ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A WITTGENSTEINIAN LANGUAGE OF ETHICS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

SİBEL OKTAR

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

MARCH 2008

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof.Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof.Dr. Ahmet İnam
Head of Philosophy Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Şeref Halil Turan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof.Dr. Ahmet İnam	(METU,Philosopy)	_____
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Şeref Halil Turan	(METU, Philosophy)	_____
Prof.Dr. Harun Tepe	(HÜ, Philosophy)	_____
Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ayhan Sol	(METU, Philosophy)	_____
Dr. Adnan Akçay	(METU, Sociology)	_____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name : Sibel Oktar

Signature :

ABSTRACT

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A
WITTGENSTEINIAN LANGUAGE OF ETHICS

Oktar, Sibel

Ph.D., Department of Philosophy

Supervisor : Assoc.Prof. Şeref Halil Turan

March 2008, 163 pages

In this study, the standpoint that discourse on ethics is impossible is examined. As Ludwig Wittgenstein is the first philosopher who explicitly said that ethics is inexpressible, the main concentration is on Wittgenstein's conception of ethics. Analytic philosophy's questions regarding ethics are about the meaning of the expressions of value rather than conduct. It is generally recognized that the distinction between these questions and the emphasis on the definition of value judgements starts with G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (*PE*). So G.E. Moore is included in the scope of this study. Wittgenstein's manifestation of the inexpressibility of metaphysical and ethical utterances influenced logical positivists. Hence, it is necessary that our scope should also include the Logical Positivist's two main meta-ethical theories, i.e., the emotive theory of ethics and naturalistic ethics. Wittgenstein's conception of ethics in his early and later periods are examined separately. This is because it is generally believed that his later works could provide a means of saying what "cannot be said" for early Wittgenstein. It is concluded that the conception of a language-game reflects well how we may have a discourse on ethics.

Keywords: Analytic Ethics, Ethics, Inexpressibility of Ethics, Wittgenstein.

ÖZ

WITTGENSTEINCI BİR ETİK DİLİNİN OLANAKLARI ÜZERİNE

Oktar, Sibel
Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi : Doç. Dr. Şeref Halil Turan

Mart 2008, 163 sayfa

Bu çalışmada etiği söylem dışında bırakan bakış açısı incelenmiştir.Etiğin dile getirilemez olduğunu açıkça ilk kez söyleyen felsefeci Ludwig Wittgenstein olduğu için Wittgenstein'in etik hakkındaki düşünceleri üzerinde yoğunlaşılmıştır. Analitik etik, doğru edimin ne olduğu ile değil dile getirilen etik ifadelerin anlamları ile ilgilenir. Etik edim ve etik ifadelerin anlamına ilişkin soruların farklılığı ile değer yargılarının ve "iyi" teriminin tanımına ilişkin soruşturmanın öneminin vurgulanmasının G.E.Moore'un *Principia Ethica*'sı ile başladığı genel olarak kabul görmüştür. Bu nedenle, Moore bu çalışmanın kapsamına dahil edilmiştir. Wittgenstein'ın etik ve metafizik ifadelerin dile getirilemezliğine ilişkin görüşü Mantıkçı Olguculari etkilemiştir. Dolayısıyla Mantıkçı Olguculların etiğin dile getirilemezliği üzerine olan iki kuramı, Doğalcı Etik ve Duygucu Etik Kuramları da araştırmanın kapsamındadır. Wittgenstein'ın sonraki dönem felsefesinin dil oyunları aracılığıyla etik söyleme olanak tanıdığı düşüncesi ile Wittgenstein'ın önceki dönem ve sonraki dönem felsefeleri ayrı ayrı incelenmiştir. Dil oyunu kavramının etik söylem biçimimizi yansıttığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Analitik Etik, Etik, Etiğin Dile Getirilemezliği, Wittgenstein.

To My Parents İsmail Hakkı and Sebahat Oktar

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express her deepest gratitude to her supervisor Assoc.Prof. Dr. Şeref Halil Turan for his intellectual stimulation, guidance, advice, criticism, encouragement and insight throughout the research. Without his support it would have been impossible to complete this study. The author would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam, Prof.Dr. Harun Tepe, Assoc.Prof.Dr. Ayhan Sol and Dr. Adnan Akçay for their helpful suggestions and comments.

The language, presentation and appearance assistance of Mr.Ian Thomas and technological as well as psychological support of Ms.Saadet Özkan are gratefully acknowledged. Also the author wishes to thank all her office friends on behalf of Mrs. Müge Darcan not only for their support but also reducing her work-load during this study.

Finally, the author would like to thank Prof. Dr. Erhan Erkut and Mr. Bülent Bankacı for their support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

BB	*The Blue and Brown Books*
CPR	*Critique of Pure Reason*
CV	*Culture and Value*
LE	"A Lecture on Ethics"
LTL	*Language, Truth and Logic*
NB	*Notebooks 1914-1916*
PE	*Principia Ethica*
PG	*Philosophical Grammar*
PI	*Philosophical Investigations*
RPP	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*
TLP	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*
Z	*Zettel*

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In our ordinary language we all make value judgements, we say 'this is good,' 'she is a good person,' 'it is very cruel,' 'you should not lie,' etc. We do not experience any difficulty while we are uttering these sentences nor do the people who hear them. We understand each other and are not puzzled when we hear an ethical sentence and we do not ask 'what does it mean?' Obviously we use these words so they are 'sayable' for us. When we say "you ought to tell the truth" we do not think that this utterance is meaningless.

Of course, sometimes we do have disagreements on our value judgements, although we understand each others' point of view. Sometimes we have difficulties in resolving our disagreements; there are times that we hardly find objective evidence to support our value judgements. In order to change another person's belief or attitude we generally give examples and try to base our judgements on facts. When we cannot convince each other we sometimes simply give up and say "It is your subjective judgement, I do not approve it". At other times we do not even discuss the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of our value judgement simply because our judgement or our behaviour is based on the values of our society. In our ordinary life we come across such situations and we do not ask questions like: Can we legitimately utter value judgements? If we can, are they meaningful? Are our value judgements based on facts? Are value judgements subjective? Are the values distinct from facts? Are the value judgements in question ethical or non-ethical? But these questions are raised by philosophers.

How philosophers reply to these questions changes depending on their ontological and epistemological points of view as well as their views on metaphysics and theory of action. Philosophers' points of view not only affect their reply, but also the questions they raise. To begin with, we must recognise that the nature of the questions above is quite different than the nature of questions like 'How ought I to act?' The nature of your questions changes depending on the nature of your ethical inquiry or vice versa.

The questions such as ‘Can we legitimately utter value judgements?’ ‘If we can, are they meaningful?’ ‘Are our value judgements based on facts?’ are generally questions that analytic ethics (‘meta-ethics’ or ‘critical ethics’) tries to answer. Analytic ethics states that ethical value judgements are inexpressible and even if you think that you utter an ethical statement this statement is meaningless. And this radical approach will constitute the subject matter of this study.

The first philosopher who explicitly claimed the inexpressibility of ethics is inexpressible is Ludwig Wittgenstein. Although he sends ethics to exile from discourse, it would not be appropriate to call him an analytical ethicist. However, Wittgenstein’s views deeply influenced logical positivists and are the kernel of two main meta-ethical theories, i.e., emotivism and naturalism, derived from logical positivism. So I aim to understand Wittgenstein’s approach to ethics, that is, his arguments concerning the inexpressibility of ethics and its implications.

First, we must ask why ethics is regarded as ‘unsayable’ for Wittgenstein and logical positivists, while it is perfectly ‘sayable’ in our ordinary life. Here, it is important to note that ethics is not alone in the realm of ‘what cannot be said’; for, Wittgenstein and logical positivists regard metaphysics as unsayable as well as ethics. This is not accidental, because their approach to metaphysics mainly determines where they position ethics. So we could ask what their attitudes towards metaphysics are and why, they thought that metaphysics and ethics are interrelated.

Wittgenstein makes a distinction between relative and absolute senses of value judgements and he says that it is the absolute sense of value judgements that cannot be said. We can express value judgements if they are relative value judgements, i.e., if they correspond to a fact or predetermined standards. However, absolute value judgements do not correspond to facts thus they cannot be expressed. Wittgenstein thinks that ethics is concerned with the absolute sense of value. The idea that a sentence must correspond to a fact in order to be meaningful applies both to metaphysical and ethical utterances. Behind Wittgenstein’s and logical positivists’ view that both metaphysics and ethics are inexpressible there are two dichotomies which had influenced on twentieth century philosophy. One is analytic-synthetic and the other is fact-value distinction. From where does the fact-value distinction come

from? Hilary Putnam[1] and Willard Van Orman Quine[2] point out that the fact-value dichotomy is parallel to Kant's analytic-synthetic dichotomy which is indicated by a Humean distinction, i.e., distinction between "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact". But, what is the connection between fact-value and analytic-synthetic distinction? The answer is seemingly easy and comes from Kant: "Judgements of experience, as such, are one and all synthetic" (*CPR*, p.49). So far this is the logical positivist's (even G.E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein's) point of view. But when Kant says that "[a]ll mathematical judgements, without exception, are synthetic" (*CPR*, p.52) the confusion begins as this is the assertion of the existence of a synthetic a priori judgements. And to talk of a priori synthetic judgements, is the point where logical positivists take a different path. In contrast, logical positivists hold that mathematical truths are analytic. So they preserve the analytic-synthetic distinction, but twist it to avoid the confusion, and state that a proposition is 'synthetic' when it is empirically verifiable and 'analytic' when its verifiability depends on the definition of its symbols, i.e., when it is a tautology. Like Hume, but unlike Kant, logical positivists classify the propositions in two categories, as analytic or synthetic. In which category do ethical value judgements or ethical statements fall? Are they synthetic or analytic? For Wittgenstein and logical positivists value judgements are neither analytic nor synthetic. Here, we face the fact-value distinction. Both Wittgenstein and logical positivists distinguish values from facts. If values are distinct from facts, they are not in the realm of facts, and hence value judgements are not synthetic. If value judgements are not synthetic, then ethical knowledge is not possible. If we hold that, analytic statements either do not 'go beyond the concept' or they are tautologies, then value judgements cannot be analytic either.

When it comes to the point that you accept the idea that ethical judgements do not refer to matters of fact, you could either hold that they express nothing, i.e., they are nonsense (as Rudolf Carnap and Moritz Schlick did) or by a "Humean twist" state that they are expressions of sentiments, i.e., they express

[1] Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.14.

[2] Willard Van Orman Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p.20.

emotions (as A.J. Ayer and C.L. Stevenson did). Or, more radically you could pass over the problem in silence (as Wittgenstein seems to have done).

Thus if we accept that value judgements are not related to facts and consider the problem in conjunction with the analytic-synthetic distinction, the legitimacy of a language of ethics seems to be jeopardized if not entirely demolished. Although Wittgenstein says that "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP*, 7), he expresses his views on ethics. The same is valid for logical positivists like Ayer, Schlick and Stevenson who talk about ethics even if to say that it is unsayable. In this study while investigating this distinctive approach that regards ethics as unsayable and bans ethics from our discourse, I will try to examine this urge to talk about ethics instead of completely ignoring what cannot be said.

Although the scope of this study is mainly the views on the inexpressibility of ethics, it is important to consider the foundations of analytic ethics. As mentioned, analytic philosophy's questions regarding ethics are about the meaning of the expressions of value rather than conduct. They ask, 'what does 'good' mean?' rather than 'what is a 'good' action?' It is generally recognized that the distinction between these questions and the emphasis on the definition of value judgements starts with G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (*PE*). Moore, in his investigation of 'what good is', mainly states that good is an indefinable, non-natural object. And it is a fallacy to try to define 'good' as a natural object. Moore entitled this fallacy as the 'naturalistic fallacy'. For Moore, any kind of reduction of 'good' to a natural object, any attempt to define ethical terms with non ethical terms is committing naturalistic fallacy. As the discussion of the deduction of values from facts heated up with Moore's introduction of naturalistic fallacy, I will begin my investigation with G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*. The discussions on why 'good' is indefinable and unanalysable, what 'good' is a simple and non-natural object means, why naturalistic fallacy applies both to naturalistic and metaphysical ethics seems to be a fruitful line of inquiry, and may give us an insight of the viewpoint of early analytical philosophers on the inexpressibility of ethics. G.E. Moore has a special position. In attacking the idea that there is a natural object that corresponds to value words ('good') he allows that there are facts that are not natural and that can be known by a special kind of intuition. But he does not accept a 'supersensible reality' and the notion of a 'transcendental object'. I will investigate the similarities and

differences between Moore and metaphysical ethicists, and try to see where Moore really stands in the metaphysical-naturalistic spectrum. I will also concentrate on Kantian ethics, for Moore thinks that Kantian ethics is an exemplar of metaphysical ethics, and that Kant too has committed naturalistic fallacy. I will try to show that Moore's argument on Kant's committing naturalistic fallacy is gratuitous. I will argue that Moore's notion of 'good' as a non-natural object that does not exist in time is inconceivable without assuming a 'transcendental object' and the existence of a supersensible reality, as Kant did. And I suggest that Moore is as guilty as Kant in stepping into the supersensible reality.

