. Wittgenstein was required to show what alternative he proposed to put in the place of referential theories in order to do justice to the fact that meaning and language-use are inseparable and that language does connect with the world for words cannot mean whatever we want them to mean (Wittgenstein attacked the notion of private use or private language). Now what Wittgenstein says about the topics of meaning or understanding something is taken by him

to have wider implications about language in general and it is to this I now turn. In logic there seemed to be a clue to the general 'a priori' order of the world (P.I. 97) because thought and language were taken to fit the facts (P.I. 95-96). Wittgenstein does not reject every kind of analysis, but insists that there is no final analysis of the forms of language (P.I. 90-91) and that we should stop looking for the essence of language. Instead, he asks us to look at the actual functioning of language in order to get a clear view about the part rules have to play and of how some concepts are exact and others are inexact.

Wittgenstein's answer to the question, 'What is the meaning of a word?' (B.B. p. 1) is to emphasise how a word is used, but this should not be taken, in my opinion, to indicate that Wittgenstein was simply proposing a meaning = use theory. It is important to be clear on this issue. The function of words, we are told, is as diverse as the use of tools in a tool-box (P.I. 11). Words are compared to the different kinds of levers we see in the cabin of a locomotive (P.I. 12) which have different functions. Wittgenstein stresses the need to recognise the diversity and complexity of language-use (P.I. 23). In the Builder-Assistant language words are part of a whole range of complex activities. Wittgenstein calls this range of activities a Language-Game (P.I. 7). Wittgenstein asks, "But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command? There are <u>countless</u> kinds ...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... Here the term "Language-Game" is meant to bring into prominence

the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life". He then gives examples of the multiplicity of Language-Games (P.I. 23) and says that such uses are as much of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking and playing (P.I. 25). Instead of concentrating on an 'over-simple picture of language'[6], we are invited to look at the use, purpose, role or function of words and to get away from the simple relation of naming and meaning. Such remarks incline commentators to think that Wittgenstein equated meaning with use so that the slogan "Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use"[7] became a slogan purporting to describe Wittgenstein's new theory of meaning. Pole[8] and Pitcher[9] agree with this interpretation, but this is rejected by High[10], Hunter[11] and Zebeeh[12] and with justification.

A crucial section of the Investigations in trying to discover what Wittgenstein's idea of meaning was is in section 43 where he 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". This is in the section of the Investigations (P.I. 39-50) in which he is attacking the logical atomism of Russell and the less sophisticated version of Socrates (P.I. 46). In sections 41-43 he argues that the meaning is the use. The idea that the world is made up of simple elements is rejected and we are told that the meaning of something is characterised by the use we make of it (see B.B. p. 65). In the context Wittgenstein is discussing how a word can mean if nothing corresponds to it (i.e. if it hasn't a bearer). He commences section 43 with the words, "Man Kann" which may suggest that he is not proposing a theory at all. The question of how erklären should

be translated is important too. Anscombe renders it "defined" and this tempts us to equate meaning with use. Perhaps the question of translating this word is not as important as understanding it. Hunter points out that the final sentence, "And the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer" is inserted in case we should misinterpret Wittgenstein. Interestingly, the word erklärt is here translated "explained" by Anscombe and not "defined". It must also be noted that Wittgenstein says, "For a large class - though not for all...". He is not defining the meaning in terms of its use, but says that we get a clearer picture of a word's meaning by looking at it from every aspect of its use in the language than if we try to see it exclusively from the aspect of meaning. By translating erklärt by "explained", Wittgenstein seems to say that though we can explain the meaning of a name by pointing to its bearer, the bearer is not the meaning and although we can explain (sometimes) the meaning of a word by its use, the use is not the meaning. It is possible that the 'large class of cases' in which we ask, give or decline to give the meanings of words is that in which the verb or noun-verb of 'to mean' is used i.e. we do various things we call 'explaining the meaning' without using a form of 'to mean' at all. We may say 'That is a box' to explain the meaning of 'box', but we do not say 'box' means one of those or that is the meaning of the word 'box'. Hunter argues that section 43 teaches us that in sentences in which we use any form of the word 'mean' when we explain the meaning of a word or ask for such an explanation instead of thinking of 'means', we can think of 'has the same use as' so that in these cases for 'meaning' we can substitute use. Wittgenstein did not define meaning (definiendum) in terms of use

(definiendum) in all cases. According to Wittgenstein the word 'meaning' (Bedeutung) can be used in various ways and sometimes it is helpful to ask how words are used in everyday life, but light can also be thrown on their function by imagining different and even unusual ways they can be used. It is, I conclude, a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein to suppose that he taught a meaning = use theory. Section 43 lends no support to that argument. Wittgenstein gives no general theory of meaning at all. Every enquiry, illustration, model, picture or image which helps us to a clearer understanding of language-use, function, role or purpose also helps us to a clearer understanding about meaning, but we are not given a theory of meaning (P.I. 492) which could serve as a foundation for understanding everything else. Meaning is sometimes like 'going up to someone' (P.I. 457) i.e. it is something to do with the way we act in a given situation. If Wittgenstein had intended to propose a general theory he would not have used four different German words for 'use'.

Wittgenstein invites us to look at the actual functioning of language and suggests that linguistic activities are as diverse as games because no single common element can be found in either. Language, we are told, consists of a 'complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing ' (P.I. 66) and not of one single, essential meaning. Wittgenstein attacks the craving for generality. The analogy of games is chosen to avoid the temptation of looking for a common characteristic or feature in the use of language. Does this mean that language is not circumscribed or bounded in any way and that concepts can be created and altered arbitrarily? The accusation that

Wittgenstein was a conventionalist needs to be met and a proper understanding of the relationship between language and the world, as Wittgenstein conceives it needs to be examined. This understanding can only be grasped by trying to evaluate Wittgenstein's teaching about rules and their place in the formation and application of language and to this I now turn.

Wittgenstein's analysis of rules has been variously interpreted, but one thing at least seems clear and that is Wittgenstein's denial that the rules which govern the use of certain expressions reveal any hidden essence of the meaning of language. Just as there are no rules for how high a server throws the ball when he serves at tennis, so Wittgenstein says similarly that concepts are 'not everywhere circumscribed by rules' (P.I. 68). Accordingly we cannot explain how we use language by listing rules. Sometimes we learn to play a new game without learning its rules (P.I. 31). Language too does not function according to strict rules (P.I. 81). The command "Stand roughly here" works perfectly well in language, although it is not an exact explanation (P.I. 88). He says, "No course of action could be determined by a rule because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule" (P.I. 201). A signpost or an arrow does not necessarily tell us that we can only go in one direction (P.I. 85); it would be possible for a tribe to follow them in a different way (P.I. 185). Similarly we too can alter the rules as we go along (P.I. 83). Consequently, we are invited to look to the human background which lies behind the use of rules and which illuminate the rules. In Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics Wittgenstein gives examples of people whose methods of counting and calculating

might differ from ours' (R.F.M.I. 149, R.F.M. II 76, 78, 81, 84; R.F.M. III 15, 17; R.F.M. IV 5; R.F.M. V, 6, 8, 12, 14, 27, 29, 36, 42, 43-44) and these remarks seem to suggest that our calculating, counting and measuring is a matter of convention as we can think of intelligible alternative methods of doing these things. Now Wittgenstein's constructivism is certainly opposed to the Platonic realism of Frege and Russell in which alternative methods of calculating and counting were not admissable, but should Wittgenstein be accused of conventionalism?

Dummett[13] argues that Wittgenstein is a 'full-blooded conventionalist' and he says that the examples Wittgenstein uses to expound his conventionalism are 'thin and unconvincing'[14]. He maintains that Wittgenstein's views lead to a breakdown of communication in which it would be impossible to give an account of the use of language at all. Dummett[15] suggests that an alternative and intermediate picture can be given between realism (the Frege-Tractatus view) and conventionalism. It seems clear that if Wittgenstein's alternative methods of deriving are logically possible, then there is no necessity in the rules we use. Stroud[16] argues that Wittgenstein's examples diminish in intelligibility when they are examined in detail because in order to understand them we have to abandon our own familiar world of thinking and understanding. Wittgenstein's examples merely show that it is a contingent fact that we do actually calculate as we do and certainly we might have calculated according to rules different from ours , but only if we had been different sorts of beings who thought and behaved differently[17]. It seems to be clear that this does not imply conventionalism, but merely shows that our way of doing things

belongs to the facts of our natural history (R.F.M.I., 141). According to Wittgenstein there are certain physical, physiological and psychological facts which make our calculating activities possible (R.F.M., V, 1, 15). How we understand and follow a rule is not a convention to which there are alternatives. If someone failed to continue a series of numbers as we do, he would be a different sort of being. Wittgenstein's view should satisfy Dummett's desire for an intermediate picture since he neither espouses conventionalism nor realism. His constructivism is to be understood against the background of certain general facts of nature (P.I.p.230). He is not saying that if certain facts were different people would have different concepts since this might lead to some kind of referential theory, but he says that it is a fact of natural history that we happen to agree in following a rule and to 'go on' in the 'same' way. His point is that the correctness of calculation, counting, and measuring does depend upon rules, but that no ultimate justification of the whole procedure can be given (R.F.M. II, 74). Following a rule is an activity we learn against the background of training and of regular use and custom. The acceptance of rules depends upon training in certain techniques, which in turn depends upon the natural way human beings behave and live. It is not that the use of language is determined by conventions deliberately and freely chosen by us, but that people find there is a natural way of carrying on an activity. Petrie's[18] view that Wittgenstein gives a modified conventionalist account of necessity in which the necessity aspect rather than the truth aspect of conceptual truth is emphasised, seems to be near to the view expressed here.

Stroud uses the Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics and Petrie uses the Investigations to show that Wittgenstein accepted a compromise between realism and conventionalism and this seems to be correct, for if rules can be variously interpreted, conventionalism understood as the source of necessity fails and since Wittgenstein does insist that concepts are contingently conditioned and grounded in the general facts of nature, his position is clearly distinguished from conventionalism. Wittgenstein's 'theory' is that conceptual truths are relative to a presupposed language-game actually played in human life, that there is no need to suppose that there must exist some kind of rule behind the use of a word to make it a regulated use and there is no single feature, thing or activity which constitutes the essence of rule-following. This position is also outlined in On Certainty (e.g. O.C. 44, 204) where propositions and not rules are discussed. The primary thing, according to Wittgenstein, is the Language Game or the Form of Life (P.I. 656; 23; P.I. II p. 226) and rule-following is treated by Wittgenstein in terms of the use of the signs within such language games or forms of life. It is Wittgenstein's view that explanations of understanding and meaning come to an end and at that point we simply describe what we do (P.I. 211, 217). Now since he invites us to look to the stories of human life that lie behind the words and concepts and which illuminate the rules, concepts and 'fundamental propositions'* and, since such stories are tied up with his expressions

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* Hudson's expression. See W.D. Hudson, What Makes Religious Beliefs Religious? Religious Studies, Vol. 13, No. 2, June, 1977, pp. 221-242.

'Language Games' and 'Forms of Life', it is to such expressions that we need to turn to try to evaluate the concepts Wittgenstein uses to expound his views.

3. Language Games, Forms of Life and Family Resemblances

In this section I shall describe and evaluate the new concepts Wittgenstein uses in order to show the foundation upon which his views were to stand. I shall argue that such notions are philosophically unhelpful and cannot serve as a bridge between concepts and the world and that the conceptual-empirical distinction cannot be solved in this way.

Wittgenstein chose to speak of language-games rather than language in order to side-step the craving for generality. The analogy of games and language is chosen to attack essentialism. According to him there is no single common characteristic or feature to what we call 'games'. It would be wrong to look for such features as 'entertainment, competitiveness, rule-guidedness, skill etc.'[19] as providing such characteristics to justify the use of the concept 'game'. When we compare various games such as board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games etc., there is not one set of characteristics that is common to them all, but similarities and resemblances - a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing (P.I. 66). Wittgenstein asks us to recognise the diversity of language-games and not to try to find a general form of propositions and of language (P.I. 65). In order to understand our use of the concept 'game' we have to see in what way games resemble each other and how they differ. This is true also of language-games. The concept 'game', like all other concepts, has blurred edges (P.I. 71,77) and language-games too have no

strict boundaries, though we can draw boundaries for a special purpose (P.I. 69, 499). The theory of universals tried to provide answers to such questions as 'What is a word?' or 'What is language?'[20] and thus endeavoured to circumscribe concepts with sufficient conditions. Some commentators have also tried to discover the common essence of a game. Manser says that playing a game is a free and non-serious activity which absorbs a player completely, which is marked off from ordinary life, and which is not meant to have effects in the real world[21]. He also emphasises the 'dispositional property', that games produce pleasure. His definition fails since someone might make up a foursome at Badminton who was pressured into playing and derived no pleasure from it at all. Some engage in games activities professionally and may regard such activities as work not pleasure and which for them is a serious business. To define games as having the dispositional property of producing pleasure is unsatisfactory since pleasure may be obtained in alternative pursuits and, though such activities have the dispositional property of giving enjoyment, they are not called games.