According to analytic philosophy it is a transgression to step into the supersensible reality because it is an attempt to say the unsayable, it is running against the limits. I will continue my investigation by early Wittgenstein's conception of ethics and examine what these limits are. Wittgenstein states that his aim in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)* is to draw a limit "to the expression of thoughts" (*TLP*, p.3), and explains the limits of the language through his picture theory of language. This theory suggests that the truth of a proposition depends on whether the proposition pictures reality or not. For Wittgenstein, the only true propositions are the "propositions of natural science"; they are the only propositions that are sayable. So, on the one side of the limit there are propositions of natural science that can be said, and on the other there are metaphysical and ethical utterances that cannot be said. Wittgenstein says that there are two senses of value judgements. One is the relative sense of value judgements, which can be said because they picture reality, they are simply statements of fact. The other is the absolute sense of value, which cannot be said, which lies outside the limits of language. For Wittgenstein, ethics going beyond the limits of language is transcendental. He seems to say that we cannot express ethics, but that it can be shown, that it manifests itself through our attitude toward the world. I will argue that although Wittgenstein says that his attitude towards ethics is 'remaining silent', his silence is a 'nosy silence' and that he expresses his views on value quite eloquently.

Wittgenstein's manifestation of the inexpressibility of metaphysical and ethical utterances influenced logical positivists for it was in accord with their scientific model of philosophy. Thus, I will continue my investigation by examining how the logical positivists positioned themselves on ethical theories, how they

diverged from each other, what their differences and similarities were, and their connection to Wittgenstein on the inexpressibility of ethics. Before going into the details of the logical positivist's views on ethics, I will discuss the logical positivist's general standpoint. I will show that logical positivists' views on ethics depended on their views on metaphysics by concentrating on their refutation of metaphysics and their method of verification. I will also investigate how logical positivists could diverge while accepting the same thesis that discourse on ethics is impossible. As mentioned, logical positivists, by accepting a rigorous fact-value distinction, could either argue that ethical value judgements express nothing, i.e., they are nonsense (naturalistic ethics), or that ethical value judgements express emotions (emotive theory of ethics). I agree with Carl Wellman that Ayer and Schlick are the best examples to show the distinction between ethical naturalism and the emotive theory of ethics. Accordingly, I will examine Schlick's views on ethics and his version of naturalistic ethics and carry on with Ayer and emotive theory of ethics. It is not surprising at all to see that the logical positivists diverge in their views on ethics as on the verification theory or on the means of justification of meaningful propositions. Thus, I will deal with questions concerning these divergences when I go into the details of the naturalistic and the emotive theories of ethics. I will argue that the logical positivists' interpretation of Wittgenstein's thesis that discourse on ethics is impossible is misleading in the sense that logical positivists mostly consider ethics in the relative sense whereas Wittgenstein is always concerned with the absolute sense of ethics.

Finally, I will investigate later Wittgenstein's views on ethics. Considering that later Wittgenstein's refutation of his early views on the picture theory of meaning, the sharp boundaries of language and the scientific model, I will investigate whether later Wittgenstein's new conception of philosophy could provide room for discourse on ethics in the absolute sense. The boundaries of language in Later Wittgenstein are arbitrary; here we can draw the boundaries as we wish. But these arbitrary boundaries do not necessarily indicate the possibility of an ethical discourse. I will investigate later Wittgenstein's conceptions of 'seeing as ...', private language, language-games and forms of life to understand whether he maintains or changes his early views on the absolute sense of ethics. Wittgenstein says that we cannot express our private immediate sensations. Thus later Wittgenstein, instead of

saying ethics is transcendental, seems to let ethics be a private language. According to his notion of language-games, we cannot obey a rule privately, so if we say that ethics is a language-game it can only be a private language-game that other people will not understand. I will argue that if we cannot talk about a language-game that consists of a private language, then we cannot talk about ethics the in the absolute sense either. If we cannot follow a rule privately then we need public criteria. Although, to conceive ethics as a form of life is possible, the dependence on a community for the language-games and forms of life could only take us to normative interpretations of ethics, i.e., to the relative sense of judgement of value. Therefore, I will try to show that although most fundamental notions of Wittgenstein's philosophy changed, his conception of ethics in the absolute sense remained the same. Thus, for later Wittgenstein, the absolute sense of ethics appears to be still in the realm of what cannot be said.

CHAPTER II

GATEWAY TO ANALYTIC ETHICS – G.E. MOORE

I do not think that Moore could be defined as a logical positivist in whatever sense you extend the definition of logical positivism.[3] Nevertheless, his influence cannot be denied. Consider not only what he thinks what ethics is, and the answers that he gave to certain questions in *Principia Ethica* (henceforth, *PE*), but also the questions raised and/or implied in these arguments. The questions in *PE* are the following: Are there ethical facts? Does the word 'good' correspond to an object? If it does, what kind of an object is it? Is it a natural object? Are the propositions about good synthetic or analytic? Is ethical knowledge possible? Thus, it is natural to accept the influence of Moore on the logical positivists, Bertrand Russell and even Wittgenstein.[4]

PE seems to be the gateway to analytic ethics, as its aim is to discover the fundamental principles of ethical reasoning and to be the "Prolegomena to any future Ethics that can possibly pretend to be scientific".[5]

Moore has a peculiar position in the fact-value dichotomy. Good corresponds to an object and possesses a property, but it is neither a natural object nor a natural property so not a natural fact to which to correspond. Thus, Moore allows us to think about facts that are not natural (at least in the sense that naturalistic

---

[3] Ayer states that since the Vienna Circle characterises their standpoind as logical positivism, "its reference has been extended to cover other forms of analytical philosopy; so that disciples of Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore or Ludwig Wittgenstein at Cambridge, . . . may also find themselves discribed as logical positivists" (Ayer, A.J. (ed.), "Editor's Introduction," in *Logical Positivism* (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.3). I will not accept such a wide usage of logical positivism as it is also seen as an approach to use a 'broad brush' to attack all the philosophical activities that does not allow speculative enquiry at once.

[4] For example, Friedrich Waismann, an influential member of the Vienna Circle, says the following: "Yet from Plato to Moore and Wittgenstein every great philosopher was led by a sense of vision: without it no one could have given a direction to human thought or opened windows into the not-yet-seen" (Friedrich Waismann. "How I See Philosophy," in *Logical Positivism,* ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.375). Also Ayer states that "I suppose that Wittgenstein is mainly responsible for the prevalent interest in the question how words are ordinarily used, though account has also to be taken of the influence of G.E. Moore" (Ayer, A.J. (ed.) "Editor's introduction," in *Logical Positivism*, (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.28).

[5] G.E. Moore. *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.35

ethics and the logical positivism defines it), but these facts do not belong to 'supersensible reality'. He claims that good is not a natural object which is simple, indefinable and unanalysable. These are strong claims which were discussed, to some extent accepted and to some extent denied by the logical positivists and Wittgenstein. The idea that we cannot analyse a simple object seems plausible, but whether good is simple or not is the controversial point.

Moore believes that the disputes in ethics are due to answering questions without paying attention to the 'true' nature of the question itself. He tries to show the distinction between two kinds of question that moral philosophers try to answer. These are:

1) "What kind of things ought to exist for their own sake?"
2) "What kind of actions ought we to perform?" (*PE*, p.33)

When we make ethical judgements we tend to use statements that involve terms like 'virtue', 'vice', 'duty', 'right', 'ought', 'good', 'bad', and when "we wish to discuss their truth, we shall be discussing a point of Ethics"(*PE*, p.53). The common feature of all, for Moore, is that they are all "concerned with the question of "conduct"—with the question, what, in the conduct of us, human beings, is good, and what is bad, what is right, and what is wrong"(*PE*, pp.53-4). The first question emphasizes that restricting the ethical inquiry to 'conduct' might not be sufficient. Whereas the second question primarily relates ethics to 'conduct.' This distinction leads us to Moore's argument that good is not a natural property.

Moore's well known definition of ethics is "general enquiry into what is good" (*PE*, p.54). For him, if we restrict the inquiry to good conduct there is a danger that we might miss other things that might be good. If there are other things that are good other than conduct then 'good' denotes some property.(*PE*, p.54) The nature of this property along with the nature of good is the core inquiry of *Principia Ethica*.

For Moore, ethics does not deal with "facts that are unique, individual and absolutely particular". The answer to the statements like "to which school ought I to send my child?" could be an ethical judgement, but this is not what ethics deals with.[6] The idea that ethics does not relate to facts is in agreement with the logical

[6] Distinguishing value judgements concerning whether they correspond to facts or not and stating that value judgements concerning facts are not the subject matter of ethics is related to discussions of the fact-value dichotomy.

positivists' position which first appeared in Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics". Wittgenstein, using Moore's above mentioned definition of ethics and supplementing synonyms for 'good', reached the conclusion that the characteristic feature of all expressions that supplements good is, they can be used in two different senses: (1) trivial or relative sense, (2) ethical or absolute sense.[7] Thus, good in statements like "I had a good dinner yesterday" (*PE*, p.55) is used in a relative sense and that is not what ethics is concerned with. In Wittgensteinian terminology, we could say that Moore would agree that ethics is not concerned with the relative sense of 'good'. Moore says the following:

> Ethics, therefore, does not deal at all with facts of this nature, facts that are unique, individual, absolutely particular; facts with which such studies as history, geography, astronomy, are compelled, in part at least, to deal. And, for this reason, it is not the business of the ethical philosopher to give personal advice or exhortation (*PE*, p.55).

Moore talks of 'facts of this nature'. Does this mean that there is still space for ethics in the realm of facts? If so, here is where Wittgenstein and Moore would take totally different paths, as Wittgenstein leaves no room for ethics for facts. He is very clear in arguing that facts have nothing to do with ethics and states that "judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statements of fact, no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value" (LE, p.6).

Hence what could these facts Moore talks about be that are not unique, not individual and not particular? Is it possible to talk about common, general and absolute facts? Does the expression "books are good" mean a general fact for Moore? We know that he regards the statement "books are good" as an ethical judgement and as belonging to ethics (*PE*, p.55). The way Moore uses 'fact' prevents us from stating that there is a clear cut fact/value distinction in the way we understand. If Moore would accept the fact/value distinction – as Wittgenstein understands it – we could say that things that are related to facts are related to 'natural objects' and in this way it would be easy to grasp what he means by 'nature,' 'natural objects', 'naturalism' and the 'naturalistic fallacy.' According to Moore, naturalistic fallacy is a fallacy that most of the moral philosophers and especially the

---

[7] Ludwig Wittgenstein. "A Lecture on Ethics." *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (1965), p.5. Henceforth, LE.

supporters of naturalistic ethics committed by defining the indefinable and, by thinking that 'good' corresponds to a natural object. As this is the most influential thesis of *Principia Ethica*, it deserves separate investigation. Moore states that when philosophers refer to the properties of good that are exactly the same as 'other' properties, they make the same mistake in the attempt to define 'yellow'. That is what Moore calls a 'naturalistic fallacy' (*PE*, p.62). Throughout the book we discover that this is not the only definition of 'naturalistic fallacy.'

But what if Moore means some kind of ethical fact which is a fact of another nature that relates to ethics? Then the way Moore accepts the fact-value distinction would not necessarily allow us to make the above mentioned Wittgenstienian explanation of 'natural objects'. And emphasizing a fact of another nature would prevent Moore from falling into the naturalistic fallacy himself. So, if there are such ethical facts, what are they? Are they intrinsic values? [8] We need to go into the details of *PE* and understand what Moore means by these terms. Before doing so, having said what ethics is not concerned with (according to Moore); we should try to find out what ethics is concerned with. What does 'ethics' encompass?

2.1 What Good is Not

Moore sees ethics "as a systematic science" and defines the main object of ethics as "to give correct *reasons* for thinking that this or that is good" (*PE*, p.58). How 'good' is defined is a critical inquiry of ethics, or to give Moore's emphasis, it is an inquiry that separates ethics from casuistry[9]; it is "an inquiry which belongs only to Ethics" (*PE*, p.57).

What then, is 'good' for Moore? His answer to what is good comes from a quotation from Bishop Butler on the title page of the book: "Everything is what it is, and not another thing". In line with that, Moore's answer is "good is good, and

[8] "Moore held that ethical values are not themselves physical or 'natural' facts; in his view the fundamental truths of ethics are abstract necessary truths concerning the intrinsic value of different types of state of affairs." Thomas Baldwin. "Moore, G.E." in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge.

[9] For Moore, casuistry deals with much more detailed and particular judgements than ethics. Moore says that "casuistry aims at discovering what actions are good, *whenever they occur*" (*PE*, p.56). So, casuistry investigate 'what things are good' in a detailed and particular sense whenever an action which is good occurs, whereas ethical inquiry treats the question 'what is good' as 'how good is to be defined' (*PE*, p.57).

this is the end of the matter" (*PE*, p.58). This statement paves the way to a demonstration of the claim that 'good cannot be defined'. We could sum up Moore's notion of good, in four main propositions:

1) Good is good and that is the end of the matter.
   (a) G is different from everything *other* than G,
   (b) Good is different from everything that we express by any *word or phrase* other than the word 'good.'
2) Good cannot be defined.
3) That the propositions about the good are all of them synthetic and never analytic.
4) Good is simple.[10]

When Moore revisited proposition (1) in his preface of the second edition of *PE*, he states that it is an assertion about the indefinability of good and it could express two propositions, which are (a) & (b). He notes that (a) does not lead us to the conclusion that 'good' is unanalysable for at least two reasons. First, proposition (a) is a tautology (if not strictly mere tautology then very close to it) because it simply says that "G is different from anything which is different from it" (*PE*, p.7). Secondly even if G is identical to a predicate, say 'is desired', like 'good is desired', G would still be different "from every predicate which was different from 'is desired'" (*PE*, p.7). Although proposition (a) does not serve the main purpose of Moore, i.e., to show that G is unanalysable, it can still be used in drawing attention to the issue that two predicates seen as identical might not be. Proposition (b), unlike (a), is not a tautology and serves the purpose of showing that good cannot be expressed with any other word or phrase other than 'good'. Although I want to follow the main text and try to see how Moore asserts his views there rather than, his final comment on this proposition in his preface to the second edition, I find his later comments worth considering. Moore states that in *PE* he missed "the distinction between expressing the meaning of a term in other words, *which contains an analysis of it*, and expressing its meaning by merely giving a synonym" (*PE*, p.9). This distinction makes it possible that good is unanalysable and cannot be expressed in any other words or phrase that contains an analysis of it, but it enables us to express it by other words that do not contain an analysis of it. Thus, for example, Wittgenstein might not be accused of committing naturalistic fallacy by providing synonyms to good. I doubt that allowing synonyms might solve any problem

[10] *PE*, propositions 1, 2 and 3 p.58, 4 p.59. a & b is in p.7.

involved in Moore's 'good'. Using 'virtuous', 'worthy', 'adequate', and 'suitable' instead of 'good' is not as simple as using 'point out' instead of 'indicate'. Although different in kind, 'good is worthy' is not very different than 'good is desired.' Any word you choose as a synonym of good somehow contains a value judgement. I believe that accepting synonyms will cause more problems than it will solve concerning the assertion that good is unanalysable and cannot be expressed by any other word.

Let us leave proposition (2) to the end, for it is the major point which the other propositions mostly support. Commenting on proposition (3), Moore clarifies what he means by analytic and synthetic. He says that: "by 'analytic' [he refers to] merely *tautologous* and by 'synthetic' merely *non-tautologous*" (*PE*, p.10). The claim that all propositions about good are synthetic brings us to a very fundamental question, which is, 'is ethical knowledge possible?' If ethical propositions are synthetic then we can assume that they fall into the category of empirical propositions. This view will certainly be accepted by logical positivists. But, would Moore himself welcome it? As empirical propositions are related to 'natural objects', obviously he would not.

In order to evaluate proposition (4), that 'good is simple', we need to look at how Moore defines 'simple'. Moore says that "'good' is a simple notion, just as 'yellow' is a simple notion; that, just as you cannot, by any manner of means, explain to any one who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is" (*PE*, p.59). If we look at the examples that Moore gave of 'simple' and 'complex,' we will see good and yellow are examples of simple and horse and chimera that of complex. Yellow fits Moore's definition of simple as you cannot explain what yellow is to someone who does not already know it.

As the idea of simple is closely linked to indefinability, we can go into details of proposition (2), which is 'good cannot be defined', through the notion of 'simples'. When Moore is talking about indefinability he is not considering a 'verbal definition' one may encounter in dictionaries.

Moore says of 'simple' that "it is not composed of any parts, which we can substitute for it in our minds when we are thinking of it" (*PE*, p.60). He clarifies the 'sense of definition' and connects the idea that 'good cannot be defined' to proposition (4) as: "The most important sense of 'definition' is that in which

invariably compose a certain whole; and in this sense 'good' has no definition because it is simple and has no parts" (*PE*, p.61).

For Moore, 'horse', being a complex entity can be defined as a certain object that "has four legs, a head, a heart, a liver, etc., etc., all of them *arranged in definite relations* to one another" (*PE*.p.60). The particulars counted by Moore are '*arranged in definite relations* to one another' seem to make what a horse is and their relation to each other the essence of a horse. But, 'good', unlike 'horse', is a simple notion so it cannot be defined by referring the particulars that constitute its parts. Although Moore's explanation of what 'simple' is disputable, here, the important thing is to note that his argument that 'good' is indefinable, mainly based on the idea that 'good' is a simple notion.

2.2 Intuition

If we don't have a definition of good how do we know what it is 'good' when we see it? How will we recognise 'good?' Where do our points of reference come from? Moore states that 'good' is "a simple, indefinable, unanalysable object of thought" (*PE*, p.72). For Moore, it is not important what we call 'this unique', "so long as we clearly recognise what it is and that it does differ from other objects" (*PE*, p.72). This recognition is different from being conscious of a thing. Moore states that "we cannot attribute the great superiority of the consciousness of a beautiful thing over the beautiful thing itself" (*PE*, p.80). So, there will be a beautiful thing in itself whether we are conscious of it or not. This distinction is clear when he points out the errors of arguments of hedonism; he claims that although Henry Sidgwick[11] did not

[11] It is widely accepted that Moore was influenced by Henry Sidgwick and mainly by his major work *The Method of Ethics. PE* contains many references to Sidgwick's book. As Thomas Baldwin puts it, *PE* contains more references to Method than any other book, but it would be wrong to believe that this influence led Moore to simply re-emphasise or amplify Sidgwick's views of ethics. Moore was an undergraduate at Cambridge when he encountered Sidgwick, though never close, he did attend lectures given by Sidgwick and wrote essays for him. Referring to his autobiography Baldwin states that Moore found the lectures uninspiring, however in *PE* his thesis of previous ethical theorists being guilty of the naturalistic fallacy echoes Sidgwick's thesis that "the concept of practical reason is the characteristic, but indefinable, mark of ethical thought." This is one of the reasons why Sidgwick was exempted from committing the naturalistic fallacy. Baldwin mentions one of the central themes of *PE*, that is, "non-hedonistic 'ideal utilitarianism'" that we should act in a way that will result in the best possible outcome – not just for pleasure, is not dissimilar to Sidgwick's assertion (individual) needs being superseded by "an intuitionist specification of the ideal ends of action" (Thomas Baldwin, "Editor's Introduction" in *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. xiii-xiv).

commit naturalistic fallacy as the other philosophers did, he failed "to distinguish 'pleasure' from 'consciousness of pleasure'" (*PE*, p.160). Although, consciousness could be seen as a necessary condition of recognition; that is not how Moore regards recognition.

In Moore's sense, recognition seems more like intuition. Knowing that Moore does not accept Intuitionistic Hedonism, we must clarify the difference between his sense of intuition and Intuitionistic Hedonism. Moore's two main requirements are: (a) not accepting intuition as an alternative to reasoning and (b) applying intuition when the proposition is self-evident. Moore puts this point as follows:

> We must not therefore look on Intuition, as if it were an alternative to reasoning. Nothing whatever can take the place of *reasons* for the truth of any proposition: intuition can only furnish a reason for *holding* any proposition to be true: this however it must do when any proposition is self-evident, when, in fact, there are no reasons which prove its truth (*PE*, p.194).

This distinction is very important for Moore; in fact, it is seen as the ground of a "properly guarded method" (*PE*, p.222). With the obscurity of his language and his method of argument – showing that others' arguments are wrong by arguing that it has contradictory elements in it rather than openly stating what his own view is – it is not easy to understand his version of intuitionism. So, it is not clear that for Moore intuition is like "perceiving a physical object" or "perceiving the truth of mathematical principle" [12]

Moore compares logical and mathematical truth with ethical truth especially when direct proof is not possible and when we are led to intuition. He thinks that the question "what things or qualities are good?" cannot be answered by direct proof. But he holds that it is not the real issue. It is not the impossibility of

[12] Carl Wellman. *The Language of Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.66. Wellman thinks that there are two distict models that are used by intuitionists to explain 'how we obtain our ethical knowledge'. One says that intuition is like "perceiving a physical object." In that model, intuition "is the direct awareness of some particular moral fact." The difference between perceiving a physical object and a moral fact "is that the awareness is intellectual rather than sensory." The other says that intuition is like 'perceiving the truth of mathematical principle.' "What we are directly aware of is, for example, the universal proposition that promises ought to be kept." Wellman thinks that Moore's conception of intuition is the former one. I agree with Wellman that it is more of the former model than the later, but I cannot say that Moore's is an attempt that tries "to explain our particular ethical insights as deductions from universal principles"(Wellman, pp.66-67). I think, based on Moore's examples of mathematical truth, 'perceiving the truth of mathematical principle' might have a different meaning for Moore.

proof that causes confusion, but the disagreement on it. He believes that in certain cases we do not mind the fact that proof is impossible. For example, we cannot prove that "there is a chair beside me", but the agreement that 'this is a chair' is enough for us not to ask for further proof. In his analogy, only a madman could say that this is not a chair, but an elephant. Although we cannot prove 'that this is a chair', by using a kind of Socratic method, we could try to make others agree with us. Moore says the following: "We can only persuade [someone] by showing him that our view is consistent with something else which he holds to be true, whereas his original view is contradictory to it" (*PE*, p.127). We would be satisfied that we all agree on it, although it does not show us that what we agree upon is true. This is where he questions whether proof is the warrant of truth. He doubts it. Even logical proof is not the warrant of truth, because it only shows us that we all agree that laws of logic are true and accept their results as the warrant of truth. I think that this line of argument seems quite relativistic and not compatible with his general approach. As mentioned before, Moore excludes propositions like 'I had a good dinner' from the domain of ethics. Allowing 'agreement' to strengthen his argument on the impossibility of proof and not allowing it in the definition of 'good' causes confusion, but it seems to serve for what he wants to emphasize. Even if there needs to be an agreement that logical proof warrants the truth, in the case of disagreements in ethics, it is harder to convince the other party of the truth of your arguments or persuade them that their argument is wrong. Showing someone that s/he is mistaken in an ethical judgement is not as easy as it is in mathematics. If someone who is asked to calculate 5+7+9 makes the first step of calculation as '5+7=25' and states that the result of this calculation is 34, it will not be a surprise to us. We could show that the person made a mistake and persuade him/her that s/he made a mistake easily.[13] This seemingly plain argument has its own shortcomings because it takes us back to the problematic idea of the grounds of certainty, even of mathematical certainty.

If "intuition can only furnish a reason for *holding* any proposition to be true" (*PE*, p.194), then what is the reason for holding that something is good? So, could it be possible that good is definable? Moore thinks that if good is not simple and indefinable there are only two alternatives left. First, it is complex and definable.

[13] See *PE*, sections 45, 86 and 87

Second, it means 'nothing at all.' If we choose the first alternative then disagreement arises on the correct analysis of it. Moore does not accept either of the alternatives. He thinks that he can easily show that neither alternative is correct by applying the famous 'open question argument.' He states that "whatever definition be offered, it may be always asked, with significance, of the complex so defined, whether it is itself good" (*PE*, p.67). This question will remain open, whatever definition you provide. Say, we define 'good' as pleasant, for Moore, the question "But is pleasure good?" will still remain open. Since, this question has significance it indicates that the word 'good' is not meaningless. If the definition we provide, i.e., 'good' is pleasant, is correct then we will ask "Is pleasure pleasant?" This question will be the same as asking "Is good good?" So no definition of good would be the ultimate answer, for Moore this proves that good is not complex (for the first alternative) and it is not meaningless (for the second alternative).[14] But does the question's remaining open really prove that the definition is incorrect? Is questioning the definition prove that it is not correct? The question will remain open if we think that good stands for a property and this property is not a natural property. But we could say that there are various ways of defining.[15] For example one can offer a definition by showing the common characteristics or 'family of meanings' of goodness without denoting it with any property. That is what Wittgenstein did, and ended up saying that 'good' as an absolute value judgement has no meaning at all.[16] This shows that Moore is only concerned with naturalistic definitions when he says that 'good' is not definable. Although, the open question argument is not a plain proof that 'good' is not complex and meaningless as Moore thinks it is, it gives us an idea of what Moore thinks what 'good' is, or, as he chooses to do in most cases, what good is not.