Khatchadourion[22] tries to show that the concept 'game' can be defined as "the capacity to serve a specific human need or needs, directly or indirectly, under what we shall call "'standard' (causal) conditions or in 'normal' contexts". He also says that the phenomena we call "games" are played in accordance with certain kinds of rules. In reply to this it is clear that there are many activities in which we engage which could be described as 'serving specific human needs', but we would not call these games (e.g. nursing, teaching). To say also that games are played in

accordance with rules fails to recognise that it is possible to invent games which have no fixed rules (throwing a ball against a wall). Attempts to define a set of characteristics essential to games are unsuccessful and Wittgenstein's point seems to hold. Wittgenstein's position is that there is no single structure governing all language and so there is no essence of a language-game. A language-game, therefore, is not something completely isolable or autonomous. It would seem, on this basis, that it is a mistake to try to isolate the logic of various language-games, however they are described, since such language-games overlap and criss-cross with others. Yet Wittgenstein does think that for particular purposes we may regard concepts and language-games as being circumscribed fairly tightly and suggests that the notion of 'objects' is determined by the language-game in which the word is used (e.g. O.C. 36; P.I. 373)[23]. But what did Wittgenstein mean when he used the concept 'language-game'?

Wittgenstein makes use of artificial language-games (ALG's) and natural language-games (NLG's) and these are compared to reveal similarities and differences (P.I. 130) in order to show the way words and signs might function as well as the way they do. Specht says Wittgenstein looks for a starting point in the concept of a language-game 'in which linguistic signs, human activity and object constitute a structural unity'[24]. This explanation of the use Wittgenstein makes of the concept means that not every use of language can qualify as a language-game.

He argues, for example, that confusion is caused by mixing up

different language-games e.g. the perceptual from the language of physical objects (P.I. 180). Logical mistakes occur if we fail to locate words in their own language-games. The paradox that the concept language-game cannot be defined and Wittgenstein's use of the concept as something circumscribed is probably part of Wittgenstein's dialectical method. Wittgenstein himself suggests that any language in which there is no connection between the linguistic expression and action (as in private language theories) would not constitute a proper use of language. Zabeeh points out that Wittgenstein's artificial language-games are primitive imaginary games (P.I. 2) whereas his natural language-games are more complex and as such are more meaningful. Such natural language-games as 'pretending' or 'lying' or 'hoping' depend upon the mastery of the use of language and belong to man's natural way of life (P.I. 249, 583; P.I. II p. 174, p. 229). But whether Wittgenstein speaks of artificial or natural language-games, he gives no criteria for identifying any particular game apart from describing the circumstances or natural history in which the words are used. His own use of the notion'language-game' seems to be limited to the investigation of agreed ways of speaking which determine the kind of objects appearing in the language.

Wittgenstein uses another figurative expression 'form of life' in order to try to solve the empirical-conceptual distinction. His ultimate appeal was not to rules as the basis for meaningful language, but to 'forms of life' (P.I. 23). He sometimes says that we must look on the language-game as the primary thing (P.I. 156), but it is better to maintain, as High does, that his ultimate appeal is to forms of life (P.I. II, p. 226) and that

this concept functions as the 'logically primitive concept'[25]. Stroud[26] and Hudson[27] both agree that Wittgenstein's final appeal is to 'forms of life' and Zabeeh[28] defines Wittgenstein's expression 'forms of life' as 'a superstructure of our concepts' or the system of reference by which we interpret language (P.I. 206), without which language cannot be understood. It may not be accurate, therefore, to say as Pole[29] and Strawson[30] do that Wittgenstein looks on a language-game as the primary datum (but see P.I. 656) unless the concept language-game is identified with the concept 'form of life' and this seems not to be the case.

Whatever may be the source of Wittgenstein's concept 'form of life'*, Wittgenstein uses other expressions such as 'activity', 'natural history', 'the common behaviour of mankind', 'circumstances' and 'consequences' (see B.B. pp. 181-2) to speak of the same idea.

Different interpretations have been given of the concept, however, and some evidence can be provided for either the sociological interpretation of Winch[33] and Malcolm[34] or for the organic account of Hunter[36]. Other accounts seem less plausible. These descriptions of Wittgenstein's use of the concept are less important than the question as to whether by the use of the concept Wittgenstein can be said to dispose of the conceptual-empirical distinction, but before this can be assessed an analysis

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* e.g. (1) Spranger's Lebensformen - various forms of value experience[31].
(2) Scholz's 'forms' which are differentiations of religious consciousness or descriptions of attitudes[32].

of the five passages in which the concept is used in the Investigations will be given.

In section 19 Wittgenstein says "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life". Here he tells us something about what is imagined when we imagine a language and implies that this something is the wider framework in which words are used. In the second passage (P.I. 23) Wittgenstein describes the multiplicity of language-games and says the term"'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life". Here a distinction is made between a language-game and a form of life. Speech belongs to a wider background of activity embedded in human history and life (see P.I. II, p. 227). In the third passage (P.I. 241) Wittgenstein says that people agree in the language they use and this has been brought about by training. In this passage Wittgenstein is thinking of language-use when he says that it is a form of life and this corresponds with section 23 where language in use is described as an activity. In the fourth passage (P.I. II p. 174) Wittgenstein gives a specific example of a form of life. He says, "the phenomena of hope are modes of this complicated form of life" and that only those who have mastered the use of a language can hope. It is not that hope is described here as the form of life (as behaviourists might put it), but the phenomena of hope or what we notice about those who do hope. The concept 'hope' refers to a phenomenon of human life (P.I. 583) and the language used to express hope is part of human activity and as natural as smiling or eating. The language-

game of hope is not synonymous with 'hope' considered as a form of life. In the fifth remark Wittgenstein says, "What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life" (P.I. II, p. 226). This remark follows Wittgenstein's observation that mathematicians agree about what is certain and that it is futile to seek justification for that certainty or agreement. Such activities as measuring and calculating, as has already been pointed out, depend ultimately upon what people accept, understand and agree upon and this behaviour cannot be further justified. (See P.I. 212-214).

Wittgenstein's use of the expression 'form of life' indicates that it is not to be identified with the concept 'language-game' and that for him forms of life are the bedrock beyond which justification for reasons and understanding cannot be sought (P.I. 325). By a form of life Wittgenstein means fundamental human activities such as hoping, feeling certain, measuring, commanding, questioning etc., together with natural customs and human institutions (P.I. 584). These, says Sherry[36], are the fundamental facts from which philosophy must begin. These general facts of nature and of human nature provide the background for understanding the language of giving orders, asking questions, guessing riddles, praying and all the other varied language-games which are used. These forms of life are used by Wittgenstein as the bridge to bring together language and the world and to solve the conceptual-empirical distinction. Wittgenstein says, "Our interest certainly includes the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature" (P.I. II, p. 230). This might

tempt some to be interested in such facts and not in the 'grammar' in which concepts are formed and used. Wittgenstein denies that such general facts should be understood as the possible causes of the formation of concepts (P.I. II, p. 230). He attacks the view that nature constitutes concepts. He is not interested in hypothetical arguments and, therefore, avoids inquiries into explanations of concept formation since he rejects the notion that the meaning of words is determined or explained or justified by something other than language. This view is hardly contestable now. But Wittgenstein goes further than this. His only appeal in philosophy is to what he calls 'grammar' and an understanding of his teaching on this will help to clarify his real position.

In emphasising the word 'grammar'Wittgenstein wishes to direct us from the temptation to argue that concepts, intelligibility, rationality and truth could be justified by empirical evidence. He says that grammar is not accountable to reality (P.G. 184), and that his investigations are grammatical (P.I. 90). 'Essence', he says, is 'expressed by grammar' (P.I. 371) and in section 373 he says "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is (Theology as Grammar)" . These remarks show that to describe the 'grammar' or logic of language is to describe its essence. The grammar of pointing to an object is different from the grammar of pointing to a colour. The kind of object referred to in a sentence is discovered in the grammar* e.g. when speaking of God this refers

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* Anscombe points out that the emphasis should be placed on the word 'kind' rather than on 'object' in section 373. See R.H. Bell. Theology As Grammar. Is God an Object of Understanding? Religious Studies, No. 3, Sept. 1975, Vol. 11, Cambridge University Press, pp. 307-317.

to a God who cannot be thought of as an object among objects in the spatio-temporal world and to understand this is apparently to recognise that empiricist criteria are irrelevant for the determination of the existence of God. Mixing up grammars has led philosophers to impose on mental concepts appropriate to physical ones through a failure to distinguish between language-games and by looking to the "surface grammar" rather than to the "depth grammar" of language (see P.I. 664). Surface grammar describes only the form of sentences whereas depth grammar is the penetration into the role the sentence plays in life. The philosopher's task is to reveal the 'depth grammar' of the technique of the use of different language-games in order to show what kind of objects any particular language-game is referring to, to map the logical frontiers in order to avoid misunderstandings. Failure to distinguish these things has led philosophers to talk about 'pains', 'intentions' and 'souls' as if they were new entities. In inviting us to look at 'depth grammar' Wittgenstein wishes us to see the point of an utterance, to search for the human depth of what words express[37].

There is no doubt that Wittgenstein puts forward an acceptable critique of certain dualistic and behaviourist theories* and that

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* Wittgenstein's ontology avoids Dualism in which sensation words are referred to as private objects (P.I. 305) and Behaviourism in which sensation words are reducible to modes of behaviour (P.I. 306).

his emphasis on the kind of objects expressed by grammar is fundamentally sound. It could hardly be denied, however, that he is theorising. Specht has described Wittgenstein's later ontology as a linguistic "Constitution Theory" in which language is not derived from the world of objects, but is somehow involved in the construction of objects[38]. Specht argues that Wittgenstein did not want to reject any kind of relation between words and essence and that his only concern was to avoid the misinterpretations that arise from having a limited concept of object when interpreting the correlation[39] e.g. when 'pains' or 'imagination' or 'understanding' or 'meaning' signify an object to which one can point. In directing us to the kind of object grammar expresses, Wittgenstein tells us to infer from the rules of the word's use what kind of object the word signifies. Wittgenstein did not wish to deny that sensation words or other words named something, but he tried to avoid the difficulties that result from a wrong correlation of the naming relation[40]. For Wittgenstein the meaning of a word is not something in addition to the word, but is constituted by the rules for the use of the word. Specht argues that, according to Wittgenstein, language is not abstracted from objects but that drawing up a language-game "creates a new articulation and organisation of the phenomena simultaneously with the introduction of the new linguistic sign and in this way a new group of objects is 'constituted' in a language-game simultaneously with the new linguistic sign"[41]. Specht says that by "constitution" he does not mean that objects are produced by man[42], but that man "organises phenomena into ordered wholes". The phenomena are, of course, given. Linguistic rules are

introduced by man in response to the phenomena for particular purposes. This spontaneity in creating language is therefore conditioned by the facts of nature and by facts about human beings[43] but we cannot "read off the rules of concepts from reality"[44]. There is, therefore, no empirical evidence upon which grammar stands and so no justification to be sought for language outside language, but to be able to investigate the meaning of a concept we need to describe the background circumstances in order to see what activities give life to it. Our ways of speaking would lose their point if the facts of nature were different[45].

4. Difficulties and Implications of his Philosophy

Having described (briefly) what I consider to be Wittgenstein's main arguments, it is necessary now to indicate what is acceptable and what is unsatisfactory in his philosophy and to draw out the implications of this for religious belief. The first problem in trying to evaluate his arguments is the nomenclature used by Wittgenstein. Vague notions such as 'language-games' and 'forms of life' have been used by him and by interpreters and upon these undefined expressions certain theories have been advanced. Clearly there is a strain, as Sutherland says, in leaning for support on such 'figurative expressions'[46]. Phillips[47] became aware of this strain and Williams, who dislikes such phrases, says they refer to 'quite modest linguistic practices'[48]. But in spite of such protests Wittgensteinians continue to appeal to these notions, but in some cases prefer to use the expression 'form of life' rather than 'language-game'. Sometimes Wittgenstein tells us to look on a language-game as the primary thing (P.I. 656) and elsewhere he describes 'forms of life' as the proto-phenomena or given.

Paradoxically, he says the concept 'game' cannot be defined and he refuses to define a language-game (since this would apparently contradict his attack on essentialism) and yet he uses the concept as if it were circumscribed. Now if Specht's description of Wittgenstein's use of 'language-game' is correct (as I think) and that signs, activity and object constitute a unity which is their essence then this becomes a definition without blurred edges. It seems that Wittgenstein finds it impossible to criticise theories and definitions without invoking his own. And this is precisely the criticism levelled at him about the Tractatus. Pole and Strawson have criticised Wittgenstein since, on his account of language-games, any system of activities, whether true or false or whatever might be included. Pole, in fact, argues that correct and incorrect use of language is determined by the rules of language[49] and some philosophers (e.g. Austin[50] and Searle[51]) have tried to identify such rules. Now whether Pole is correct or not and whether Searle's identification of regulative and constitutive rules is defensible, Wittgenstein's attempt to reject essentialism is not helped by his use of vague undefined expressions. Cavell[52] argues correctly that Wittgenstein sets up the central concept of 'grammar' in opposition to the notion that language depends upon a certain structure and conception of rules. Now if Wittgenstein had argued that 'language-games' have their own tight rule-systems he would have been compelled to identify their essence and this he refused to do (P.I. 71, 77). He endeavoured to rescue his position by invoking the idea of family resemblances (P.I. 65-66) to show that there is no feature common to all games. The popular slogan that every statement has its own sort of logic cannot be

supported from Wittgenstein without contradicting his use of family resemblances. Wittgenstein thus rejected essentialism and the notion of autonomous logics and Bambrough[53] defends Wittgenstein's use of family resemblances on this issue. It is because of the dialectical method Wittgenstein chose to use and because of the vague expressions he offered as a foundation for his theories that the many confusions and misunderstandings have arisen. It is important for this thesis, however, to understand that Wittgenstein gave no support to the notion that every 'language-game' has its own kind of logic and to the idea that language can be divided into the logic of science, psychology, ethics, theology etc. Those[54] who have spoken of different language-games each with its own sort of logic, each with its own criteria of what is meaningful, true and rational, have failed to see that for Wittgenstein the notion of areas of discourse with strict boundaries is anathema (apart from special subjects such as Chemistry). Others have chosen to use the 'form of life' concept instead of the 'language-game' concept to argue in the same way and have insisted that certain disciplines are determined by tacit presuppositions which mark them off from other areas of discourse. High is justifiably critical of such approaches since words are not the private property of one type of discourse, but are used across the subject divisions. It would seem that such mistakes are made because the concept'language game'was taken to be synomymous with the concept 'form of life'. If an appeal is made to a form of life it must be remembered that Wittgenstein does not adequately define the concept and ambiguity and misunderstanding in seeking to use the concept is inevitable.