[14] Carl Wellman says that: "Moore's argument rests on the assumption that every meaningful word stands for some property. He argues that since "good" is meaningful it must stand for some property. Since all definitions of "good" are incorrect, it cannot stand for a complex property. Therefore, it must stand for a simple property"(Wellman, pp. 50-51).

[15] Let us keep in mind that 'any definition may be misunderstood'.

[16] See "A Lecture on Ethics", pp. 6, 10, 11.

2.3. Natural Object

Hitherto, we have investigated what good is for Moore, but we received the answer to the question what it is not. The conclusion is that it is not definable, not complex and not a natural property. This led us to the question of how we recognize good. Moore's answer was that we recognize it with a specific kind of intuition. But the account of intuition as Moore understands it has its own problems. Moore argues that we need to understand that good is not a natural property. What then is the natural property that 'good' is not?' Henceforth, I will search for the answer to this question. To begin with, let us look how Moore defines 'nature' and 'natural object.'

In *PE* Moore states that by 'nature' he means that "which is the subject-matter of the natural sciences and also of psychology" (*PE*, p.92). By 'natural object' he says that he means any object that has such a nature that: "it may be said to exist now, to have existed, or to be about to exist, then we may know that that object is a natural object" (*PE*, p.92).

Moore thinks that to distinguish which 'objects' are natural and which are not is not difficult. When he states that we could ask whether there is any object that is not natural. Unfortunately, Moore does not give clear examples of objects that are not natural. But it seems that he is conceiving the existence of mental facts, his consideration of 'virtue' as a "very complex mental fact" (*PE*, p.223) gives us the opportunity to think about 'simple' mental objects as well. Even if this is so, it does not tell us whether they are natural objects or not. If we conclude that these mental objects are in the category of non-natural objects, then Moore's consideration of 'thought' as an example of a natural makes such a conclusion impossible. He says the following: "We shall say that we had thoughts yesterday, which have ceased to exist now, although their effects may remain: and in so far as those thoughts did exist, they too are natural objects" (*PE*, pp. 92-93). This explanation shows Moore's scope of 'natural objects', but does not give us any clue about what these non-natural objects are. That is the real subject matter of ethics.

To understand what 'non-natural objects' are is very important. To Moore, those who committed naturalistic fallacy were not able to make the distinction between natural and on-natural objects. At this point I will consider one

more question. The question is, 'if good is not natural or a natural object then what is it? Metaphysical?

Although Moore could appreciate the metaphysicians' recognition 'universal' truths and "their essential unlikeness to what we can touch and see and feel" (*PE*, 162), he would not accept that good is metaphysical. What Moore understands by a 'metaphysical' proposition is the propositions "about the existence of something supersensible – of something which is not an object of perception" (*PE*, 163). Perhaps, 'metaphysical' propositions give us a chance to talk about objects that are not natural, but Moore thinks that "the only non-natural objects, about which [metaphysical ethics] has succeeded in obtaining truth, are objects which do not exist at all" (*PE*, 163). For Moore, metaphysicians are as guilty as naturalists in committing the naturalistic fallacy.

2.4. Naturalistic Fallacy

To understand what a non-natural object is for Moore, it seems to be necessary to understand Moore's notion of naturalistic fallacy. As naturalistic fallacy is a key concept in *PE*, I think it is crucial to understand what it is. Naturalistic fallacy does not point to one single fallacy, it consists of a group of fallacies and it is hard to identify which is the central one. Bernard Williams says the following which I believe shows how confusing and controversial the notion of naturalistic fallacy is.

> It is hard to think of any other widely used phrase in the history of philosophy that is such a spectacular misnomer. In the first place, it is not clear why those criticised were committing a fallacy (which is a mistake in inference) as opposed to making what in Moore's view was an error, or else simply redefining a word. More important, the phrase appropriated to a misconceived purpose to the useful word "naturalism."[17]

Whether 'naturalism' is a useful word or not is the central theme of the next chapter in which I will be investigating examples of naturalistic ethics. But I would totally agree with Bernard Williams in that it is not clear why and how so called naturalists – including some metaphysicians – committed this fallacy. It seems that, if you say anything that contradicts the claim that 'good' is not definable, not complex and not a natural property, then you commit a naturalistic fallacy. The

[17] Bernard Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.121.

biggest crime seems not only defining good, but defining it with a natural property. However, it is not that simple. We need to look at the examples that were used in *PE*.

To show the significance of naturalistic fallacy for Moore, Thomas Baldwin in the "Editor's Introduction" to *PE* points out, the first four chapters were devoted to the identification of this fallacy. Moore's claim is so strong that it covers all the ethical theories up to *PE* and everyone else except Sidgwick and Plato committed this fallacy.[18]As Moore has not used naturalistic fallacy in a single sense it is open to a variety of interpretations. For example, Carl Wellman in his *The Language of Ethics* identifies seven senses of naturalistic fallacy in *PE*[19]:

1) The arguments of naturalists being not valid
2) Defining the indefinable
3) Confusion of two words with different meaning
4) Reducing the a priori to the empirical[20]
5) Reducing the synthetic to analytic[21]
6) Confusion of non-natural with the natural
7) Reduction of the ethical to the non ethical

Most of these interpretations seem to be instances of the naturalistic fallacy; however, we still have the question of which one is the main argument? In the "Preface to the Second Edition" of *PE*, Moore clarifies the point that there is no one simple answer to the question 'what this fallacy is' and he identifies three propositions that he interchangeably uses for the fallacy.

> (1) Identifying G (goodness) with some predicate other than G
> (2) Identifying G with some *analysable* predicate
> (3) Identifying G with some *natural or metaphysical* predicate (*PE*, p.17)

[18] Thomas Baldwin, "Editor's Introduction" in *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. xv.

[19] Wellman, pp. 45-47.

[20] Here, Wellman refers to "[t]his method consists in substituting for "good" some one property of a natural object or of a collection of natural objects; and in thus replacing Ethics by some one of the natural sciences" (*PE*, § 26), for this interpretation.

[21] Wellman refers to the passage "[t]hat propositions about the good are all of them synthetic and never analytic" (*PE*, § 6), for this interpretation.

Moore states that he sometimes implies (1), sometimes (2) and sometimes (3) when he speaks of the fallacy. Considering these 'respectively equivalent' propositions that define the naturalistic fallacy, the answer to 'what this fallacy is' depends on the answer of 'what good is.' The propositions simply state that 'goodness' (G) is what it is and not another thing (1), G is not analysable, G is not a natural and metaphysical object. In addition to these propositions, Moore says that: "'I actually identify 'the fact that the naturalistic fallacy is a fallacy' with 'the fact that' G is simple" (*PE*, p.18). 'G is simple', identified as indefinable, an unanalyzable. Hence, any attempt that denies these propositions falls into the category of naturalistic fallacy. For Moore, anyone who commits naturalistic fallacy in one of the above mentioned three senses also commits the rest of them.

> That is why, . . . , most of the important consequences which follow from the proposition that G is not a natural or metaphysical predicate, would also follow from the proposition that it is unanalysable; for by *important* consequences I meant consequences important because they assert of some predicate, which is *actually* liable to be confused with G, that it is not identical with G. And this fact, that anyone who actually does any one of the three things is also doing both of the two others, may, I think, partly explain why I confused the three things (*PE*, p.19).

As Moore himself puts it, the arguments of § 12, i.e., to define pleasure as being any other natural object, are supposed to 'dispose of' the fallacy, it is worth looking at § 12 in more detail. There is no problem in saying that 'pleasure is good' but the confusion begins when we define 'pleasure' as the sole 'good'. If we say that "pleasure *means* the sensation of red" and "deduce from that that pleasure is a colour" there will not be any argument about a fallacy, although such an argument is senseless. Here 'pleasure' is defined as another 'natural object'. But when we apply this mode of reasoning to 'good', which is a non-natural object, here we have the naturalistic fallacy. The point is very important, for, if someone "confuses two natural objects with one another, defining the one by the other", like 'pleasure' and 'pleased' still, one does not commit a naturalistic fallacy. At this stage we are allowed to say that 'pleasure is good' as long as we do not mean that "'pleasure' is the same thing as 'good'". In this case we are not committing naturalistic fallacy. Whereas, if someone "confuses 'good,' . . . with any natural object whatever" then s/he commits naturalistic fallacy. Defining 'good' as a natural object causes this

fallacy because Moore immediately adds that "[e]ven if it were a natural object, that would not alter the nature of the fallacy nor diminish its importance one whit".[22]

At this point, defining anything as 'good in itself' seems to play the major role in committing the naturalistic fallacy. We need to look for another example of the fallacy, "if we were bound to hold that everything which was yellow, *meant* exactly the same thing as yellow" then we could make absurd (as Moore puts it) deductions like:

a. orange is yellow
b. a piece of paper is yellow
c. everything which is yellow, mean exactly the same thing as yellow
d. therefore orange is a piece of paper

For Moore, although the absurdity of such a deduction is very clear in the above example, when it comes to 'good', even if the deduction is absurd, it is not as clear as this one and that is how people committed naturalistic fallacy.[23] Although Moore is not clear whether Jeremy Bentham[24] committed this fallacy, he takes Sidgwick's interpretation of Bentham as leading us to an absurd conclusion that "greatest happiness is the end of human action, which is conducive to the general happiness".[25] Moore highlights Sidgwick's point as a "very good illustration of this

[22] *PE*, p.65. If we regard 'good' as a natural object, saying "pleasure is good" will be defining one natural object with another natural object , like in the example of "orange is yellow". Here, the problem of defining a non-natural object with a natural object disappears, but the problem of defining an indefinable and defining 'good' with another predicate other than 'good', still remains. Moore admits that in such a case it might be hard to call the fallacy a naturalistic fallacy, but the importance of the fallacy, whatever you call it, will not diminished.

[23] Moore gives Herbert Spencer's conception of 'good' as an example of such a deduction applied to 'good'. Moore states that: "It is absolutely useless, . . ., as Mr. Spencer tries to do, that increase of pleasure coincides with increase of life, unless good *means* something different from either life or pleasure"(*PE*, p.66). Also, for Moore, to say that "plaesure is good" is not so different than to say "orange is a piece of paper".

[24] Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) mostly known for his contribution to systematize utilitarianism. J.S. Mill was disciple of Bentham and made known most of his views. Henry Sidgwick was also influenced by Bentham. Moore was influenced by Sidgwick but distanced himself from Mill's hedonism. Bentham's principle known as 'principle of utility' or 'the greatest happiness principle'. By this principle he aimed to provide the standards of right and wrong. Pleasure and pain becomes part of this measure. Briefly, the greatest happiness is the appropriate end of action. His famous dictum, acknowledged as an 'axiom', is the following: "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong." Quantity of pleasure is the only criterion for choosing types of happiness. He puts it as "quantity of pleasure being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry." This view was not accepted by J.S. Mill, who believed quality also matters. See, J.S. Mill. *Utilitarianism.* edited by George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2001).

[25] Sidgwick's interpretation of is Betham based on combining his two assertions. Sidgwick points out that Bentham says: "the greatest happiness of all those whose interest is in question as being the right

fallacy, and of the importance of the contrary proposition that good is indefinable" (*PE*, p.70). Moore states that saying that "'right' *means* 'conducive to general happiness'" (*PE*, p.70) is not committing naturalistic fallacy, since 'right' here denotes 'good' as a means. But in Sidgwick's interpretation of Bentham, 'conducive to general happiness' denotes 'good' as an end, in Moorian terminology, 'good in itself' or 'intrinsic value'. Moore says that 'good as means' means that "the thing is a means to good" whereas, "good as an end" means that "we shall be judging that the thing itself has the property which, in the first case, we asserted only to belong to its effects"(*PE*, p.75). Hence, here, the fallacy is defining 'good' with a natural object as 'good as an end'.

Though Moore is not sure about Bentham, he has no doubt that John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer committed this fallacy. Actually, almost all of his attacks on naturalistic ethics are directed at Mill and Spencer. They are found guilty of confusing 'intrinsic value' (good in itself) and 'value as means' (good as means), and of course of defining the indefinable. Moore criticises Mill for defining good as pleasant. He thinks that Spencer was also influenced by this identification of good and identifies good with 'more evolved' (*PE*, p.102). Both philosophers "name those other properties they were actually defining good; . . . these properties, in fact, were simply not 'other,' but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness" (*PE*, p.62). So, for Moore they definitely committed naturalistic fallacy. On the other hand, MacIntyre thinks that it is 'almost commonplace' that Moore misinterpreted Mill and his criticism is misdirected. He states that "all that Mill at the most says is that pleasure provides us with our only criterion of goodness".[26] MacIntyre also thinks that even if it is not as commonly accepted as Mill's case Moore also misinterpreted Spencer: "As with Mill, Spencer may in unguarded moments have given the impression that he was defining the moral vocabulary".[27] MacIntyre points out that Spencer's position is much more complex than Moore puts it.

---

and proper end of human action." Sidgwick thinks that in other passages Bentham implies that "he *means* by the word 'right' 'conducive to the general happines'" (*PE*, p.69) Moore qoutes from Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* (Bk. 1, Chap. iv. P 1).

[26] Alasdair MacIntyre. *A Short History of Ethics* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), p.251

[27] *Ibid*., p.251

> Spencer held, first, that human society has evolved, just as the human species evolved, and indeed that the evolution of species and of society can be placed on a single continuous scale. Secondly, he believed that the higher a society is upon this scale the more ideal its mortality; and thirdly, that conduct tends more and more toward the end of preserving life, it being assumed that in life there is, especially as one ascends toward the ideal, more pleasure than pain.[28]

I find MacIntyre's points valid and in addition to his above clarification I think Mill did not confuse good 'as means' and good 'in itself' as Moore told us. He is talking about a fundamental moral principle, which is called 'the greatest happiness principle' by Bentham and 'principle of utility' by himself and he states that any 'consistency' in "moral beliefs . . . has been mainly due to the tacit influence of a standard not recognized".[29]Not recognizing this standard would make ethics sacred, but it does not change the fact that people's 'actual sentiments' "are greatly influenced by what they supposed to be the effects of things upon their happiness".[30] Mill also adds that even those who did not acknowledge that it is the fundamental moral principle hardly 'refuse to admit' that "the influence of actions on happiness is a most material and even predominant consideration"[31] in moral issues. Mill asks Moore's question himself, what is the proof of 'pleasure is good'? He is aware that stating that some things could be good in themselves and others could be good as means is proof of it. Mill states that any pleasure, say music, and any exemption from pain, say health, must not be seen "as means to a collective something termed happiness, and to be desired on that account". Mill explains this as: "They are desired and desirable in and for themselves; besides being means, they are a part of the end".[32]

Moore criticises Mill by saying that he has 'broken down the distinction between means and ends' by giving the example of money as 'part of happiness' while he was also mentioning it as 'means'. However, what Mill states is although

---

[28] *Ibid*., p.251

[29] J.S. Mill. *Utilitarianism.* edited by George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2001), p.3.

[30] *Ibid*., p.3

[31] *Ibid*., p.3

[32] *Ibid*., p.37

money is a means for happiness, as the 'desire to possess' in many cases becomes stronger than the 'desire to use', it is 'desired in and for itself'. Here Moore states that if money is desirable 'for the sake of an end' and desirable in itself, then it cannot be means to an end.[33] However Mill openly states that it is not desired 'for the sake of an end' but it is desired as 'part of the end'. He does not seem to confuse means and ends, as he states that means is included in happiness. Love of money, love of music and desire of health are "some of the elements of which the desire of happiness is made up. Happiness is not an abstract idea but a concrete whole; and these are some of its parts".[34]

It is not my intention to go into detail about Mill's and Spencer's conclusions nor Moore's view about them, the rationale of these discussions was to understand the naturalistic fallacy. The above considerations of Mill's philosophy bring us to the point where we could doubt how well-founded this fallacy is. Moore's attacks on naturalistic ethics were chiefly directed at Mill and Spencer as the representatives of this view. As my own choice of representative of naturalistic ethics is Moritz Schlick, I will reconsider this discussion and try to find out whether Schlick commits this fallacy in Moore's sense.

2.5 Metaphysical Ethics

In the previous section I investigated what the naturalistic fallacy is and found that there are various definitions of it. As the phrase itself bears 'naturalistic' in it, we can safely assume that identifying goodness with some natural predicate is main definition, and this constitutes the basis of Moore's charge against the naturalists. I asked the question; if good not a natural object, then what could it be. Could it be metaphysical? Moore does not accept this suggestion. After all, for Moore, metaphysical ethics, including that of Kant (if not the entire history of ethics) is as guilty as naturalistic ethics in committing the naturalistic fallacy. But, do we really have anything left at hand if we discard both natural objects and non-natural objects that have a metaphysical nature?

---

[33] See, *PE*, pp.123-124.

[34] Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p.38.

In this section my aim is to understand how naturalistic fallacy applies to metaphysical ethics, if it does, and where Moore really stands in the metaphysical-naturalistic spectrum. Here I will concentrate on Kantian ethics, for Moore thinks that Kantian ethics is an exemplar of metaphysical ethics, and Kant has committed naturalistic fallacy.

As we saw in the previous section, one of Moore's definitions of the fallacy is "Identifying G[ood] with some *natural or metaphysical* predicate" (*PE*, p.17). Let us look at how Moore defines metaphysical ethics and what his charge of naturalistic fallacy is for metaphysical ethics. By 'metaphysical' propositions, Moore refers to the propositions "about the existence of something supersensible – of something which is not an object of perception" (*PE*, p.163). A common point in the thesis of metaphysical ethics is that "they use some *metaphysical* propositions as a ground for inferring some fundamental propositions of Ethics" (*PE*, p.161).

Moore appreciates the metaphysicians' recognition of 'universal' truths, he notes that their objects essentially differ from "what we can touch and see and feel" (*PE*, p.162), and that 'metaphysical' propositions provide us with a chance to talk about objects that are not natural. And he thinks that "the only non-natural objects, about which [metaphysical ethics] has succeeded in obtaining truth, are objects which do not exist at all" (*PE*, p.163). Numbers constitute an example. When we say "Two and two are four" we do not assert either the existence of two or four. "Yet it certainly means *something*. Two *is* somehow, although it does not exist" (*PE*, p.162). Moore states that, although "Two and two are four" is a universal truth, "the objects, about which they are truths, do not exists either" (*PE*, p.162).

According to Moore, metaphysical ethicists' problem is not recognising the fact that their main contribution to philosophy is emphasizing "the importance of objects which do not exists at all" and supposing "that whatever does not exist in time, must at least *exist* elsewhere, if it is to be at all – that, whatever does not exist in Nature, must exist in some supersensible reality, whether timeless or not" (*PE*, p.162). For Moore it is acceptable to say that there are "objects of knowledge which do not *exist in time*, or at least which we cannot perceive" (*PE*, p.162), but it is not acceptable to say that they 'exist in some supersensible reality'. So what does this mean? There are non-natural objects, by definition they do not belong to nature, they do not exist in nature, they are not sensible, they are not supersensible and in fact

they do not exist. So, is good something that is a non-existing non-natural object? This seems to be no less problematic than the belief in the existence of a supersensible reality. I suppose, this is what Kant would define as the absurd conclusion that "there can be appearance without anything that appears".[35]

Moore in his argument concerning the 'knowledge of non-natural existence' goes further and states that both metaphysics and religion claim the 'knowledge of non-natural existence'. However there is a slight difference, where metaphysics tries to justify such knowledge by reason, those who argue from the point of view of religion claim such knowledge 'without any reason'. Surely, this is not the first time, in the literature of ethics, that the similarity of metaphysical and religious propositions is mentioned. Moore criticises such knowledge, by suggesting another ideal. Let us remember that Moore uses the term 'metaphysical' as the opposite of 'natural' (*PE*, p.161), and does not approve of either of them.

Metaphysical ethics, says Moore, makes the following assertion: "That which would be perfectly good is something which exists, but is not natural; that which has some characteristic possessed by a supersensible reality" (*PE*, p.164). Among examples he states that Kant also made this assertion "when he tells us that his 'Kingdom of Ends' is the ideal"[36](PE, p.164). He criticises Kant on other grounds, but this argument is worth special attention, I will therefore go into the details of it after examining what the 'naturalistic fallacy' that metaphysical ethics committed is. In order to understand the point of Moore's charges of naturalistic fallacy for metaphysical ethics, we should look at his main criticism.

---

[35] Imanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kempt Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), p. 27.

[36] This topic refers to a very important part of Kant's ethics and takes us to Kant's Copernican Revolution, namely changing the centre of laws of reason from an external source to human beings with the capacity of making laws, so it deserves to be a subject of another study. But, here I can say that by the kingdom Kant means "a systematic union of various rational beings through common laws"(AK 4:433). His explanation is worth quoting: **"**For, all rational beings stand under the *law* that each of them treats himself and all others *never merely as means* but always *at the same time as ends in themselves*. But from this there arises a systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws, that is a kingdom, which can be called kingdom of ends (admittedly only an ideal) because what these laws as their purpose is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means. A rational being belongs as a *member* to the kingdom of ends when he gives universal laws in it but is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it as *sovereign* when, as law giving, he is not subject to the will of any other. A rational being must always regard himself as lawgiving in a kingdom of ends possible through freedom of the will, whether as a member or as sovereign**"** (AK 4:433-4). References to Kant (excluding *Critique of Pure Reason)* give the pages in German Academy of Sciences (AK) edition of Kant's collective works.

Moore's main criticism of metaphysical ethics focuses on "supposition that a thing's reality is a *necessary condition* for its goodness" (*PE*, p.173). Moore tells us that "[t]o hold that from any proposition asserting 'Reality of this nature' [i.e., metaphysical nature] we can infer, or obtain confirmation for, any proposition asserting 'This is good in itself' is to commit the naturalistic fallacy"(*PE*, pp.164-165). Moore states that when it is asserted that ethics must be 'based on metaphysics' one must assume that "a knowledge of what is real supplies reasons for holding certain things to be good in themselves" (*PE*, p.165) and this means that "some knowledge of supersensible reality is necessary *as a premise* for correct conclusions as to what ought to exist" (*PE*, p.165). Here, metaphysical ethics commits naturalistic fallacy not by reducing 'good' to a natural object, but reducing it to an 'assertion about reality'. Moore says that people fail to perceive that any statement "which asserts 'This is good in itself' is quite unique in kind – that it cannot be reduced to any assertion about reality, and therefore must remain unaffected by any conclusions we may reach about the nature of reality"(*PE*, p.165). What, then, is the unique nature of ethical truths? Moore seems to be very close to Kant here: "one cannot insist that the laws of [thing-in-themselves'] operation should be the same as those under which their appearances stand" (AK: 4:459). It is amazing to see how close Moore is in his basic assumptions to Kant. For Kant: "things-in-themselves (though hidden) must lie behind the appearances as their ground" (AK: 4:459), but they operate in a different way. And the objective reality of the things-in-themselves "can in no way be presented in accordance with laws of nature" (AK: 4:459). That is quite similar what Moore says for 'good-in-itself', which cannot be reduced to any assertions about reality.

In most of the passages Moore uses 'good' and 'goodness' interchangeably. Although it causes confusion for the reader, but it seems that this helps him to not base good on supersensible reality. Does this really help? Grammatically speaking, 'good' and 'goodness' are mainly used as adjectives. In this use they are both predicates – attributes or properties. But Moore also talks about 'the good' which is a use of 'good' as a noun as in the use of 'the good in something'. This use presupposes that good is a subject rather than a predicate. This is why the issue of 'existence' becomes a very sensitive one: "It is not *goodness*, but only the things or qualities which are good, which can exist in time – can have

duration, and begin and cease to exist – can be objects of *perception*" (*PE*, p.161). Thus, things that are good exist and we can perceive them, whereas 'goodness' cannot be 'an object of perception.' This approach seems to echo Kant when he is saying "we can achieve only cognition *of appearances*, never of *things in themselves*" (AK 4:451). We know that Moore mentions good in itself as the real subject matter of ethics. There seems to be both similarities and distinctions between this conception of Moore and Kant's view on 'things in themselves'. Moore's above distinction between 'good' and 'goodness' is like Kant's distinction between 'appearances' and 'things-in-themselves'. 'Good' like 'appearances' can be an object of perception, whereas 'goodness' like 'things-in-themselves' cannot be. Both 'goodness' like 'things-in-themselves' also cannot be reduced to naturalistic assertions. As Moore's 'good-in-itself' and Kant's 'things-in-themselves' do not correspond to a natural object it is not possible to explain them with reference to a natural object. The only difference seems that Moore does not accept that 'good-in-itself' is a supersensible object.