Wittgenstein sometimes says that forms of life simply refer to what we do and sometimes he says that what we do connects with general facts about the world. There seems to be little doubt that his ultimate appeal concerning concept formation and conceptual techniques is linked to the notion of 'training', but it follows from this that since there is nothing sacrosanct about the concepts we use, some sort of conceptual relativism is implied by the move. This relativist account was discussed in the previous chapter. Sherry[55] says he prefers the pragmatist/empiricist line in Wittgenstein and a neglect of this aspect by some Wittgensteinian commentators is to be deplored. Wittgenstein tells us that legal concepts presuppose some facts (Zettel, 350) and that expecting, loving, forgiving, hoping and other human activities could only arise in certain situations (P.I. 581-3). He says that if certain facts were different people would form concepts differently (O.C. 63-5) and that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (O.C. 509; 513). The fact that water boils and freezes under certain conditions is one such fact (O.C. 558). Wittgenstein admits, therefore, that concepts force themselves upon us (P.I. II, p. 230) because of these general facts. Now I do not believe this goes far enough for it neglects to say that the truth-conditions of language do exist independent of language. It is my view that truth is not a notion relative to language for a theory is true only if it corresponds to certain 'facts'. I believe that whilst Wittgenstein deals successfully with the question of the meaning of concepts, he fails to deal adequately with the question of the relationship between the truth-conditions that exist in the world and the language that describes them. I have argued against any form of conceptual relativism in chapter 4 and what is required,

in addition to solving the question of the meaning of concepts, is to do justice to the question of the truth and falsity conditions of language and then to apply this to different areas of discourse. This alternative strategy is discussed in the final chapter and is crucial to understanding religious belief.

Conclusion

Having described Wittgenstein's main ideas and having pointed to the problems and difficulties involved in accepting Wittgensteinianism 'in toto', I wish now to summarise the parts of his philosophy which seem helpful and acceptable if certain conditions and qualifications are recognised.

1. Wittgenstein's point that it is essential to an understanding of language to look at the way it functions in a proper sitz-im-leben which surrounds its use is a salutary reminder that philosophy should begin with life and not with abstractions. The point can be made better without the employment of such expressions as 'language-games' and 'forms of life'.

2. Wittgenstein's insistence that meanings can only be defined by means of language is obviously true and this reaction against certain types of calculus theories of meaning is acceptable. This corrective against calculus theories, however, should not necessarily be identified with the view that true statements should be understood as 'grammatical' statements only. Wittgenstein's view that the meaning of language cannot be justified by reference to some extra-linguistic 'reality' does not necessarily mean that we cannot discuss the truth or rationality of the particular things we say in language. Since

philosophy is concerned with the reasonableness or otherwise of what is believed, it cannot ignore the difficult question of the relationship between language and the states of affairs. Wittgenstein's claim that the source of necessity is located in language implies that to say a statement is true is to recognise the grammar of the use of the statement and this deliberately avoids discussion of evidence for beliefs and of the connection between facts and propositions. Wittgenstein's attack on essentialism is incisive, contains real insight and is a real contribution to philosophy, but this does not imply that we cannot develop an epistemology.

3. Wittgenstein's descriptive method of doing philosophy has its uses and clearly by looking at the function of words in an impressionistic way certain 'metaphysical ghosts may be exorcised'. It is questionable, however, whether his own writings avoid the generalisations he condemns in others and it is also far from evident that to propose theories is necessarily to falsify. Quine and Strawson and Tarski are to be preferred to Wittgenstein. His method of doing philosophy is not a recipe for solving all the problems in philosophy.

4. Wittgenstein's view that language in general is autonomous is balanced with the stress he places on the general facts of nature and a middle path between conventionalism and realism seems to be the correct method of trying to avoid the problems of both. But if we accept this it does not follow that we say that particular ways of speaking cannot be appraised, otherwise we still have to commit ourselves to the view that 'language-games'

are sui generis universes of discourse. This is to be rejected since words used in a special sense depend for their meaning upon the use of the same expression or word in other areas of discourse and on language in general. Those commentators who have emphasized the separate identity of 'language-games' and have defended their logical independence have exaggerated one aspect of Wittgenstein's teaching and neglected the 'empirical' side of his teaching.

5. Wittgenstein's constitution theory is a useful device for understanding the kind of objects under review in a particular way of speaking provided that proper attention is paid to the phenomena which exist independent of the language used to refer to them.

Consequences for Religious Belief

Wittgenstein's later philosophy has been applied to religion in particular and in the concluding remarks of this chapter I shall indicate the possible consequences these ideas have for an understanding of religious belief. In order to deal thoroughly with Wittgenstein's arguments as they apply to religious belief, it is necessary to describe Wittgenstein's own comments on the subject and this will be done in the next chapter. What he says represents a particular point of view, aspects of which are not necessarily implied by his general philosophical stance. Certain implications are, however, clear from the Investigations and these raise specific questions to which I shall now refer.

Wittgenstein's theory that meaning can only be determined by

reference to specific language-games and forms of life suggests that a 'functional-situational' approach to religion is the correct way to understand its logic and that the meaning and truth of religious locutions is determined by the use/function/role within the context of the given language-game of religion. It seems to be implied that religious language is a distinctive language-game having its own set of criteria for the determination of its meaning and truth, since any criteria by which we might evaluate the intelligibility or truth of anything is to be sought internally within a specific language-game. This move assumes that Wittgenstein's language-game theory is coherent and also that the autonomy of language in general has the consequence that religious discourse itself is autonomous. Both moves are highly questionable for we have seen the difficulties involved in the analogy of games and language; furthermore it does not follow that because language is not founded on a non-linguistic reality that this is true of religious language in particular.

If Wittgenstein's descriptive method of doing philosophy is accepted it would seem to follow that once a description of the 'grammar' of religious discourse has been given, the work of the philosopher is finished and no criticism or appraisal of what is believed can be given. A religious believer is consequently described as someone who uses religious concepts and participates in the life of religion, but what he actually believes cannot be evaluated independently. Accordingly, demands that beliefs should be testable or made subject to confirmation and disconfirmation would be to misunderstand them since no external justification could be given. This seems an unsatisfactory way of dealing with religious

beliefs, as theorising is not something philosophers should give up even in religion.

Wittgenstein's suggestion that we must locate language within its proper context has the consequence that the logic of religious belief is best understood by studying the language within the framework of certain activities and 'forms of life'. For this reason attempts to define and to describe religion as a 'form of life' rather than a language-game may be the proper conclusion to draw from Wittgenstein. This move, however, may represent a fundamental misunderstanding of what Wittgenstein included under the expression 'form of life'. Could it be that a correct application would be to say that religion included 'forms of life' rather than to say that it is a 'form of life'? The problem again is that of the difficulty of accepting a vague expression as the basis from which to expound the logic of religion.

Wittgenstein's notion that for special purposes language may be circumscribed perhaps implies that religious discourse is regulated by rules and this might lead to the notion that religious belief is constituted by such rules. This might imply that religion was a tight system without the possibility of alteration and change. This would be to ignore the use of Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances and to fail to take note of Wittgenstein's warning that interpretation and creation of rules is flexible. Wittgenstein's constitution theory would certainly imply that the logic of religious objects should not be confused with that of other objects, but his notion that the general facts of nature form the background to an understanding of concepts would need to be held in view to withstand the charge of esotericism. This emphasis on

physiological, psychological, legal and other general background phenomena might be taken to have metaphysical consequences for an understanding of the logic of religious belief, but if this move were to be made it would seem to contradict the 'grammatical', descriptive, functional/situational, account he recommends.

There are many issues involved in trying to make clear Wittgenstein's views as they apply to religion and incompatible positions could be drawn up from an emphasis on one or other of his ideas to the exclusion of others. Light is thrown on the whole subject by certain things Wittgenstein said and in the next chapter Wittgenstein's own discussion of religion is described so that a proper evaluation can be made of the consequences his philosophy has for religious belief. This will provide a foundation from which to appraise what has become known as Wittgensteinian fideism.

CHAPTER 6

The Logic of Fideism Evaluated and Rejected

In this chapter the consequences that Wittgenstein's philosophy has for religious belief will be examined. The thesis has throughout concentrated on the question 'Is it wrong to try to provide a justification for religious belief?' and has shown why Wittgenstein's early and mid-stream philosophies do not give a satisfactory answer to that question. Wittgenstein's third attempt to resolve the problem is to treat (1) religious belief as a basic human activity which does not need to be justified, and (2) to insist that the language of religion stands in no need of justification where this means either that it is not in need of being shown to be intelligible or is not in need of being shown to be true. He regards philosophy as a clarification of the grammar of language-games and this means that the logic of religion is also discussed 'grammatically'. The conclusion is drawn that religious beliefs belong to a given universe of discourse which cannot be appraised from outside the system. Wittgenstein's own remarks on the subject of religious belief will be described and evaluated in the light of his later philosophy. Arguments for and against this position will be assessed after an exposition of his Lecture on religion has been given. This Lecture, together with arguments advanced by Wittgensteinians, will provide the basis from which 'fideism' will be appraised. The arguments advanced, the concepts used and the consequences drawn by fideists will be shown to offer an inadequate defence of the logic of religious belief. This logic will be discussed under six headings and it will be shown that the notions that (1) religious belief is a logically

self-contained universe of discourse (2) religious belief is non-hypothetical (3) religious belief has an exclusively regulative function (4) religious belief is using a picture (5) religious belief has a non-contradictory character (6) religious belief is an absolute commitment to a way of life, fail to do justice to the diversity and logical character of religion. The conclusion will be drawn that Wittgenstein and his supporters are mistaken in saying that it is wrong to try to provide justification for religious belief. This chapter thus seeks to lay the ghost of fideism and this implies, if successful, that a non-pictorialinterpretation of "A believes p" is necessary and this will be analysed in the final chapter.

Wittgenstein's Lecture on Religion

Wittgenstein's Lecture* on Religious Belief was given in 1938[1]. The Lecture seeks to answer the question, 'What makes a belief a religious belief?' and in seeking to give an answer Wittgenstein uses a number of illustrations to show what distinguishes a believer from an unbeliever and to raise the question as to whether or not it is right to look for justification for what constitutes that difference.

He uses the illustration of belief in the Last Judgement and argues that someone who does not believe in the Last Judgement does not necessarily believe the opposite to the one who does believe in it and that the unbeliever does not contradict the

* These lecture notes are not the 'ipsissima verba' of Wittgenstein but were taken down by students who heard him. Wittgenstein's thoughts are probably transcribed accurately.

believer. According to Wittgenstein the believer allows this belief to regulate his life and it is this that constitutes religious belief. He says that someone could think there will be a Last Judgement at a date in the future, but this kind of belief resting as it does on some kind of evidence, whether weak or strong, would not be a religious belief because someone might accept the evidence and fail to allow it to regulate his life. He contrasts this kind of belief with the belief of a man who may think the evidence for a Future Judgement is very thin but who, having entertained the picture of the Last Judgement, allows the picture to admonish and to control his behaviour (pp.54-6). A religious belief, that is, is an absolute commitment to a way of life whether or not there is any evidence or grounds or reasons to support it. Indeed, the very best scientific evidence may not influence a man sufficiently to make him change his way of life because to be religious there can be no tentative, half-hearted commitment that waits for confirmation.

Wittgenstein compares two people who have different attitudes to life; one thinks of retribution and one does not. "Suppose someone is ill and he says: 'This is a punishment!' And I say: 'If I'm ill, I don't think of punishment at all'. If you say: 'Do you believe the opposite?'" (p. 55), it would be inappropriate to call it believing the opposite. One believes that illness is due to divine judgement and that he is the victim of retribution and so 'explains' his illness that way. The unbeliever does not think of punishment when he is ill and no evidence could convince him otherwise. The believer and unbeliever do not, however, believe opposite things, but have different 'bliks' like Hare's neurotic

student[2]. Religious beliefs are different from hypotheses and probabilities and are not a form of knowing (p. 57). There can be blunders made within religious belief, but such blunders must not be confused with scientific mistakes. According to Wittgenstein religious belief, by definition, excludes doubt "One couldn't say about the Ressurrection "Well, possibly" (p. 56). Wittgenstein not only dismisses scientific evidence as being irrelevant to religious belief, but historical evidence also. Those who believe in Christ's Ressurrection do not question it in the way they might treat ordinary historical empirical propositions. Wittgenstein criticises Father O'Hara* (as he did Frazer in 'the Remarks') for making religious faith 'a question of science' (p. 57). Wittgenstein says he would not call religious beliefs either reasonable or unreasonable (p. 58). At one point he actually stresses the 'foolishness' of faith. A person who believes takes a Kierkegaardian risk or leap of faith. He says, "Anyone who reads the Epistles will find it said: not only that it is not reasonable, but that it is folly"**. Wittgenstein would have sided with Kierkegaard against Hegel, with Barth against Brunner, with Hare against Hick, and with George Fox against Cardinal Newman.