Empirically speaking, when you attribute a value to something as it appears valuable to you, the object of the value should be genuinely valuable. As you can perceive the object of value empirically; it is seen as plain and simple, but you do not want to attach value to a simple object. When you attribute goodness to a chair, the value of the goodness is weak, relative and dubious. Notwithstanding the empirical appearances, you come to the conclusion that there must be something more, something absolute that would have goodness in an absolute sense.[37] That is where the empirical world limits you; you want to go beyond and want to base your value on something or somewhere else. Then you need to assume another world, another reality and/or something that cannot be perceived directly or that can only be perceived with a different kind of intuition. I would broadly agree with Moore, but from a different standpoint, both religion and metaphysics attempt to go beyond the boundaries. But it seems that what Moore suggests is no different than what he is criticizing. He also tries to go beyond the limits of what Kant calls the 'world of sense'. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant says the following:

[37] See Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* for the details of this assumption, "although beyond this constitution of his own subject, made up of nothing but appearances, he must necessarily assume something else lying at their basis" (AK 4:451)

> [As man] regards mere perception and receptivity to sensations he must count himself as belonging to the *world of sense*, but with regard to what there may be of pure activity in him (what reaches consciousness immediately and not through affection of the senses) he must count himself as belonging to the *intellectual world*, of which however he has no further cognizance (AK 4:451).

How does this sound when we think of Moore's intuition? To me it sounds very familiar, especially when we are talking in Moorian terms about knowing a 'non-natural object' through 'intuition', and claiming that we know it immediately and are not able to explain how it could come from something that we have 'no further cognizance'. Kant thinks that it is quite common "to expect behind the object of the senses something else invisible and active of itself – but it spoils this [i.e., consciousness of belonging to the intellectual world] again by quickly making this invisible something sensible in turn, that is, wanting to make it an object of intuition" (AK 4:452). For, Moore seems to be susceptible to this Kantian accusation. Moore says that 'goodness' is not an object of perception and a non-natural object, but he claims that we can know 'good-in-itself' by intuition. Thus it becomes an object of intuition in the Kantian sense.

Moore, by accepting that there is a good which is different than the relative good, claims that there is an absolute good, and as this absolute good is thing in itself, it cannot be defined and is a non-natural object, he leads us to the Kantian idea of 'transcendental object'. If we know 'good' through intuition, we assume that it represents an object, but Moore says that the object that intuition represents is not a natural object. If it is not representing an appearance, are we considering "an *object* of a *non-sensible intuition*"? (*CPR*, p.268) If it is not a transcendental object, what alternative is left? Is it not non-existent? How can we talk about the objectivity of a judgement that depends on the intuition of an object that does not exist? So, willing to cut the relationship of 'good' with natural objects, how can Moore resist the possibility of having a "ground for *assuming* another kind of intuition, different from the sensible, in which such an object is given"? (*CPR*, p.270) Moore should therefore accept the Kantian supersensible reality, otherwise, as Kant puts it, his thought, "while indeed without contradictions, is none the less empty" (*CPR*, p.270). Without presupposing another kind of intuition it is not possible to say that we have an intuition of a non-natural object which does not exists.

Moore criticises Kant on a few more grounds, two obvious criticisms are worth mentioning. One concerns "the fallacy of supposing moral law to be analogous to natural law" (*PE*, p.177) and the second, "the fallacy of supposing that 'This ought to be' means 'This is commanded'" (*PE*, p.178). Both fall under the category of his 'naturalistic fallacy'. For the first fallacy, Moore states that identifying "what ought to be with the law according to which a Free or Pure Will *must act*" (*PE*, p.177) is analogous to natural law. Moore thinks, Kant by saying that human will is 'autonomous'; means that "there is no separate standard by which it can be judged" (*PE*, p.177). This takes us to the conclusion that good is "what is necessarily willed by this Pure Will" (*PE*, p.177). This is parallels his criticism of Mill concerning issue of defining 'good' as 'what is desired'. On these grounds he states that what Kant thinks makes his ethics autonomous makes it 'hopelessly heteronomous' (*PE*, p.178). Also, quoting from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Moore says that Kant "fails to see that on his view the Moral Law is dependent upon Freedom in a far more important sense than that in which Freedom depends on the Moral Law" (*PE*, p.178). So, if we can show that there is no free will, everything would crumble. At this point it is worth seeing the full version of Moore's quotation from the *Critique of Pure Reason,* where Kant explains the relationship between freedom and moral law.

> Let anyone suppose that he finds an *inconsistency* when I now call freedom the condition of moral law and afterwards, in the treatise, maintain that the moral law is the condition under which we can first *become aware* of freedom, I want only to remark that whereas freedom is indeed the *ratio esendi* of the moral law, the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom. For, had not the moral law *already* been distinctly thought in our reason, we should never consider ourselves justified in *assuming* such a thing as freedom (even though it is not self-contradictory). But were there no freedom, the moral law would *not be encountered* at all in ourselves (AK 5:4n).

Moore would agree with Kant that the principle of morality is "always a synthetic proposition" (AK 4:447). As Moore insists that good is unanalysable, he could also accept that "by analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will that property of its maxim cannot be discovered" (AK 4:447). For Kant, the only way such a synthetic proposition could be possible is: "that the two cognitions [i.e., the cognition of moral law and that of freedom] are bound together by their connection

with a third in which they are both to be found" (AK 4:447).[38] The third cognition that bounds freedom and moral law together is 'autonomy'. "With the idea of freedom the concept of autonomy is now inseparably combined and with the concept of autonomy the universal principle of morality" (AK 4:452). When the world of sense and the world of understanding are distinguished, we have two standpoints to regard ourselves, belonging to the world of sense, where we have to act 'under the laws of nature' or belonging to the world of understanding where we have to act "under the laws, which, being independent of nature, are not empirical but grounded merely in reason" (AK 4:452). So moral law is not analogous to natural law; the necessity here is not the same as the necessity of laws of nature. Obeying moral law is different than obeying the law of nature. It is not like the law say, 'what goes up must come down'. Any object that goes up will obey the law and come down, and as Christine M. Korsgaard puts it, it will not say "I ought to go back down now, for gravity requires it".[39]Acting in accordance with moral law and is different than acting in accordance with a law of nature, "a rational being has the capacity to act *in accordance with the representations* of laws"(AK 4:412). The representations in question are the principles on which we act, and "the representation of an objective principle . . . is called a command (of reason), and the formula of this command is called an imperative" (AK 4:413).

Moore says that the facts ethics deal with are not 'unique', 'individual' and 'absolutely particular' (*PE*, p.55). So, he implies that moral facts are absolute and not natural. And now we find him accusing Kant of holding that moral law is a 'fact' and charges him with committing the fallacy of supposing moral law to be analogous to natural law. It is true that, for Kant, moral law is established as a "fact

[38]There is no doubt that freedom is an important concept in Kant's ethics. Within it it caries the concept of autonomy, with respect to ourselves and respect to moral law. The definition of obligation and duty changes its meaning from the ordinary sense of duty in connection with the idea of freedom. The two cognitions mentioned here are freedom and moral law, and freedom is defined as "independence from the determining causes of the world of sense (which reason must always ascribe to itself)" (AK 4:452)

[39]*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.* trans. and ed. By Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. xvi. Christine M. Korsgaard wrote the "Introduction" of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (2006) and she gives this example to emphasize the distinction between acting according to law of nature and moral law.

of reason" and our consciousness of moral law is the "sole fact of pure reason".[40] In C*ritique of Practical Reason* Kant states that "this fact is inseparably connected with, and indeed identical with, consciousness of freedom of the will" (AK 5:42). We come across this 'immediate consciousness' in Moore as he investigates how we recognize good when we see it. Although Moore charges Kant to draw a parallel with natural law by the fallacious argument in question, Kant immediately warns us that: "in order to avoid misinterpretation in regarding this law as *given*, it must be noted carefully that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason which, by it, announces itself as originally lawgiving" (AK: 5:31). This is also strictly connected with his view that obeying moral law is different from obeying a law of nature. Here, the authority is the moral law and its authority is not coming from an external source, rather this lawgiving activity comes from pure practical reason.

The notions of obeying a law, lawgiving activity of pure practical reason and acting in accordance with the representations of law take us back to Moore's second fallacy. Why is it a fallacy to suppose that 'this ought to be' means 'this is commanded' and to conceive 'moral law as an imperative'? For Moore this is a fallacy because it supposes that "moral obligation is analogous to legal obligation, with this difference only that whereas the source of legal obligation is earthly, that of moral obligation is heavenly" (*PE*, p.179). If the grounds of Moore's criticism was questioning 'why free will obliges to obey a law?' it would make more sense, because in connecting the 'source of obligation' to a power or an authority and saying that you obey a command because it comes from an authority, you assume that what is commanded by this authority is good.

It is plain that obeying an authority because you consider it as an authority, is different from the consideration that you ought to act in such and such a manner because you think it good to do so. So, Moore seems to be right. However, Kant is aware of this distinction and Moore's being right does not show that Kant is committing this fallacy. For, Kant tells us that any action that is bound to external causes (even such internal cause of our own desire) does not have a moral worth even if it is a 'right' thing to do.

[40] Kant says that "[c]onsciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason"(AK 5:31).

Here, Kant thinks that we must "distinguish whether an action in conformity with duty is done *from duty* or from self-seeking purpose" (AK 4:397). The difference between obeying a moral law and obeying a legal law comes from the difference between good-in-itself and good-as-means. This is valid both for Moore and Kant. If you obey a law to avoid its sanctions, then the motive comes from the prospect of punishment or reward, and this is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end. This act has no moral value. There is a sense of dignity in obeying moral law, which is missing in obeying a legal law. In this case the motive comes from "the idea of the dignity of the rational being, who obeys no law other than that which he himself at the same time gives" (AK 4:434). According to Kant, the authority of the moral law is duty. In acting in compliance with moral law, because it is a duty, we are obeying because we give the law ourselves. This is quite different from acting by thinking of punishment and reward. Punishment and reward changes its shape with respect to law and so to yourself as a lawgiving rational being. So, immediate value of compliance with the moral law comes from oneself: "feel that satisfaction in consciousness of one's conformity with [the law] and bitter remorse if one can reproach oneself with having transgressed it" (AK 5:538). I think we can hardly say that this Kantian conception of moral law has a parallel with legal law in the way Moore describes.

In this chapter, by regarding *PE* as a gateway to analytic ethics, I tried to examine what 'good' is for Moore. Moore gives a tautology as an answer, which is, 'good is good' and nothing else. Considering that 'the propositions about the good are all of them synthetic and never analytic' we can hardly regard this as an answer. But Moore gives an account of what good is not. Good, being simple, cannot be defined. This leads us to the question 'if we cannot define and analyse how we can recognise it?' Here, Moore provides us with a different standpoint within the fact-value spectrum. He allows a kind of 'fact' which is needed for the objectivity of 'good', but which is not a natural fact. He has a different notion of fact in his mind than the logical positivists and Wittgenstein. This concept leads us to his conception of intuition which is not an alternative to reasoning. Naturalistic fallacy, as being the biggest crime in the investigation of good, would in the near future be deliberately committed by some of the logical positivists, and some would escape it by not associating value judgements with natural objects and referring to emotions instead.

Although, some of Moore's views and his efforts to provide a scientific, or objective, approach were notable, would be refuted by the future philosophers of analytic tradition in the following chapters. I went into the details of Moore's criticisms of Kant, and found that although Moore seems to believe to have refuted his ideas he has many parallels with him. Moore, therefore, is no less guilty than Kant in stepping into the supersensible reality. These discussions on metaphysical ethics will carry us to the next chapter where we will be investigating the limits of language and how Wittgenstein defined ethics in terms of going against the boundaries of language, as both Kant and Moore seem to have.

CHAPTER III

ETHICS IS TRANSCENDENTAL-EARLY WITTGENSTEIN

In the previous chapter I investigated Moore's ethics and said that it will be a gateway to analytic ethics. I finished the chapter with the accusation that both Moore and Kant exceeded the boundaries of language. In this chapter I will explain what it means to 'go against the boundaries of language' in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Also, the discussions in the introductory chapter especially the ones on the doctrine of inexpressibility and the Augustinian picture of language will find their place and will be discussed with a Wittgensteinian approach.