Besides dealing with the question of belief in the Last Judgement and in the Resurrection, Wittgenstein refers to the question of miracles and to the question of the meaning of 'God'. Miracles of various kinds appear to offer evidence for faith, but Wittgenstein

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* In a contribution to a Symposium on Science and Religion (London: G. Howe, 1931, pp. 107-116).

**See 1 Corinthians, Chapter 1 18ff.

rejects this notion. He mentions certain 'incredible' happenings such as the experience of seeing his 'dead' cousin at a seance, seeing blood coming out of something at Lourdes, a statue which bleeds on a certain day of the year, flowers which materialise etc. (pp. 60-1). Such evidence is always insufficient to the unbeliever. Wittgenstein's illustrations are used to show that religious belief does not consist of explanations nor relies on appeal to evidence, but also to raise the question of what the criterion is for meaning something different. He is interested in what makes one kind of statement religious and another one non-religious. According to Wittgenstein, religious language has 'entirely different connections' (p. 58) from non-religious language. For Wittgenstein, to think and to talk religiously is to 'refer to a technique' (p. 68) or to be trained in the use of a picture (p. 71). To entertain such belief is to place the whole weight in the picture (p. 72). He asks if having a religious picture such as the picture of death is like having a private mental picture and argues that if the concept 'death' is unpacked it can be seen that the meaning of 'death' depends on the use of the picture and this depends on public criteria and conventional linguistic practice (p. 69).

Wittgenstein's emphasis on 'training in a technique' and 'making connections' in order to understand the meaning of language is perhaps best illustrated in his reference to 'God'. If believers talk about God's Eye they do not imply that God has eyebrows (p. 71) or that a picture of God is like a photograph of an aunt (p. 59). What makes talk of God's Eye different from language about ordinary 'eyes' is the role of the picture-word 'Eye' in God's Eye

and this is determined by an accepted practice or use which the concept has in religion. Such training in the techniques of the use of religious pictures points religious beliefs and religious language in a different direction from ordinary language. Religious belief is having pictures at the forefront of one's mind which, by their very nature, are different conceptually from non-religious ways of speaking and which also make a psychological difference to a person's outlook, but to say these things is to make 'grammatical' remarks not to offer explanations (p. 72). Believers and non-believers, therefore, speak a different language because they mean different things by what they say or believe and disbelieve. Religious believers know how to connect the words by a 'Weltanschauung', but unbelievers do not understand how to use the picture because they are not committed to the use of the picture.

The arguments advanced by Wittgenstein in this Lecture will now be considered under six headings: (1) Religious belief as a logically self-contained universe of discourse (2) Religious belief as non-hypothetical (3) Religious belief as having an exclusively regulative function (4) Religious belief as using a picture (5) Religious belief as having a non-contradictory character (6) Religious belief as an absolute commitment to a way of life. Although there will be points made which overlap and criss-cross, these six headings may help to provide some clarity in a very difficult area of thought. An appraisal of the subject of religious belief in the light of Wittgenstein's later philosophy and his lecture on the subject will be given and reference will be made to arguments offered by supporters and opponents of what has come to

be known as 'Wittgensteinian fideism'[3]. The implications and consequences of fideism will be drawn and reasons advanced to show why this approach to religious belief is unacceptable. The conclusion will be drawn that it is correct to seek justification for religious belief and this will prepare the way for the final chapter.

1. Religious Belief as a Logically Self-contained Universe of Discourse

In his later writings Wittgenstein insists that no explanations of human language and action can be given outside language and that meaning and necessity are found within linguistic practices themselves. Now if what Wittgenstein says about language in general is correct, does this imply that religious language in particular is autonomous or logically self-contained? This view of the matter is advocated by Brown,[4] Malcolm,[5] Phillips[6] and Winch[7]. Fideists try to show that religious language has its own 'sui generis' meaning because they consider religious language to be a distinct 'language-game' or 'form of life' and consequently irreducible[8]. This position stands opposed to the 'scepticism of meaning' approach represented by Nielsen,[9] Martin,[10] Flew,[11] MacIntyre[12] and Hepburn[13] and differs also from that in which an attempt is made to justify Christian theism in particular as in Crombie,[14] Hick,[15] Mitchell[16] and Cox[17]. Hudson[18] does not belong to any of those schools of thought because, although he defends the fideistic position in a general way against scepticism, he rejects the idea that religious language can isolate itself from other forms of discourse[19] and, although he is critical of certain forms of apologetics, he provides a rationale for God-talk in which

religious belief is constituted by the concept of 'god' understood as possessing transcendent consciousness and agency[20].

According to Wittgensteinian fideists, the meaning of religious language is taken to be the use which such language has in the lives of believers and since a situational/functional/conextual notion of meaning is applied to religious discourse, religious belief is taken to be of a logically different kind of language from all other areas of language-use and is therefore self-contained. This notion of religious language being logically ultimate will now be appraised and rejected. The following points can be made:-

(1) It was pointed out in the last chapter that no clear indication could be given of how a language-game or form of life was to be defined or identified since Wittgenstein refused to define the essence of a concept. He denied that there must be a set of properties or characteristics common to an entity in virtue of which a word possessed meaning and that such properties or characteristics justify us in knowing how to use the word, i.e. we cannot state necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of such a word. Now if this argument against essentialism is applied to the word 'game' or 'religion' it is wrong to regard these words as something that can be defined in terms of a set of properties or characteristics discoverable in it, but this is precisely what fideists do when they speak of religious language as 'sui generis' or try to discover its fundamental presuppositions. Concepts have 'blurred edges' according to Wittgenstein and presumably this is true of religious concepts also. If an attempt is made to draw a clear

boundary for the meaning of the term 'religion' by circumscribing it in some way and defining it as a distinctive language-game or form of life, this is to fall into the generality trap of which Wittgenstein warned us. Hudson's attempt to blunt this criticism by defining necessary and sufficient conditions for the use of the word 'religion' in terms of the concept of a transcendent agency understood as a tacit presupposition fails on two counts. Firstly he fails to recognise (adequately) that concepts mean different things to different people and that consequently the clear boundary he tries to draw for the meaning of the term 'religion' would not be acceptable to all and, secondly, he confuses the meaning-aspects of a word with the truth-conditions of it*. If a religion exists which does not depend on belief in a god of transcendent consciousness and agency he would not call this a religion because of the necessary and sufficient conditions he has described. The open texture of general terms is thus denied. His argument is circular and truths are made into conceptual truths.

(2) In the last chapter the notions of language-games and forms of life were criticised and it was argued that undefined 'figurative expressions' could not be used as the basis of a philosophical position. There are at least four competing interpretations of the term 'form of life' and the term 'language-game' offers no better refuge for fideists. Phillips

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* In spite of the distinction he draws between 'criteria' and 'symptoms'. See W.D. Hudson: Wittgenstein and Religious Belief. op. cit. pp. 117-119.

became aware of the strain of using the language-game analogy and confesses to some misgivings[21]. Rhees had persuaded him that it was risky to compare religion to a game[22]. Attempts have been made to show that the limitations imposed by the analogy between religion and games may be avoided if the notion 'form of life' is used to speak of religion and this has been explored by Malcolm, Hudson, Sutherland[23], Winch and Phillips himself. In the previous chapter the difference between the expression 'language-game' and 'form of life' was made clear and this is not always recognised by fideists who oscillate from one term to the other in their writings, not always observing the difference. Now if the expression 'form of life' (which seems to be preferred now by fideists) refers to such activities as hoping, greeting, praying, crowning kings, commanding, questioning etc. together with the language used in these activities and this idea was applied to religious activities, it would be more appropriate to speak of religion as <u>including</u> forms of life rather than being a form of life since obviously the phenomena and language of hoping is only one aspect of religious life. It cannot be said to be the essence of religion. The same would apply to all other 'forms of life' such as believing, praying, pardoning, petitioning, pitying etc. It is important to stress this since, as Sherry has pointed out,[24] fideists not only misrepresent Wittgenstein's ideas but, the idea that religion includes forms of life opens up the possibility that particular beliefs, prayers, pardons, petitions, ways of pitying etc. can be justified. Fideists argue that there is a givenness about religion and about its language and use the

concept 'form of life' to justify their point of view, but if particular forms of life stand in need of justification the ghost of fideism is already laid. If religion cannot be defined as having one set of characteristics or properties, but is said to include the many varied activities such as hoping, repenting, forgiving, confessing etc., then it is wrong to regard religious language as constituting a distinct and logically self-contained form of life.

In spite of attempts to describe a common set of features identifiable in religion[25] there would not seem to be any clear criterion for accounting something religious. The words 'religion' and 'religious' are complex concepts and cannot be taken to stand for a single essence. Being complex the word 'religion' differs from simple colour concepts where the colour is named because it is that colour. Although some features of religion can be named there are no necessary and sufficient conditions discoverable by which we can count something as religious. Hudson's account is the best attempt to specify such conditions, but this not only falls into the generality criticism, but also fails to take account of those expressions of religious belief which do not rely on his constitutive concept*.

(3) In the last chapter it was pointed out that there is an 'empirical' side to Wittgenstein's later philosophy since the connections and conventions of language are rooted in certain features of

* e.g.Certain forms of Buddhism, Zen, and certain liberal versions of Theism.

existence. If language is partly dependent on non-linguistic facts (even if the meaning of concepts cannot be justified or inferred from such facts), it follows that religious language in particular must also be partly dependent on non-religious facts. Clearly a fact 'x' can be conceived as a mere natural fact, but it may also be conceived as a religiously-conceived 'x'. Religiously-conceived facts do depend upon certain features of existence which are not in themselves necessarily religious e.g. the religious concept of repentance depends upon the general fact of pastness and future without which there could be no such concept. Wittgenstein argued that language organises experienced phenomena into ordered wholes, but he did not say that language created such phenomena. This is equally true of religious language. It is necessary to stress this in order to emphasise the fact that the 'object' of religious discourse differs from an empirical object or from the 'object' of moral language, but if there is no actual existing entity corresponding to the religiously-conceived object then religious language is nothing more than an esoteric game. We must not confuse questions about the nature of concepts with questions about things themselves and we must therefore avoid confusing the nature of religious concepts with questions about divine realities. Phillips' notion that religious language determines how things are is to be rejected.[26] The fideistic case logically ends up by saying that apart from religious activity and religious language, God cannot be said to exist as he has no separate biography apart from such activity[27].

Phillips[28] and Hudson[29] both say that religious beliefs do connect with life's experience. Phillips takes religious language to be about such experiences as birth, death, joy, misery, despair and hope and indeed about the whole of human existence; he wishes to reject the charge that religious beliefs are esoteric. Nevertheless, in order to rebut the charge he uses concepts such as 'death' and 'hope' as neutral concepts to discuss religiously-conceived 'death' and 'hope'. He assumes the validity of a neutral language in order to make out a case for religion as a given language-game. He insists that religious language is not an interpretation of how things[30] are and yet by tracing 'connections' he is supposed to be able to see that astrology is superstitious and distinguishes between that and true religion[31]. Hudson makes out a case for religion by appealing to man's experiences of life and yet denies that religious beliefs are interpretations or explanations of how things are[32]. It is difficult to see how one can have it both ways. The alternative to an empirical approach is to say that religious language constitutes '<u>my</u>' world and this cannot be justified, but this would make religious beliefs esoteric.

(4) The notion that religious language is logically ultimate implies that it is not inter-dependent with other areas of discourse. Hudson, in his earlier writings on the subject, says that he cannot find a satisfactory answer to the question in Wittgenstein's writings whether religious belief was logically distinct from other areas of discourse[33]. In his recent work Hudson states that Wittgenstein implied that religious language

is not self-contained[34]. He points out that although religious language is distinct from other kinds of language, this does not imply that it is logically self-contained. If religious believers speak of death, their use of the word 'death' connects with what all men mean by death to some degree, says Hudson[35]. The special use which religious believers make of the word 'death' connects with the public use of the word. Religious terms connect therefore with non-religious language. The word 'hope' has an ordinary, everyday meaning and is used religiously in a special way in the religious context. Similarly, words such as 'believe', 'pray', 'good', 'pardon','petition', 'grace' etc. are used outside a religious framework as well as within it. Hudson shows that it is possible to take the words 'omnipotent' and 'good'"in senses which do no violence to their ordinary meanings and still say significantly that God is good and omnipotent"[36]. In order to understand the statement 'God's eye sees everything' we must be able to connect the use of the word 'eye' with its non-religious use[37]. Indeed, it is only in this way that the specific religious meaning of God's eye can be understood. The special use derives from the ordinary use of the word. From these illustrations and by means of such arguments Hudson shows how Wittgenstein's understanding of the picture language about God's eye implies that he regarded religious language as a member of a 'logically interdependent family of language-games'[38]. The language about 'eye' in God's eye is 'not peculiar to religious contexts' and from this it follows that a religiously-conceived 'eye' is not

logically self-contained and consequently is not arbitrary. This seems to be the correct conclusion to draw whether Wittgenstein's teaching can be said to support it or not. It is possible to argue that words such as 'omnipotent', 'omniscient' and 'good' and other predicates used in propositions of the type 'God is F' derive their meaning from their ordinary, non-religious use. It is possible for an unbeliever to understand the statements 'God is omnipotent' or 'God is good' and understanding it to reject the truth they represent. It is because religious language does connect with non-religious language as well as with non-religious facts that certain problems involved in believing arise, in particular the 'loss of faith' problem and the problem of 'evil'. Wittgenstein's notion that the search for the meaning of concepts outside language is futile does not logically imply that religious language is itself autonomous. This is not to say that difficulties do not remain for those who would seek to justify the meaning of religious language because such words as 'sacred' and 'miracle' are difficult to explain in non-religious terms as they tend to get distorted if so translated[39]. And the challenge that religious language may be eroded by qualification[40] until it is bereft of all meaning may have to be met. What is at issue in this chapter is not necessarily to show that religious statements are meaningful, but to ask whether their meaning and meaningfulness is something that can be shown by a fideistic approach. Now if it is conceded that religious concepts do connect in some degree (whatever that is) with the public use of words, the case

against the logically ultimate givenness of religious discourse has been made.