Here, my main aim is to understand Wittgenstein's views on ethics. But, in this chapter I have restricted my investigation to his early philosophy, his later philosophy will be studied in Chapter V, just after we elaborate on the logical positivists different accounts of ethics which were somewhat influenced by his early works. Although there are views that his philosophy is not 'static' it is important to see his early and later works as a 'whole'[41], I will consider Wittgenstein's conception of ethics his in early and later periods separately. Even if his ethical views are accepted as remaining the same in both periods, I believe we need to separate these periods because his solution to the same issue changes. Also it is known that it is his early works that influenced the logical positivists. Thus, I will investigate on these periods separately not only that the chronology is important, but also I believe his later works (especially *Philosophical Investigations*) could provide us a means to say what 'cannot be said' for early Wittgenstein.

[41] For example, James C. Edwards supports this view. He states that "in both periods his essential ambition is an ethical one; . . . Early or late his texts intend to show, through the medium of philosophy, the possibility of sound thinking and living" (C. James Edwards. *Ethics without Philosophy Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1982), p.4). He supports his view by referring to the preface of *Philosophical Investigations* where Wittgenstein states that: "Four years ago I had occasion to re-read my first book (*The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) and explain its ideas to someone. It suddenly seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the later could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking" (*PI*, p. x).

I will start with his views in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)*[42], to understand what cannot be said. Then I will investigate his "A Lecture on Ethics", to see how he distinguishes ethical statements. Finally, I will go back to *Tractatus* to delve into the details of what he really means by ethics.

3.1 The Limits of Language – Sayable

As discussed in the introduction, for Wittgenstein and logical positivists ethics is inexpressible. In order to understand 'what cannot be said' is first we need to understand 'what can be said'. This seemingly easy task is full of confusion and requires an understanding of Wittgenstein's conception of thought, language, reality, philosophy and the role of a philosopher.

Before going into any detail, let us imagine an island. Imagine that we live on an island, we know this island, have never been off it, and do not know what is beyond or whether there really is a beyond. The island is surrounded by an ocean, the ocean is 'wide and stormy', it is foggy and the fog together with a 'swiftly melting iceberg' gives you the illusion of 'farther shores', after all, the ocean is 'the native home of illusion.' Although we do not have any evidence that there is any other land that we can reach in this ocean, we have the 'hope' that there is. The island is 'enclosed by nature within unalterable limits.' But we still have the urge to go beyond the limits of nature and want to sail to the ocean. It will be an adventure and we want to embark on this adventure, even if there might not be another land, even if the island is all we have, even if others tell us that there is nothing beyond the island. No, I am not telling you an adventure story, I am inviting you to Kant's "land of truth".[43]Would you embark on this adventure or say that the limit is unalterable and that is all we can know and stay on the island?

Surely Kant took this voyage on this wide, stormy and foggy ocean. His journey takes us to the distinction of world into a 'world of the senses' and a 'world of the understanding' and a division of objects into 'phenomena' and 'noumena'. The idea is to set the limits of knowledge. Here, we are about to "transcend the limits of experience" (*CPR*, p.7). Although, we have no knowledge of objects as they are,

[42] *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, hereon in referred to as *Tractatus*.

[43] This analogy of an island used by Kant to describe the territory of understanding (*CPR*, p.257).

Kant thinks that "we must yet be in position at least to *think* them as things in themselves" (*CPR*, p.7).[44]

On the other hand, Wittgenstein, (maybe the mystic side of him would love to take this voyage more than anybody with the company of Tolstoy and Kierkegaard, but his analytic side could not let him to do so) is not willing to go beyond the limit and instead he would stay on the island and enquire whether we can be "satisfied with what it contains . . . inasmuch as there may be no other territory upon which we can settle" (*CPR*, p.257).

In the preface of *Tractatus* Wittgenstein declares the aim of the book as "to draw a limit to thought", then he clarifies his aim as to draw a limit "to the expression of thoughts". He needs to clarify his aim because: "in order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limits thinkable (i.e. we would have to be able to think what cannot be thought)" (*TLP*, p.3). Hans Georg Gadamer, in another context, states almost the same thing: "What makes a limit a limit always also includes knowledge of what is on both sides of it".[45] Here, Wittgenstein's situation is quite puzzling. He is aware that if he draws a limit to thought, this means that he also claims that he has the knowledge of things that cannot be thought. This would be same as Kant's position; that is, to claim that there are things-in-themselves which cannot be known. For sure, Kant does not state that in order to be able to think you must have knowledge of it, otherwise he would not state that "though I cannot *know*, I can yet *think* freedom"(*CPR*, p.28). The relationship of knowledge and thinkable for Wittgenstein, is not yet clear for us. He states that "[a] thought contains the possibility of the situation of which it is the thought. What is thinkable is possible too" (*TLP*, 3.02). In line with this, we can read Kant's statement as 'if freedom is thinkable, then it is possible too' but it does not say whether knowledge of it is necessary or not. Does restating the aim as drawing a limit to language take Wittgenstein out of this puzzle? I must be able to think what

[44] At this point I will not go into the details of this distinction and its base on strict universality which is "essential to a judgement" (*CPR*, p.44). I will discuss it in Chapter IV, while I am investigating logical positivism. Here, I will only mention why Kant thinks that we need the concept of noumena. He states that "the concept of a noumenon is necessary, to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus, to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge" (*CPR*, p.44).

[45] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 2004), p.338. Gadamer used this expression in context where he puts Hegel's criticism of Kant's things-in-themselves.

cannot be said in order to be able to draw a limit to language to separate the sayable and the unsayable. At this point, to understand whether inexpressible thoughts are thinkable for Wittgenstein is important. To know the relationship of thought and language (and also knowledge) for him determines whether he could get out this puzzle.[46]

Wittgenstein, regarding 'thought' states the following: "A thought is a proposition with sense" (*TLP*, 4). He immediately combines it with language by stating that "[t]he totality of propositions is language" (*TLP,* 4.001). He thinks that thinking and language are the same. This relationship is explicit in his *Notebooks*. In August 1916 he writes the following:

> Now it is becoming clear why I thought that thinking and language were the same. For thinking is a kind of language. For a thought too is, of course, a logical picture of the proposition, and therefore it just is a kind of proposition (*NB*, p.82).

Thus, stating that thinking and language are the same, makes the restatement of the aim insignificant, to state that drawing a limit to language will, then, be the same as drawing a limit to thought. I think we could elaborate this relationship further. Although Wittgenstein states that they are the same, he also states that we cannot infer from language the thought beneath it. He explains it with an analogy with clothing:

> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes (*TLP,* 4.002).

Thus, this remark complicates the situation which seemed to be clear as he states language and thought are the same. If we cannot infer from the language the thought beneath it, then does thought have a deeper sense than language? Can we think what cannot be said? Maybe, the relationship of reality, thought and language helps us. Wittgenstein states that "[a] logical picture of facts is a thought" (*TLP,* 3).

[46] The puzzle in question is that; in order to draw a limit you must know both sides of the limit. Thus in order to draw a limit to what is expressible and inexpressible you must know what is inexpressible. But if you are able to think what is inexpressible then you must be able to express it. Wittgenstein says that: "We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either" (*TLP*, 5.61).

If we define thought as a proposition with sense and if we consider that "a proposition is a picture of reality" (*TLP,* 4.01), then thought must be somewhat a picture of reality, or it must represent reality. In order to understand a proposition, we must "know the situation that it represents" (*TLP,* 4.201). Therefore, there must be a correspondence with reality and thought. Furthermore, because the proposition is the connection of thought and reality and language is the medium that we express a proposition, there must be a link between language and reality, thus between language and thought. "The way of representing determines how the reality has to be compared with the picture" (*NB*, p.22).[47] Hence, we need to understand what he means by a picture, how this picture represents the reality and how a proposition is a model of reality in this sense. Here, in order to understand how Wittgenstein links all these concepts, let us refer to James C. Edwards' concept of 'rationality-as-representation.' Edwards describes this concept as the 'self-consciousness of the Western philosophy', as making a human being a rational being. According to Edwards, "rationality, the exercise of thought, is ultimately representational. To be a rational creature consists in pursuing and having true representations of what is the case".[48] We see this also in the background of *Tractatus*. Edwards states that although Wittgenstein has a strong faithfulness to such a concept of rationality, "he cannot easily live with some of the consequences of that powerful and philosophically traditional conception".[49] I guess this comment in a way explains Wittgenstein's struggle with the inexpressibility of ethical statements.

Here, a brief summary of the 'Augustinian picture of language' might be useful to show how the conception of rationality occurs in Wittgenstein's philosophy and how he sets a limit to language. *Tractatus* deals with the limits of the language, i.e. what can be said and what cannot be said and the Augustinian picture of language forms the roots of 'what can be said' in Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of language.'

---

[47] Cf. *NB* p.31 the entry on 20.11.14. There Wittgenstein states that, "The reality that corresponds to the sense of the proposition can surely be nothing but its component parts, since we are surely *ignorant* of *everything* else. If the reality consists in anything else as well, this can at any rate neither be denoted nor expressed; for in the case it would be a further component, in the second the expression would be a proposition, for which the same problem would exist in turn as for the original one."

[48] C. James Edwards. *Ethics without Philosophy Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1982), p.22.

[49] *Ibid*., p.6.

This is the idea of language as a picture of reality. The underlying idea of the Augustinian picture of language is "Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands" (*PI*, 1). This idea was appeared also in *Tractatus*: "A name means an object. The object is its meaning" (*TLP,* 3.203). The relationship of meaning, naming and object is clarified in *Tractatus* 3.22: "In a proposition a name is the representative of an object". Additionally, in *TLP* 3.3 Wittgenstein says that: "Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning". And the idea of language as 'a *picture* of reality' occurred to him by the representation of a car accident by means of toy cars and dolls as a practice in law courts.[50] And he combines it with the idea of a proposition as "a picture of reality" (*TLP,* 4.01). Then Wittgenstein explains how reality represents itself in a proposition. "The essence of representation lies in description, in the representation of a state of affairs by means of proposition".[51] Thus, describing how things are by means of a proposition, that a proposition is a picture of reality, the proposition reveals "the essential nature and limits of language".[52]

We can see the strong link between language and reality when Wittgenstein states that "[a] name means an object. The object is its meaning" (*TLP,* 3.203). The form of an object, is the "possibility of its occurring in states of affairs" (*TLP,* 2.0141), defines its internal properties. We have to be careful at this point not to take objects identical with physical objects in the ordinary sense when Wittgenstein says "[i]n a proposition a name is the representative of an object" (*TLP,* 3.22) and "[t]he configuration of objects in a situation corresponds to the configuration of simple signs in the propositional sign" (*TLP,* 3.21). At this point,

[50] G.H. Von Wright tells us that: "Wittgenstein told me how the idea of language as a *picture* of reality occurred to him. He was in a trench on the East front, reading a magazine in which there was a schematic picture depicting the possible sequence of events in an automobile accident. The picture there served as a proposition: that is, as a description of a possible state of affairs. It had this function owing to a correspondence between the parts of the picture and things in reality. It now occurred to Wittgenstein that one might reserve the analogy and say that a *proposition* serves as a *picture*, by virtue of a similar correspondence between *its* parts and the world. The way in which the parts of the proposition are combined – the *structure* of the proposition – depicts a possible combination of elements in reality, a possible state of affairs" (G. H. Von Wright. "Bibliographical Sketch" in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 7-8).

[51] G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker. *Language, Sense and Nonsense* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p.39.

[52] *Ibid.,*p.40.

Wittgenstein's answer to "What lies behind the idea that names really signify simples?" is worth full quotation:

> Socrates says in the *Theaetetus*: "If I make no mistake, I have heard some people say this: there is no definition of the primary elements – so to speak – out of which we and everything else are composed; for everything that exists in its own right can only be *named*, no other determination is possible, neither that it *is* nor that it is *not* . . . . . But what exists in its own right has to be . . . named without any determination. In consequence it is impossible to give an account of any primary element; for it, nothing is possible but the bare name; its name is all it has. But just as what consists of these primary elements is itself complex, so the names of the elements become descriptive language by being compounded together. For the essence of speech is the composition of names."
>
> Both Russell's 'individuals' and my 'objects' (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) were such primary elements. (*PI*, 46)

Especially, in reading *Tractatus* 3.203, could easily convince us that the 'objects' here are the ordinary physical objects.[53] But, it seems that 'objects' are used in a somewhat different sense if we consider the following assertion of Wittgenstein:

> Objects I can only *name*. Signs represent them. I can only speak *of* them. I cannot *assert them*. A proposition can only say *how* a thing is, not *what* it is (*TLP*, 3.221).