Four points have been made against the view that religious language is autonomous. It was argued that attempts to define 'religion' by seeking to identify a common set of properties falls into the generality trap as there are no necessary and sufficient conditions discoverable by which we call something religious. The difficulties involved in accepting Wittgenstein's expressions 'language-game' and 'form of life' were pointed out and a case was made out to show that religion could not be conceived either as a language-game or a form of life, but religion could be said to include forms of life. The third point emphasised the empirical side of Wittgenstein's work and this was followed by arguing that religiously-conceived facts do depend upon non-religious facts. The last point showed that religious concepts are inter-dependent with non-religious use of words. In practice few people would want to argue that magic, astrology, voodoo, Zande witchcraft and other beliefs merely represent different paradigm structures which cannot be appraised. If religious talk belongs to a closed circle of belief then relativism is inescapable and doubt becomes impossible. It would not be possible for God to exist and for men to disbelieve it if fideism were true. Such consequences follow if religious language is treated as if it were logically ultimate and self-contained. The view that religious language is a distinctive language-game or form of life having its own ultimate criteria of meaning and truth[41] is, therefore, rejected. We must not identify understanding with believing and this seems to be consequence of fideism[42].

2. Religious Belief as Non-hypothetical

According to Wittgenstein religious belief has a non-theoretical character. Phillips supports this and says that to make belief in the Last Judgement a dispute over a theory is to falsify its character[43] as this sort of belief is different from a scientific theory which may turn out to be mistaken. Religious beliefs do not seek to explain how things are since if they did they would be inductive generalisations based upon empirical experience. Wittgenstein's attitude to primitive rituals and magic were described in chapter 4 and these activities were shown to be significant because they connected with men's deepest hopes and fears. Frazer's treatment of such rituals and myths made them out to be mistaken quasi-scientific explanations and this was to misunderstand them according to Wittgenstein. O'Hara was also criticised for treating religious beliefs as explanations. Wittgenstein's point was that religious beliefs are of a logically different kind from scientific or historic beliefs. Four points will be made in response to the claim that religious beliefs are not explanations, or to be treated as subject to testing.

(1) It must be readily admitted that religious beliefs are not scientific hypotheses, but it does not follow that theorising and giving reasons and grounds is not part of the logic of religion. It is possible for individuals or a whole society or tribe to stake everything on their belief and for others who do not share their beliefs to regard them as theoretical and testable. It is logically possible to use a mythological system of signs to express a complete feeling for life's deepest experiences and for those to be mistaken understanding of how things are. Indeed if this were not logically possible

there would be no basis for condemning cannibalism or flat-earth theories. Philosophically, Wittgenstein's approach fails to distinguish between people's concepts and beliefs and reality itself and ignores the fact that something can be the case whether it is believed or not and that something can be believed which is false.

(2) On the Locke-Butler-Tennant* model of religious belief it makes sense to say that 'p' is hypothetical and yet for it to be believed with complete conviction. It should not be doubted that those who subscribe to probability arguments to defend religious beliefs can be committed believers and if Wittgenstein's advice to 'look and see' what exists among believers is followed then reducing religious belief to one particular model should be rejected. This would apply equally to those who reject all explanatory aspects of belief. Butler believed that it was possible to combine certain hypothetical or theoretical factors in religion with certain revealed propositions and that a synthesis of such arguments provided a foundation or justification for theism. Now whether or not this approach is completely satisfactory, the point still holds that a religious belief or parts of that belief can be construed as explanatory and therefore theoretical and for that to represent genuine religious belief since, as has been argued, necessary and sufficient conditions for defining religious belief cannot be given. To be consistent a Wittgensteinian who cannot judge the beliefs of another culture cannot condemn the beliefs

* See discussion of this in P. Helm: The Varieties of Belief. Allen and Unwin, 1973.

of sophisticated Western thinking as misunderstandings of the nature of religion.

(3) If religious belief does not involve some kind of theorising it is difficult to deal adequately with the 'loss of belief' problem[44]. Phillips tries to explain this problem by saying that loss of religious belief occurs, not because evidence makes a believer change his mind, but because the attention of the believer has been won over by a rival picture. This may well happen, but it is also possible for a believer, who had an absolute commitment,to find his commitment too challenging and demanding, particularly if certain pieces of evidence or arguments are produced to make him question his beliefs. This weakening of a person's resolve often characterises the 'back-slider'. Phillips thinks that if a believer modifies his unshakeable beliefs he has already become an unbeliever and ceases to understand what religious belief actually means. Trigg argues convincingly that Phillips' notion of commitment becomes part of the meaning of religious language since understanding is identified with believing[45]. In order to prove this argument Phillips assumes that the believer and the non-believer live in different conceptual worlds, but he claims to be able to stand outside both semantic systems in order to contrast them. He also assumes that his view of the matter is correct or true and this is impossible for him since the criteria, not only of meaning but also of truth, is contextual.

(4) When it is denied that religious beliefs are hypotheses, fideists have scientific theories in mind and criticise the view that

religion relies on contingencies and generalisations. It is doubtful if they do justice either to scientific theory or to religious belief. Contemporary philosophers of science have stressed the fiduciary frameworks* in which science makes progress and this is not often recognised by fideistic philosophers of religion. There is a difference between religious commitment and the fiduciary attitude of the scientist, but this difference should not be exaggerated. If theorising has no part to play in religion, rational judgement may be dispensed with altogether. Wisdom[46] regards religious beliefs as hypothetical, but not in the scientific sense and by his methods of connecting and disconnecting he shows that religious beliefs are the sort of beliefs which can be justified or refuted. Theists offer reasons for believing and this inevitably involves some sort of theorising, but in doing so they do not consider that there is an incompatibility between theorising and commitment. Theorising within religion and about it is an indispensable feature of seeking to explain its logic.

3. Religious Belief as Having a Regulative Function

According to Wittgenstein a belief is religious if it is at the forefront of our mind and determines the way we think and live. Religious belief has the role of helping the believer to regulate his life. Philosophically, Wittgenstein meant that religious

* T.S. Kuhn: Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Foundations of the Unity of Science. Vol. 11: No. 2, Chicago, 1962, p. 126f. M. Polanyi: Personal Knowledge. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958 and The Study of Man. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958. For a discussion of this see Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge. Ed. I. Lakatos and A. Musgrove. Cambridge University Press, 1970.

statements must not be confused with factual assertions about what is the case, nor derived from what is the case. Religious beliefs are explained non-cognitively. It must be admitted that religious belief does regulate a believer's life, but this needs to be qualified in the following way:-

(1) The regulative character of religious belief may actually derive from its factual character. Many become Christian believers by hearing the gospel preached and such proclamation may appear 'folly' to unbelievers, but it must be remembered that such preaching of the 'Kerygma' depends upon certain factual claims made concerning the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus*. Certain of these claims are clearly subject to disconfirmation since they can be shown to be falsifiable in principle.

(2) Certain religious statements such as 'There is a God' are different from historical statements about the life and death of Jesus, but they still purport to be assertions. There would be many who would claim that the statement 'There is a God' performs a regulative function because it is impossible to specify any states of affairs by which the assertion could be disconfirmed. As in (1) above, it is possible to ask 'In virtue of what states of affairs could Christian theism be said to be disconfirmable?' and if such states of affairs can be specified then the language used to express Christian belief can be shown to be both meaningful and at the same time make claims which are true. This possibility will be argued for in the closing chapter of the thesis.

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* See 1 Corinthians 15, 1-4.

(3) Regulative interpretations emphasise 'belief-in' and neglect 'belief-that', but in order that belief-in God can be shown to be more than mere illusion it must presuppose belief-that such a God exists. It would be logically indefensible to insist that belief-in God excludes belief-that God exists. To believe-in someone or something may be taken as referring to the existence of whatever is under discussion or may be an expression of trust in that in which belief is placed. 'I believe in liberalism', however, does not entail that liberalism exists, so the meaning of belief-in depends upon the context. 'I believe in Smith' can mean 'I believe that Smith exists without believing in Smith' (in the sense of trusting him). Consider the following propositions:-

1. I believe in Smith
2. I don't believe in Smith
3. I believe in liberalism
4. I don't believe in liberalism

In 3 and 4 'believe' may have an entirely different meaning from 1 and 2, since 1 and 2 probably imply that Smith does or does not exist, but 3 and 4 do not necessarily imply that liberalism does or does not exist. In 2, however, we must have a concept of Smith before we could deny any belief in him. If we apply statement 2 to belief-in God, 'I don't believe in God' presupposes that we must have the concept of God before we can deny belief in God. Also, it should be remembered that sometimes we can move from I 'believe-that' to I 'believe-in', e.g. 'I believe that antibiotics remove tonsilitis' to 'I believe in antibiotics'. Belief here derives from evidence

and experience. Similarly it is possible to move from 'I believe-that God exists' to 'I believe-in God', but neither 'I believe-that God exists' or 'I believe-in God' imply that God does exist. In the religious context 'I believe-in God' could be taken in contrast to 'I believe-in Satan' and 'You believe-in Nature' to 'I believe in God' and 'I believe-in God' in contrast to those who only believe that God exists, but who do not trust Him. Certainly religious belief includes expressions of affective and conative attitudes, but belief-in God understood in the sense of personal trust still implies belief-that[47]. 'I believe-in God' cannot be compared with 'I believe-in liberalism'. Hudson says "Belief that God exists and has certain characteristics is a necessary condition of belief in God"[48]. The question 'Does God exist?' is logically distinct from the question 'Should I trust God?'. Malcolm's view of the matter is to be rejected. Religious belief does regulate a believer's life, but it depends logically upon the claim that God exists.

4. Religious Belief as Using a Picture According to a Particular Technique

According to Wittgenstein and his followers, religious belief consists of the presentation of a picture or set of pictures which control the believer's life. The whole weight is said to be placed in the picture itself and if a believer loses his belief it is said that for him the picture dies and a commitment to a different picture takes place. Religious utterances are construed as pictorial expressions of belief, but no independent account of what is believed when the picture is used can be given.[49] The

difference between a believer and a non-believer is like the difference between someone who does and someone who does not use the picture.

Durrant has subjected this approach to a penetrating criticism[50] and what follows is a brief summary of some of the points he makes, together with my own arguments. One of the assumptions made by Wittgenstein is that some sentences can be regarded as pictures or pictorial expressions. Now whilst symbolic and analogical language is a common use of language, this is not the same as claiming that sentences are pictures. There is a difference between the sense in which a picture or an ordered set of symbols could be said to show something and the sense in which a sentence can be merely said to picture. Sentences cannot logically be said to be pictures. The following points can be made against the view that religious statements play the role of picturing:-

(1) Wittgenstein's reason for rejecting the notion that assertions can be genuinely used in religion was his commitment to a non-cognitive interpretation of religious belief. But if instead of an over-concentration on 'belief-in' he had examined statements of 'belief-that', the constative force of religious belief would have been seen to be a fundamental aspect of religion. He used the expression 'I believe in the Last Judgement' to illustrate the picture-thesis and avoided expressions such as 'There will be a Last Judgement'. Hudson correctly points out that such a belief has a constative, as well as a performative function.

(2) It is important that we regard some religious utterances in a cognitive way because this enables us to introduce pictures, parables, symbols and analogies and other non-cognitive uses of religious language. Hick has pointed out that non-literal language is "necessarily parasitic upon non-mythological beliefs"[51].

(3) When religious symbols, pictures, parables and analogies are used in religious utterances, they are not to be treated as ends in themselves. Where they are used they are the means through which we perceive the truth they represent e.g. 'God is a Father' is a literal statement describing certain things a believer believes about the kind of God he believes in, but it is 'logically-odd' in the sense that God does not stand six feet tall, have brown hair and procreate children. The word 'Father' connects with the non-religious use of the word and can intelligently be said to depend for its special use on its normal use. The representative function of such pictures must not be lost sight of. Wittgenstein admits that the word 'God' is used like a word representing[52] a person, but to say this is to deny the picture-thesis he advocates. Phillips also uses the picture-language of religion representationally whilst denying that it can be done. He says that to believe in the Last Judgement is a pictorial expression that people should act towards each other in a certain way and this implies that he uses the picture representationally. It is far from clear that to believe in the Last Judgement and to have an attitude to others are identical and this can be clearly seen in the following way:-

(a) I believe in the Last Judgement.

(b) I should live in a certain way.

The first proposition does not necessarily entail the second one and even if it did it cannot be said to be saying the same thing. Phillips gives an independent account of the use of the picture expression 'I believe in the Last Judgement' and yet denies that this can be done since the whole weight is in the picture. If no independent account of the use of the picture can be given, the final appeal must be to some mystical sense of 'showing' or 'obviousness' and this is precisely what Phillips does, but no criteria is given to show how this is possible or how arbitrariness is to be avoided.

(4) Hudson has developed the picture-thesis of religious[53] belief and he distinguishes between different senses of how pictures are used. His main concern is to stress that using a picture has logical 'connections' and 'entailments' and incompatibles'[54]. The believer is someone who is trained how to use the appropriate pictures and this means being able to draw the correct consequences from the picture. From the picture 'God the Father' we conclude that God regards all men with goodwill. The picture is fundamental, but has certain logical connections and entailments. It also has certain psychological consequences, for the person who uses the picture is different from an unbeliever who does not share in the believer's explanatory, commissive and affective use of the picture[55].

Durrant criticises Hudson for infelicitous use of words since he

speaks of 'logical entailment' in connection with picture-use and this is inappropriate because only propositions can be said to logically entail. Hudson claims that to understand the use of a picture is a matter of seeing the 'logical connection' between what is being said and what is logically fundamental, the picture itself. But even if we ignore Hudson's infelicitous use of entailment, it is difficult to see how one could ever break out of picture-use if the whole weight is in the picture and if no independent account of the use of the picture can be given. The notion that there is a logical connection between a picture and what is being said, if it is to mean anything at all must presuppose that the original 'picture' is itself a proposition and not a picture in the accepted sense of the meaning of picture. But to admit this would be to part company with the picture-thesis.

Supporters of the picture-use theory of religious belief have misused something that is important. Statements such as 'God's eye sees everything' or 'Jesus is the Lamb of God' are picture-expressions and such utterances are used in a non-literal way. This non-literal way of speaking, however, contrasts with those utterances which are literal and if this were not so and we were unable to locate some non-pictorial remarks in religious belief, the very condition of such picture ways of talking, having a sense would dissappear[56]. Certain religious utterances are construed as literal statements purporting to express truth whether they are believed or not and it is on the basis of these statements that figurative expressions, parables, symbols and analogies can be said to picture. It is true that many expressions in religion are

performative and serve specific linguistic needs apart from describing or stating, but religious beliefs have a stating function also. Even if we could understand an expression as presenting a picture, the picture itself does not tell us what picture we are presented with unless we know this in some other way.

5. Religious Belief as Having a Non-contradictory Character

According to Wittgensteinians, those who do not use the picture do not contradict those who do because to hold a different belief is not to say that one believes 'p' and the other 'not p'. Apparently there is no contradiction because the word 'believe' means something different to the non-believer from what it does to the believer and this is claimed also for words such as 'evidence' and 'contradict'[57]. When a man says 'I believe in the Last Judgement', 'believe' is used differently from when he says 'I believe in material objects'. If 'A' says he believes in the Last Judgement his use of the word 'believe' is distinctive because it is connected to the religious language-game. If 'B' says he does not believe in the Last Judgement, Wittgenstein says he does not contradict the believer (L.R.B. 53). Hudson agrees with this[58].

It is easy to see how this notion arises. If 'A' says 'I believe in a picture' and 'B' says 'I don't believe in a picture' then obviously these are not contradictory statements such as 'p' and 'not p'. Similarly if we said "'A' believes God created the world", but "'B' does not believe God created the world", this is not a contradiction. But if we isolate the proposition believed from any assent given then real contradiction does emerge. The

statement 'God created the world' and the statement 'God did not create the world' are contradictory if the referent 'God' is the same in both propositions and it can be*. Similarly 'There will be a Last Judgement' contradicts 'There will not be a Last Judgement'. Penelhum observes that it needs to be argued that what men of faith proclaim and unbelievers deny is not one and the same thing and known to be[59]. Wittgensteinians make their point by including the concept 'believe' in the proposition believed and by omitting to use propositions with 'believe-that' as the central idea. If we detach the word 'believe' from the actual proposition believed then the proposition believed or disbelieved can be shown to be contradictory. For some expressions of belief, such as Wittgenstein's remark that one person regards illness as a punishment from God and another does not, the notion of contradiction is inappropriate, but this is not true of all expressions of belief. The reason for affirming the non-contradictory nature of religious belief is that fideists define religious belief in regulative terms.

In order to be meaningful the positive proposition 'God created the world' does necessarily presuppose the possibility of the negative proposition 'God did not create the world'. It would be meaningful to say 'It is not the case that God created the world' or even to say 'It is not the case that God exists'. We can understand the statement 'God created the world' as 'p is true' and 'God did not create the world' as 'p is false'. If we say:-

*Radford has argued this way. C. Radford, Religious Belief and Contradiction. Philosophy, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 50 No. 144, Oct. 75, p. 443.

1. God created the world.

2. God did not create the world.

This can be taken as a contradiction.

But if we say:-

3. I believe that God created the world.

4. I do not believe that God created the world.

This is not a contradiction.

The differences between what speakers intend or believe can make a difference to the same things they say and it is for this reason that it is possible to agree with Wittgenstein when he says that what believers and non-believers 'mean' is the same sometimes and sometimes it is not. But if it can be the same sometimes then clearly religious belief can sometimes have the contradictory character denied by fideists. The fideists' case rests ultimately on the view that religion is a distinct'language-game' or 'form of life' and that there is an intelligibility gap between those who participate in it and those who do not, but this view of the matter has been shown to be indefensible. The use of religious language does not, therefore, depend on commitment since religious belief cannot be identified as a distinct form of life.

6. Religious Belief as an Absolute Commitment to a Way of Life

In the Notebooks, in the Tractatus, in his Lecture on Ethics, in the Remarks on Frazer and in his Lectures and Conversations, Wittgenstein consistently objected to the view that ethics and religious beliefs have only a relative value. He insisted that religious beliefs have an absolute hold over the believer's life and control his thinking as well as his living. Fideists strongly support this. It must be admitted that absolute commitment does

characterise the attitude of many religious believers, but what fideists fail to admit is that there are degrees of commitment. Some believe strongly, some weakly, some have an unshakeable belief and others are like the disciples, who were described as of 'little faith'. Now the fact that there are degrees of belief illustrates the point that religious beliefs can, in fact, be held tentatively. The notion that religious belief must always philosophically take the form of an absolute commitment that allows nothing to disconfirm it or even to count against it is to take the view that it depends upon a leap of faith in Kierkegaard's sense. Surely a belief can be tentative and yet religious. Wittgenstein says all testing takes place within a system (O.C. 105) and that at the end of the reasoning process comes persuasion when the process of conversion takes place (O.C. 611-612). Accordingly, it is futile to give grounds or reasons or to produce evidence for religious belief since these would be contingent characteristics and these are out of place in the religious context. Indeed Wittgenstein says that we cannot justify religious belief to those who challenge us (O.C. 106). According to Wittgenstein what we say presupposes our way of looking at things. It is consequently logically impossible for an unbeliever to understand a believer. Now if we are to have some criteria for differentiating between genuine religious belief and misguided zeal, we cannot hide behind the fideist's mask of commitment by persuasion. According to the fideist, doubt has no place in the model of religious belief for there are no degrees of commitment. Now the crucial question is whether religious beliefs are by definition subject to disconfirmation in principle. If it can be shown that the fundamental tenets of religion are subject

to testing then the case for fideism collapses. True religious commitment must involve beliefs which claim to be true so that the very act of commitment entails commitment to some beliefs and excludes others. Fideists insist that commitment precedes the entertainment of religious doctrines and pictures, but this is to be rejected since unbelievers are capable of understanding things which they choose to disbelieve. Believers are also subject to challenges which severely test their belief and which sometimes succeed in overthrowing belief. In the final chapter of the thesis it will be argued that certain states of affairs could be specified, the presence of which would disconfirm religious belief. It is not only the case that certain things may be true and valid whether they are believed or not, but that certain things may be believed that could, in principle, be shown to be false. To affirm this is to deny that religious belief has the character of consisting of necessary propositions. The nature of commitment is misunderstood by fideists, who fail to recognise that true commitment consists of entertaining certain propositions combined with a personal dedication or acquiescence to those propositions. As a matter of logic, commitment is consequent upon religious belief.

Conclusion

Wittgensteinians have taken the extreme view that religious beliefs are autonomous because the presuppositions of religious language are not questionable. It has been asserted, therefore, that it is futile to seek justification for religious beliefs since this is to seek justification for religious language and since this rests on conventions and tacit presuppositions, it is a futile enterprise.

In this chapter the arguments advanced show that this position is untenable. Unlike the presuppositions which have to be accepted in order to use language in general the presuppositions of religious language are open to question since there are alternatives to religious language. This implies that there is an external question of meaning about belief-statements and that it is right to ask for the justification or reasonableness of the use of that language. Belief-statements are interwoven with linguistic and non-linguistic activities and, therefore, being confronted with the existence of religious beliefs, it is reasonable to ask what in its existence justifies its being spoken and this means that the question of the truth of religious beliefs as well as the meaning of them needs to be answered. Religious believers describe, assert, and make predications and the truth of such descriptions, assertions and predications must be subject to some kind of testing or disconfirmation if they are to have a proper cognitive content. An unbeliever can logically ask what different states of affairs would have to exist for the believer to entertain the disconfirmation of his beliefs. A believer ought to be able to indicate a certain state of affairs, the absence of which would disconfirm his belief and, if this can be specified, then the cognitive content of religious utterances would be guaranteed. The fideistic view that it is wrong to seek justification for religious belief is thus rejected and this opens up the question as to how such justification might be provided. In the final chapter of the thesis, therefore, an examination of the nature of religious belief and its relation to states of affairs will be undertaken and the proposed way forward as an alternative to Wittgensteinianism will

be suggested. This will take the form that a non-pictorial interpretation of 'A believes p' is essential when 'believe' is equated with 'believe-religiously'. It is logically necessary to make this move since the propositional element in belief provides grounds and reasons for the belief.

CHAPTER 7

The Proposed Way Forward to Religiously-Believe Involves Making Certain Truth-Claims

An exposition and appraisal of Wittgenstein's interpretation of the logical nature of religious belief has been given in the previous six chapters. It has been shown that Wittgenstein dealt with the subject of religious belief in three different ways, but that these approaches fail to do justice to the logical nature of religious belief. In his early period Wittgenstein regarded religious propositions as meaningless since they fell outside the limits of fact-stating language. The religious 'meaning of life' or the 'mystical' belonged to the 'inexpressible' or 'unsayable'. This first attempt to deal with the subject of religious belief was rejected since the distinction made between the factual and the mystical presupposed that the picture theory of meaning was correct, that the mystical notion of 'showing' was tied to the logical notion of 'showing', and that the notion of the intuitive inexpressibility of the mystical was itself coherent and these presuppositions were shown to be unacceptable. In the middle period, his constructivist theory of language provided him with a second method of dealing with religious belief. His new interest in non-logical language and in the social contexts of language led him to explore the language of primitive ritual and mythology and he concluded that the language of the mystical (which should not be treated as scientific or explanatory) permeates all language and that it is futile, therefore, to criticise other systems of belief by invoking one's own criteria

of intelligibility and truth. This approach was also rejected since it was shown to lead to a radical form of conceptual relativism which can neither be stated coherently nor held consistently. Wittgenstein's third attempt to deal with the subject of the justification of religious belief was based on a situational/functional/contextual theory of meaning. Wittgenstein argued that meaning and necessity are found within linguistic practices and when applied to religious linguistic practice he concluded that religious beliefs should be regarded as basic human activities standing in no need of justification. Wittgenstein presented a 'grammatical' method of dealing with religious belief in which it was regarded as having a regulative function, as consisting of the use of certain techniques in using pictures, and which implied a non-cognitive interpretation of religious locutions. This 'fideistic' approach was also rejected since it is shown to rely on undefined figurative expressions so that it is impossible to say what constitutes religion, it implies the logical invulnerability of religious beliefs, it ignores the connections that language has with the world and so ignores the referential and truth-aspects of religious beliefs and it is based upon an essentialist and unitary concept of belief.

Having rejected Wittgensteinian attempts to explain the logic of religious belief, a non-pictorial interpretation of "A believes 'p'" may be offered and once this possibility has been admitted it is then possible to argue that particular religious beliefs are disconfirmable and sometimes falsifiable in principle*.

* By disconfirmability is meant a weaker form of falsifiability where there is a lack of certainty.

If the first six chapters of the thesis succeed in showing that Wittgensteinian interpretations of religious belief do not hold, the thesis has achieved its main purpose. However, the task of providing an actual description of the logic of religious belief remains. Attempts by MacQuarrie[1], Tillich[2], Smart[3], Mascall[4], Lewis[5], Hick[6] and Hudson[7] to provide, not merely a description of, but a justification of, religion cannot be evaluated in this work, but what was said in the penultimate chapter implies that attempts to justify 'religion' in general are to be rejected since there is no single thing 'religion' which has a special kind of language appropriate and peculiar to it. There is not one single concept of religious belief, but a diversity of beliefs which are brought together under the general idea of believing-religiously*.

But as was pointed out in the previous chapter, even if one were to accept Wittgenstein's argument that religious beliefs could be understood as speech-acts of various kinds which satisfy various linguistic and non-linguistic conditions and even if one accepted his view that agreement about its conventions could not be justified, it would still be possible to seek justification, not for religion in general, but for particular beliefs. Crombie[8] and Mitchell[9] in their way, and Hick[10] and Penelhum[11] in another, seek to do this.

Now if a non-pictorial interpretation of "A religiously-believes 'p'" is to be developed, this implies that it is necessary to give reasons, adduce evidence and to seek to provide both necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth of what is believed.

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* Helm describes four such models or different systems of belief within Christian Theism. See P. Helm, The Varieties of Belief. Allen and Unwin, London, 1973.

Now to make statements, claims, assertions is to say something in principle that is true or false and this applies equally to religious statements, claims, assertions as to those made in ordinary language. If we say 'A religiously-believes that p', this does not imply 'p', but if it is true it does. Also, something may be the case whether it is believed or not. An essential function of ordinary language is concerned with what is the case and since an understanding of non-cognitive uses of religious language is dependent upon certain core-statements, claims, assertions (Hick), the same is true of religious language. In this final chapter, therefore, this essential element is examined since religious believers do wish to claim cognitive significance for their basic claims, beliefs, assertions, statements. Since to be cognitively significant is to make a claim, assertion, belief, statement which is either true or false, it follows that religious claims, assertions, beliefs, statements ought to be at least disconfirmable in principle. In the first section of the chapter the distinction between knowledge and belief will be made clear and once this has been shown the next section will argue that to believe that p is to imply that p is true since belief is acquiescing ~~to~~ in a claim, statement, assertion that such and such is the case. This leads logically to the next section in which the truth of what is believed is shown to be correspondence between what is claimed, stated, asserted and certain states of affairs. As this is crucial to the final moves about to be made, the section will be more detailed. From the position advanced that 'A religiously believes p' is taken to mean 'A takes p to be true' where p refers to a specifiable state of affairs, it will then be

argued in the fourth and final section that within Christian theism certain belief-claims are subject, in principle, to disconfirmation since it is possible to specify certain states of affairs, the absence of which would disconfirm such claims, assertions, statements, and that one particular Christian belief is actually falsifiable in the strong sense. The conclusion will be drawn that 'A religiously believes p' consists in having varying degrees of assurance according to the quality of evidence available. No attempt will be made to show that any particular beliefs are true or are verifiable as in Penelhum, Hick, Cox[12]; the less ambitious objective will be to show that some theistic statements, claims, assertions are disconfirmable in principle (not in relation to 'meaning', but in relation to 'truth') and that one particular statement is falsifiable (in the strong sense).

1. The Difference Between Knowledge and Belief

In epistemology, although no absolute distinction can be drawn between knowledge and belief, the difference between 'to believe' and 'to know' is emphasised because 'to believe' does not usually entail the truth of what is believed. When someone is uncertain of the truth of what he believes, he sometimes says "I believe p" because he could not for sure say "I know p". In ordinary language we say "I am not sure, but I believe so" (which implies fallibility) and "I don't only believe, I know" (and this implies infallibility). A contrast is made between belief and knowledge because "A knows p" is taken to imply certainty, whereas "A believes p" implies either that A is not sure about p or that he cannot demonstrate that he has sufficient grounds to be certain. It is also argued that we can believe what is false, but not know what is

false e.g. I can believe that the earth is flat, but I cannot know this because the earth is in fact round. The use of the word 'believe' implies a lack of certainty whereas the use of the word 'know' does not. Believing, therefore, contains an element of uncertainty and varies in degrees of confidence (Price)[13]. However, it can be argued against this that "I believe that p" does not logically imply the falsity of "I know that p" so that it could be said that if one believes with complete assurance, this does not imply that one does not know; someone may be prepared to say "I believe that p, indeed I know that p" (Robinson)[14]. Attempts to show how 'I know' and 'I believe' can sometimes coincide, do not, however, invalidate the claim that 'to believe that p' is usually incompatible with 'to know that p' for if I know 'p' at least one condition must be satisfied and that is that p must be true, but this does not apply in relation to believing. 'A believes that p' can be true when p is true and 'A knows that p' can be true when p is true. 'A believes that p' can be false when p is true and 'A knows that p' can be false also when p is true. Yet (crucially) 'A believes that p' can be true when p is false, but 'A knows that p' cannot be true when p is false. Thus the distinction between believing and knowing can be emphasised. But what is meant by belief? The next section makes the move that to believe that p is to imply that p is true since belief is acquiescence in a claim, statement or assertion.

2. The Nature of Belief

When belief itself is analysed, a distinction needs to be made between the entertaining of a claim, statement, assertion and acquiescing to it; claims, statements, assertions can be

entertained and understood without believing or disbelieving them. The psychological element in belief consists in the degree of confidence the believer has and this can vary from a mere opinion through a whole range of attitudes to an absolute assurance at the other extreme. The conceptual or logical element in belief is the philosopher's concern and this relates to what is believed, claimed, stated, asserted. Belief, therefore, is reasoned assent to an entertained statement, claim, assertion, story, theory etc. This applies equally to religious beliefs since to religiously-believe something is to entertain a claim, assertion, statement and then to acquiesce or respond to such a claim, assertion, statement. It is a condition of believing something that we should also be willing to apply the concept of truth to what is believed, claimed, asserted, stated, so that for every claim, assertion, statement the words 'is true' can be added. For the belief itself to be true the statement, claim, assertion believed must be true, so that a man's belief depends on something other than his believing it. To understand what this something else is leads to an examination of the nature of truth itself.

3. Truth is Correspondence Between What is Claimed and Certain States of Affairs

For the purpose of the argument about to be advanced it is necessary, (following White)[15] to distinguish between (1) words used to express a belief (2) what is said by such words and (3) the belief or claim that is made or, to put it another way (1) saying that p (2) uttering words that 'p' and (3) expressing the belief that p. The mere saying of words does not guarantee that this is how things

are or that such and such is the case for words in the form of statements, assertions, claims could be said in a play or by a parrot. Statements, claims, assertions cannot themselves be true or false, but can be used to say what is true or false. To identify what is said with the use of the words used to say it, so that truth is to do with the use of a set of words is to be rejected. The point is that words are used by people to say something. What a statement, claim, assertion conveys is not its meaning or its use, but what one wishes to state, claim, assert, believe, doubt etc. Whether there is something which is said in what is uttered depends upon the circumstances in which it is said. The mere utterance itself is not a necessary condition for something claimed. Once the difference is noted between saying that p, uttering the words that p and expressing the belief or claim that p, it becomes clear that what a statement or assertion conveys is what one believes and it follows that the truth or falsity of what is believed depends on a relation or correspondence between what is said and what is claimed. This means that it is only when what is said is 'that this is so' or 'this is how things are' can it be either true or false. "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true" (Aristotle)[16]. That 'this is how things are' or 'that this is so' is what we state, claim, believe and is a necessary condition for its being true or false. To accept this argument is to reject the Logical Superfluity Theory in which 'true' is logically superfluous (Ryle)[17] and the Non-Descriptive Theory in which to say that something is true is a means of showing

agreement (Strawson)[18]. 'True' is taken here to be connected with how things are. The Correspondence Theory which says that truth consists in correspondence of what is claimed, asserted, stated to what is a fact, where fact is a word used to indicate how things are is taken here to be the most acceptable method of dealing with the question of the truth or falsity of what is asserted, claimed, believed, stated. For the purpose of arguing that certain religious statements, claims, assertions, beliefs are disconfirmable in principle, it is unimportant whether the Semantic Correspondence Theory is invoked (Tarski[19], Popper[20]), or whether the notion of correspondence relates everyday language and everyday thinking to specifiable facts (White)[21], or whether an appeal is made to eternal propositions (Moore) or whether 'sentences' are emphasised rather than propositions (Quine)[22]. Nor does it follow if the Correspondence Theory is invoked that we need to think that a statement 'that p' is structured like the fact 'that p' (early Wittgenstein) or that we need to analyse the 'meaning' of the correspondence as if it were an additional reality (see Moore). For the purpose here, certain statements such as 'Christ rose from the dead' and 'There is a life after death' can be taken to make certain claims and such claims are true if and only if it is a fact that Christ rose from the dead and that there is a life after death. These statements, assertions, claims say this is how things are i.e. that these are facts. To discover whether what is claimed, stated, believed here is true or false is to discover whether there are facts corresponding to what is said.

Reasons for believing that certain statements, claims, assertions, beliefs are true differ in detail or in kind because the facts depend on many features and clearly there is a need for different criteria if truth-claims are to be assessed, but the truth is still correspondence to fact. Tarski's theory does have the advantage of making clear just what fact a statement, assertion, claim 'p' will correspond to, if it corresponds to any fact, and this solves the problem of false statements for they do not correspond to any fact. If it is accepted that a statement is true, if and only if there is a corresponding fact, in order to test statements for their truth-claims it is necessary to indicate 'how things are' or 'how things are not' if the cognitive element is to be appraised. If a statement says this is how things are and it is possible to show by evidence that things are not like that, then the statement is false. So what is characterised as true or false is what is said where what is said is that this is how things are. The word 'fact' is used to indicate how things are and false beliefs are made false because there are no facts corresponding to what is conveyed by what is said. In order to test whether this is 'how things are' or that such and such exists, it is necessary to indicate a state of affairs, the absence of which would disconfirm what is asserted, stated, claimed, believed. The truth or falsity of all beliefs, including religious beliefs, therefore, depends upon how things are and 'how things are' or states of affairs are the necessary and sufficient conditions for the truth or falsity of belief. A Christian's belief that Christ rose from the dead and that there is a life after death depends, therefore, on something other than his believing it i.e. on the facts. Once

we give up the search for the evidence and reasons which confirm or disconfirm the truth of a belief we lose all means of distinguishing between one belief and another 'except by the comfort they provide' (Vivian)[23].

Religious belief depends ultimately on belief-that, for if a believer insists that he believes in God, or in Christ's Resurrection, or in Life after Death this logically implies that he believes that there is a God, that Christ did rise from the dead and that there is life after death. Religious-believing, which is here understood as a personal acquiescence or response to what is claimed, asserted, stated or conveyed by means of language where what is claimed, asserted, stated or conveyed refers to 'how things are', involves consideration of evidence and reasons. The belief held may be reasonable or unreasonable, justified or unjustified, shakeable or unshakeable, but in the final analysis its truth (though not its meaning) is determined by the facts. By belief we mean what is believed i.e.'that p'. Of course, an understanding of the language of Christian theism involves us in something more than a mere assent to an entertained claim, statement, assertion since we make use of Commissives, Exercitives, Behabitives and other performative language-uses (Austin[24], Evans[25]). Nevertheless, it is upon the referential and truth aspects of the core statements of Christian theism that its claims stand or fall. When Christians speak of God they refer their thoughts and concepts to something evoked by the concepts (Christian)[26] in what they claim, assert, believe. The very use of God-talk presupposes the extra-linguistic reality of God (Hick). Questions about God's existence and God's reality

are not only grammatical and conceptual, but are about fact, for every true religious belief must ultimately relate or correspond to some particular state of affairs. The belief is true if it refers to what is and it is false if it refers to what is not.

The quality of evidence and the strength of reasons which we possess for beliefs varies according to what statement, assertion, claim is being made and this is no different from ordinary beliefs. There are other beliefs about which we feel equally sure, but where the evidence is poor. If we wish to be reasonable we cannot hold all beliefs with the same degree of certainty. If the evidence is overwhelming we may be justified in saying 'I know' rather than 'I believe' and at this point belief gives way to knowledge. Sometimes we find our beliefs change and are modified when new information and new evidence is presented: these observations apply to religious beliefs also and a believer should always be ready to modify his belief according to the quality of evidence and the strength of reasons considered. There is a positive advantage in holding some beliefs tentatively in that it is easier to give them up when the facts indicate that it is unreasonable to maintain such beliefs. Whatever difficulties are involved (and there are many) in trying to provide reasons and in trying to evaluate the evidence, it is necessary to be able to break out of the series of belief-statements and reach some established states of affairs in order to check the truth-claims of such beliefs.

4. The Disconfirmation of Certain Core-Statements of Theism

The conclusion to be drawn, by invoking the Correspondence Theory in its most acceptable form, is that when religious believers use statements, make assertions and claims, utter beliefs and indicate facts, such claims, statements, assertions and beliefs are either true or false. 'God created the world', 'Christ rose from the dead', 'There is a life after death' are examples of such claims and these claims are made with respect to some state of affairs and this is identified as that to which the statement refers, so that a man's believing something is true or false is to say that the state of affairs that he believes to exist or not to exist does or does not exist (Chisholm)[27].

Having shown that 'A religiously believes p' can be taken to mean 'A believes p to be true' where p refers to a specifiable state of affairs, this implies that such statements, claims, assertions, beliefs should be subject to some kind of rational and logical testing and in the final move about to be made it will be argued that one particular theistic core-statement is falsifiable in principle since it is possible to specify certain states of affairs, the absence of which would falsify such a statement. Clearly a single case of disconfirmation counts far more in deciding the truth-value of a claim, assertion, statement than many inconclusive verifications (Popper)[28] and if we can, in principle, say what would disconfirm certain theistic statements and in one case falsify a claim, we shall avoid the accusation that religious beliefs, utterances, assertions, statements are really necessary truths in disguise and are incapable of informing us about what is or is not the case. Theism cannot be made

compatible with any and every possible states of affairs. The question to be answered, therefore, is whether it is possible to indicate states of affairs, the absence of which could be taken to disconfirm certain statements, assertions, claims. If religious belief is compatible with anything having happened, it is clearly not a factual belief. The argument to be made here will show that it is possible to disconfirm certain beliefs since it is possible to show what difference is made by the assertion being true or false. The principle of disconfirmability as here invoked is the principle that asserts that if we can discover what an assertion denies we can show what it asserts e.g. 'Jones is a teacher' is equivalent to 'It is not the case that Jones is not a teacher'[29]. Flew contends on logical grounds that religious statements, assertions, claims are meaningless because believers could never admit the possibility that 'God exists' or 'God created the world' or 'God loves mankind' might not be true. Accordingly, to him theistic language is eroded of meaning when its claims are challenged because it <u>is</u> made compatible with every state of affairs. There are infelicities in the way Flew presents his challenge since he uses expressions 'to count against', 'to be incompatible with' and 'to falsify' interchangeably and he has since admitted to weaknesses in this respect[30]. Hudson[31], with the help of Heimbeck[32], has criticised Flew for insisting that the possibility of evidence is a necessary condition of meaning which, of course, it is not. What is important, however, is the logical question as to whether religious beliefs can be disconfirmable in principle in the sense that the truth claimed by such beliefs does refer to corresponding states of affairs, the absence of which would falsify them. What is pertinent is not to use the

falsification criterion as a test of meaning, but as a test of the truth-claims made.

In this final section certain Christian theistic assertions, claims, statements will be examined to see if they do conform to the condition that to assert that such and such is the case is to deny that such and such is not the case*. It will be seen that there are difficulties in the enterprise and that not all such statements are subject to the same kind of disconfirmation procedure. The test to be applied will be to ask what reasons ought to make a believer change his mind about the truth of 'p' and this means (with some statements) to be able to show some evidence or possible states of affairs that should compel him to disbelieve or to admit that what he believed as true is, in fact, false. If we cannot admit the possibility of such assertions, statements, claims not being true, then clearly they are not proper assertions, statements or claims on logical grounds. Let us take an assertion which Flew uses himself. He insists that 'God loves mankind', whilst looking like a genuine assertion is not allowed to be falsifiable by theists since, whatever happens believers will never be prepared to say 'God doesn't love mankind". The response to his challenge has been to say that the fact of 'evil' is prima facie evidence against the assertion 'God loves mankind' (Crombie[33], Hick[34], Plantinga[35], Hudson[36]). It is logically possible according to those philosophers to argue that the three statements (1) God is Omnipotent (2) God is Good (3) Evil exists, can all be believed without contradiction (Plantinga). Mitchell is prepared to allow that the problem of suffering does 'count against' the

* Technically, a positive assertion is logically equivalent to the denial of the negation of itself.

assertion 'God loves mankind", but not decisively so, thus barring any absolute falsification of the statement. It is said that evil that was 'utterly, eternally and irredeemably pointless' would falsify the assertion 'God loves mankind', but since we cannot get into the position called dying we cannot say that evil is eternally pointless and thus the statement 'God loves mankind' is not conclusively falsifiable (Crombie)[37]. So the statement 'God loves mankind', according to Crombie's interpretation, appears to be necessarily true since it is not really open to falsification. It would seem that no attempt to falsify the statement 'God loves mankind' can succeed because it is always possible to invoke the belief 'There is a life after death' in order to side-step the demand for falsification here and now.

Now the prima facie case against God's goodness and mercy is a real case and experientially has proved for some people to be conclusive, sufficient for them to become unbelievers, having once believed. Such 'doubters' are not merely won over by a rival picture, but find the crushing and unbearable evidence of suffering enough to falsify the assertion 'God loves us'. They may jump to a hasty conclusion, but it could not be said that they did not consider reasons and evidence and on considering these they have concluded that it is not the case that God loves us. Logically, the statement 'God allows innocent people to suffer unbearable sufferings' does disconfirm (in the weak sense) the statement 'God loves mankind', even though it does not necessarily falsify it (in the strong sense). Suffering does 'count against' the truth 'God loves mankind', but does not falsify it. Is it possible to indicate a state of affairs that would falsify as well

as count against it?

It is possible to argue that if evil ~~was~~ were ubiquitous that would conclusively falsify the statement 'God loves mankind'. The logical point here is that it is possible to indicate a state of affairs which, if existing, would falsify a core-statement of theism so that the truth expressed by 'God loves mankind' would not correspond to what is, but to what is not. Implicit in the assertion 'evil is ubiquitous' is the denial that such a God who loves mankind does not, in fact, do so and that either God is unloving or God does not exist at all. It may be difficult to specify what conditions would have to be like for the assertion 'evil is ubiquitous' to be true, but Buddhists who do believe that existence is itself evil, deny that there is a God who loves mankind, so the two statements are incompatible. This particular argument, however, does not seem completely convincing since clearly the state of affairs for both Buddhist and Christian is the same, the difference is how they look at the world. We seem to be back in the fideist's circle.

The statement 'God loves mankind' implies that there is a Being independent of mankind and this implies that one cannot deal with any one particular core-statement without considering the other basic assertions religiously-connected to it. It would be possible (logically) to believe certain theistic statements without necessarily believing them all. One might accept the belief 'There is a God who created the world' and 'God loves mankind' without necessarily believing 'There is a life after death' and one could believe that there is a life after death without

believing that there is a God who created the world. There would be nothing illogical in this, but Christian theism which is being considered here is a system in which a number of different statements, assertions, claims are made which hang together. The statement 'There is a God who created the world', if not true would falsify theistic belief. Would it be possible to specify a state of affairs, the absence of which would falsify the fundamental claim of theists? Let us see whether the statement 'God created the world' is falsifiable and refers to what is or to what is not.

Leaving aside various pantheistic (Schleiermacher)[38] and panentheistic interpretations (Tillich[39], Robinson[40]) of theism, the statement 'There is a God who created the world' purports to refer to a trans-empirical, discrete personal Being and to claim to refer to such a Being is to claim that such a Being exists. To claim that 'God created the world' is to assert that such a Being did actually bring the universe into existence. Is this basic assertion subject to falsification or not? It would seem that the statement 'God created the world' is incompatible with the statement 'God did not create the world', but is such a statement compatible with any and every state of affairs for those who believe 'God created the world'?

Sceptics claim the right to ask a believer what different states of affairs would have to exist for him to deny that God did actually create the world. Believers, however, seem to want it all ways for they claim that Big Bang theories and Continuous Creation theories (Hoyle) are alike irrelevant to their 'theological' claim

'God created the world'. Alternatively it might be argued that certain mega-evolutionary theories (if true) would falsify the theist's basic claim (Kerkut[41], Huxley[42], Dobzhansky[43], Newman[44]). The truth seems to be that the origins of the universe are beyond any straightforward verification and cannot, in fact, be tested for falsification. This is the case also with mega-evolutionary theories. No observation or evidence can confirm or disconfirm either view of the matter. Naturalistic interpretations of the universe seek to explain all the phenomena of nature in terms of one hypothesis and all the evidence is interpreted 'sub-species evolutionis' so that whatever data, information,evidence is discovered, it can be accommodated to the mega-evolutionist's theory. Precisely the same is true for the theist. The theist's basic statement appears to function as a fundamental presupposition for which no evidence or reasons can be invoked for support. This conclusion would be premature because although the statement 'God created the world' is not falsifiable it is possible to make out a cumulative case for theism and to argue that a consideration of the features of the world and man's relationship to the world support the concept of creation rather than the notion of a world brought into being by a blind, impersonal process of chance. Nevertheless, from the point of view being discussed here, the theists basic assertion, claim,statement is certainly not falsifiable. It seems to be used as a basic presupposition.

So far it has been argued that certain core-statements such as 'God loves mankind' and 'God created the world' may be

disconfirmable, but not falsifiable. The statement 'There is a life after death' seems to fare no better than these statements since it might be verified if true, but it could never be falsified if false (Hick)[45]. The statement 'There is a life after death' certainly affirms, asserts, claims that there is a state of affairs, the absence of which would falsify the statement so that although it cannot be falsified in practice if false, it is possible to specify what in principle here and now would falsify it then. The difficulty once again is that there is no way of appealing to evidence or referring to states of affairs which could falsify the statement 'There is a life after death'. But it is, in principle, disconfirmable since it refers to a state of affairs which exists if true.

At this point, therefore, it is pertinent to ask if there is any basic assertion, claim, statement or belief fundamental to Christian theism which, if not true, would make the system as a whole unbelievable and to further enquire as to whether such an assertion, claim, statement, belief is disconfirmable and perhaps even falsifiable (i.e. certainly true or false). If it can be shown that one crucial statement which asserts that this is how things are could be shown to assert that this is not so, then clearly the cognitive element in this belief would be demonstrably false since what is cognitive is that which is capable of being true or false (Blackstone)[46]. I want to suggest that there is such a statement, claim, assertion, belief.

St. Paul described a state of affairs, the absence of which would have made a crucial difference to the truth-claims of

Christianity. He said, "If Christ is not risen your faith is futile"(1 Cor. 15). If we put this into the form 'Christ rose from the dead' it is possible to ask whether any state of affairs could not only, in principle but also in practice, be specified to falsify this core-statement of Christian belief. It is readily agreed that theology does make use of ordinary empirical language and that where such assertions as 'Jesus lived in Palestine' or 'Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was dead and buried' are used they do assert that such and such is the case and are testable by ordinary historical methods. Now concerning the statement 'Christ rose from the dead' it is possible to indicate a state of affairs, the absence of which would invalidate the truth-claims of this statement and thus make a specific claim, belief, assertion conclusively falsifiable.

The belief that Christ rose from the dead is the kingpin of the Christian faith, without which other core-statements such as 'God created the world' and 'There is a life after death' would not hold the same significance for Christian believers. It has been shown that what should be evaluated is not 'religion' in general, but specific beliefs and what is suggested here is an attempt to specify what precisely would have to occur or to have occurred for a Christian to say 'Christ did not rise from the dead', for if what is stated is not 'how things are' when this is stated as a fact then what is said is false.

Christians have been concerned to stress that revelation is mediated through a concrete, historical person seen in the context of certain events which happened to a specific people at a specific

time. Christianity is a historical religion in a unique sense. There has been a tendency, in some quarters, to move away from the concentration upon historical events and to concentrate on 'faith' in which the New Testament claims, assertions, statements are interpreted existentially. This demythologisation entails, not only the re-interpretation of myths, but the translation of such myths into Heidegger's philosophy of existence (Heidegger[47], MacQuarrie[48], Bultmann[49]). Such interpretations are irrelevant to the crucial question as to what actually happened and attempts to avoid the challenge that true belief turns on the question whether certain things are so or not. Existential theologies are either reductionist or alterations of Christian belief or both. According to the view being advanced here, the specific Christian belief that Christ rose from the dead must relate to the reality of what is in a way that can be seen to be true or false. To claim, assert, believe that the statement 'Christ rose from the dead' is true (and nothing short of this will do for Christians) we must be able to allow something to stand against it as its disproof. If no counter-evidence is allowed to stand against it so that it can be falsified then the danger is that the belief may not relate to any falsifiable reality. If God's revelation in history has a relation to how things are then it must square with how things are. When John's disciples doubted whether Jesus was the promised Messiah, he pointed them to certain evidence and if we are to make truth-claims for the fundamental statement 'Christ rose from the dead' we must be prepared to do the same.

For Bultmann it would make no difference to his faith in the

Resurrection if some archaeologists dug up a body which could be identified as that of Jesus, supposing such an identification was possible, but this is precisely the sort of evidence that would falsify the statement 'Christ rose from the dead'. St. Paul described the Resurrection in statements describing a state of affairs, the absence of which would have made a crucial difference to the truth-claims of Christianity. Because the Resurrection was not a visible event does not imply that it was not a physical event. It does not mean the return of the soul of Jesus to the tomb to revivify a dead body. It was a transformation of death. The physical nature of the Resurrection is implicit in the language used to describe it in the New Testament. The principle of significant falsification can be invoked here, for if the earthly remains of Jesus' body were unearthed, and if this could be shown to be conclusively the case beyond all reasonable doubt, then the statement 'Christ rose from the dead' would be shown to be false. And if this was the case the Christian faith would be crucially disproved. The discovery of the body of Jesus would be regarded as a condition sufficient to falsify the statement 'Christ rose from the dead'.

According to the falsification procedure for testing particular statements, the evidence must be made publicly available and specifiable conditions in space and time are required to show that a statement is false. Concerning the claim 'Christ rose from the dead' the evidence for verifying such a statement is too far removed for anyone to be sure (though theories proposed to explain the empty tomb are not very convincing) so that although it is in principle confirmable (in the weak sense), it is not verifiable

(in the strong sense). But the statement 'Christ rose from the dead' is not only disconfirmable (in the weak sense) since one could specify in principle what would 'count against' its truth, it is falsifiable (in the strong sense) since the discovery of the body of Jesus would prove that Christ did not rise from the dead.

Conclusion

It has been shown that for a religious believer 'A believes p' should be taken to mean 'A takes p to be true' and that belief refers, therefore, to how things are. Belief itself has been shown to be acquiescence or personal response to certain statements, assertions, claims, so that as a matter of logic commitment follows belief (Trigg)[50]. This has been illustrated by certain core-statements in Christian theism in which the principles of disconfirmation and falsification have been invoked in order to test the claims that such statements are proper cognitive assertions since the truth of what is believed is shown to correspond between what is stated, claimed, asserted and certain states of affairs. Some religious statements are more amenable to testing than others, but the core-statement for Christian believers is not only disconfirmable, but falsifiable in principle. But in the absence of such falsity conditions actually existing, Christian believers have the right to claim (tentatively) that their basic belief is true. The conclusion to be drawn is that religiously-believing p consists in having varying degrees of conviction or assurance, based on reasons for believing p where such reasons are related to evidence which corresponds to such belief. Christian theism satisfies these criteria and this form of religious belief does consist in believing that p is true.

It is possible that such belief may, if believed with complete assurance, become knowledge so that one may say not only 'I believe that Christ rose from the dead, indeed I know that my Redeemer liveth', but such a belief still rests on evidence. A man's belief, that is, if it is true belief, depends on something other than his believing it and that something is a state of affairs which may or may not exist.

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