However, "Only the proposition has sense; only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning" (*TLP*, 3.3). That is to say, the meanings of names (as the primitive signs in the propositions) can be understood "if the meanings of those signs are already known" (*TLP,* 3.263). Here, it is more likely that Wittgenstein is talking about a 'logical form of reality' and the possibility of an object. This becomes clear when we read *Tractatus* 2.0123, 2.01231 & 2.0214:

> If I know an object, then I also know all its possible occurrence in states of affairs.
> (Every one of these possibilities must be part of nature of the object.)
> A new possibility cannot be discovered later (*TLP*, 2.0123).

[53] With respect to this sense of 'objects', although, neither is there no distinction of 'natural' and 'non-natural' objects nor is there a place for such a distinction in Wittgenstein's philosophy, I believe that there is a strong resemblance with Moore's notion of 'object'. As we do not have a clear definition of 'natural object' and this resemblance is seen in the way Moore describes 'natural object,' I think it is fair to say that, what can be said according to Wittgenstein, could fall into the category of Moore's understanding of 'natural object.' See Chapter II, section 2.3 "Natural Object".

> If I am to know an object, though I need not know its external properties, I must know all its internal properties (*TLP*, 2.01231).
>
> If all objects are given, then at the same time all *possible* states of affairs are also given (*TLP*, 2.0124).

With all these references to 'objects are given' and 'facts are also given' David J. Ard draws the conclusion that Wittgenstein argues that "the knowledge of the logical form of objects is a priori, and therefore the primitive name of an object is already known".[54] Since in *Tractatus* Wittgenstein states that logic and ethics are transcendental, David J. Ard draws a parallel to Kant and he states that what Wittgenstein understands of 'transcendental' is not "something that lies outside the world, but rather that which pervades the world (*TLP*, 5.61)[55] He sets out the conditions for the possibility of human experience in the world". [56] Before going into the detail of what Wittgenstein means when he states that logic, mathematics and ethics are transcendental, we must understand his view on what can be said. How objects are defined by Wittgenstein is important because "Empirical reality is limited by the totality of objects. The limit also makes itself manifest in the totality of elementary propositions" (*TLP*, 5.5561). Knowing that Wittgenstein states that "A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions" (*TLP*, 5) we can link it to how a proposition could be true or false, that is "a proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality" (*TLP*, 4.06). The truth-function is important because it is directly related to how we understand a proposition, that is, "[t]o understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true" (*TLP*, 4.024). This leads us to the question, which propositions are true? Wittgenstein answers this question clearly: "The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science (or the whole corpus of the natural sciences)" (*TLP*, 4.11). And finally, what can be said defined as "propositions of natural science" (*TLP*, 6.53).

---

[54]David J. Ard. "Knowing a Name." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 43 (Mar., 1983), p.385. To arrive at this conclusion Ard reads *Tractatus* 2.0123, 2.01231 & 2.0214 in connection with *TLP*, 3.263 which is about the meaning of primitive signs, i.e., names.

[55] In *TLP* 5.61 Wittgenstein states that: "Logic pervades the word: the limits of the world are also its limits. . . . So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.'"

[56] Ard, p.385. He quoted from Kant: "My place is the fruitful bathos of experience; and the word, 'transcendental' . . . does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it a priori, but that is intended simply to make knowledge of experience possible." (Immanuel, Kant. *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, trans. with intro. By Lewis W. Beck (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1951), p.122n.)

In this way, the 'correct' method of philosophy was described by Wittgenstein as:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science – something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person – he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy – *this* method would be the only strictly correct one (*TLP*, 6.53).

Thus, it is not surprising that logical positivists were influenced by *Tractatus* and the method of philosophy that is offered by Wittgenstein and that they set the limits of what can be said accordingly. Milton Munitz states that the picture theory and the truth-functional approach to propositions in *Tractatus*, although it has different grounds and applications, pave the way to the method of verification.[57] But on the other hand, what cannot be said is another story and I believe the Logical Positivists either misunderstood it or ignored the fundamentals of what Wittgenstein said about ethics. This will be discussed in chapter IV.

I will come back to what cannot be said and examine what it is in detail. At this point, in order to be able to continue, very briefly I could summarize what Wittgenstein says on ethical utterances. For example, "it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics" (*TLP*, 6.42). If, an ethical utterance is not a proposition, then it cannot have any truth-value and cannot be true or false and cannot have a sense, then it cannot represent reality. Therefore, we cannot talk about propositions of ethics. Wittgenstein says the following: "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words.Ethics is transcendental" (*TLP*, 6.421).

We know that for Wittgenstein "a picture is a fact" (*TLP*, 2.141). And as mentioned, ethical utterances (as they are not propositions) cannot picture reality because only "a proposition is a picture of reality" (*TLP*, 4.01). So, what is the relationship of ethics and facts? In *Tractatus*, the answer to this question is spread throughout the text. There is, however, in "A Lecture on Ethics" a direct answer.

[57] Milton K. Munitz. *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy* (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981), p.227.

Therefore, in order to see how ethical statements are distinguished and their relationship to facts, I will now investigate Wittgenstein's "A Lecture on Ethics".

3.2. Wittgenstein's "A Lecture on Ethics"

To understand Wittgenstein's arguments on ethics in his "A Lecture on Ethics" (LE), I will try, as he hopes, to "see both the way and where it leads to" (LE, p.4) In order to do so, I will first try to identify his main arguments and find out where these take us by discussing them in terms of his other works and related ideas that feed his thoughts on that subject. I can summarise the whole lecture with his own words "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP*, 7). As just mentioned, ethics, along with aesthetics and religion, is the subject matter that falls into the category of which we cannot speak. When we look into the main arguments of LE, we can obviously see the reference to *Tractatus*. Considering the date of publication of *Tractatus* (1922) and that of LE (1929), the similarity of views is not surprising at all. The preface of *Tractatus* given below, without much effort, could be the closing part of LE:

> The book deals with the problems of philosophy and shows, as I believe, that the method of formulating these problems rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language. Its whole meaning could be summed up somewhat as follows: What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent. (*TLP*, p.3)

Although it is evident that Wittgenstein has maintained most of his ideas from *Tractatus* throughout in this later work (LE), it is also possible to see the very foundations of his later philosophy. Thus, we could say that although Wittgenstein holds most of his views on the picture theory of language, we could see some signs of the transition of his philosophy in LE.[58]

[58] When Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge in 1929, he returned to philosophy with an idea that "he could again do creative work" (G. H. Von Wright. "Bibliographical Sketch" in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 12) In the *Remarks* (which based on his work between 2 February 1929 – 24 April 1930), he was still holding the fundamental thesis of *Tractatus*. But in LE there were also the foundations of some ideas that show themself clearly in his later philosophy. Thus this transition shows itself in LE. Edwards states that "reading the *Tractatus* one can sometimes forget that language has to do with living and breathing human beings; it seems somehow independent of, even superior to, human interest like knowledge and opinion, certainty and doubt, will and action"(Edwards, p.79). In LE there is an obvious transition in these areas. Wittgenstein was talking about the "right" way of living and "family of meanings". In LE, we could see the foundation of some of his later views like "family resemblance" and "private language argument."

At this point I want to go through LE step by step and try to understand the basis of these arguments, how he combines them and how he positions himself without self-contradiction by admitting that he also uses these expressions, although they are nonsense. By going back and forth to his earlier and later works I will search for an answer to the crucial question Wittgenstein himself asks: "But we still use the expression "absolute" anyway, why? "What have we in mind and what do we try to express?""(LE p.7)

Although at the opening of his speech he mentioned that English, not being his native language, could be one of the difficulties in communicating his thoughts, I think he is very careful about the words he chose. (This remark even made the audience pay closer attention to what he says and how he says it). We also know that the difficulty in communicating his thought arises because he tries to communicate something on what cannot be said.

He started adopting Moore's 'explanation' of the term ethics. I think he chose the term 'explanation' very carefully. He is not talking about the 'definition' of the term which has the connotation of expressed meaning of a term, rather he uses 'explanation' as the 'act of making clear'. Also as we discussed in Moore's approach to ethics, 'definition' is a problematic concept, for Moore. Here, Wittgenstein wants us to "see as clearly as possible what [he] takes to be the subject matter of Ethics" (LE, p.4).

In order to 'see' what Wittgenstein takes it to be the subject matter of ethics, we must understand how Wittgenstein structured his thoughts. Wittgenstein says that "the hearer is incapable of seeing both the road he is led and the goal which it leads to" (LE, p.4), and he sees this as another barrier to communicating his thoughts. Thus, to make us 'to see both the way and where it leads to' Wittgenstein explains the how he structured his thoughts in detail.

Wittgenstein starts to construct his arguments with G.E. Moore's explanation of ethics, which is, "Ethics is the general inquiry into what is good" (*PE*, p.54). His choice of G.E. Moore's explanation is neither accidental nor surprising. Being his contemporary and friend, Wittgenstein read Moore's *Principia Ethica* in 1912 in detail. He even mentioned it in his letter to Russell (probably June 1912): "I have just been reading a part of Moore's *Principia Ethica*: (now please don't be

shocked) I do not like it at all", and continues with more harsh criticism: "Moore repeats himself dozens of times, what he says in 3 pages could – I believe – be expressed in half a page. Unclear statements don't get a bit clearer by being repeated!!"[59] Wittgenstein widens Moore's explanation, by elaborating what the subject matter of ethics is. At this very early point of his introduction he states that what he will say about ethics counts for aesthetics. "Now I am going to use the term Ethics in a slightly wider sense, in a sense in fact which includes what I believe to be the most essential part of what is generally called Aesthetics"(LE, p.4). In *Tractatus* he clearly puts the same view as: "Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (*TLP*, 6.421*).* As his lecture continues we see examples coming from the language of religion. Considering the lecture as a whole, I think it will be fair to conclude that all the arguments on ethics could apply to religion as well as aesthetics.[60]

In order to elaborate the above definition of Moore Wittgenstein uses synonymous expressions to substitute for each other, in a similar way to Galton's composite photographs method. Galton attempted to develop a more general view of characteristics rather than that of individual physical appearance by superimposing a number of photographs into a composite. In his study of criminology he took a series of facial photographs of murderers. The photos were then reproduced so that their dimensions matched; these were then re-photographed sequentially and exposed onto the same photographic plate.[61] This photographic method of investigating the common or characteristic features of a subject and also Galton's scientific effort for the 'measurement of resemblance' inspired Wittgenstein's idea of 'family resemblance'. This reference to Galton seems significant because I think here lies the

[59]Brain McGuinness and G. H Von Wright (ed.). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Cambridge Letters* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, p.13). Moore would be defined by Wittgenstein as trying to go beyond the boundaries of language, trying to say what is unsayable. Considering our discussions in "Metaphysical Ethics" there is no doubt why he didn't like it.

[60] I think, in time, his tools to analyse the language changed but not his basic thoughts about ethics. He approaches ethics, aesthetics and religion in the same way in *Tractatus,* "A Lecture on Ethics" and *Philosophical Investigations*. In fact, this will be one of the main arguments of this dissertation.

[61] Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) published "Composite Portraits, Made by Combining Those of Many Different Persons into a Single Resultant Figure" in 1879, in which he details the process of creating composite portraits. See galton.org-Sir Francis Galton F.R.S, viewed 17 February 2008 <http://www.galton.org>

germ of the idea of family resemblance which will be developed fully in *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*).[62]

> How did we *learn* the meaning of this word ('good' for instance)? From what sort of examples? in what language-games? Then it will be easier for you to see that the word must have a family of meanings' (*PI*, 77).

In *PI* (exegesis 66) Wittgenstein asks, what are the common features of games like 'board-games, card-games, ball-games and Olympic games' for us to call all of them 'game'? When he introduces the synonymous words to replace the explanation of ethics, he asks the same question. And he answers the question as follows: "For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that" (*PI*, 66). And immediately, in the next section, he introduces us to the concept of family resemblance:

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between numbers of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. – And I shall say: 'games' form a family (*PI*, 66).

Let's go back to Wittgenstein's effort to widen of the subject matter of ethics by using synonymous words and how he puts the similarities and relationships together and constructs the common face of ethics. Wittgenstein used the below substitutes for 'good' to make it possible for us to visualise not what ethics looks like but what the common features of all the expressions that attempts to define/explain ethics are. Like Galton he puts these synonyms into a composite to see the collective photo of the terms that explain what ethics is.

"Ethics is the general enquiry into what is *good*"

"Ethics is the general enquiry into what is *valuable*"

"Ethics is the general enquiry into what is *really important*"

"Ethics is the general enquiry into the *meaning of life*"

"Ethics is the general enquiry into what *makes life worth living*"

[62] Similarity and distinction between Wittgenstein's family resemblance and Galton's composite portraits and Goethe's conception of archetypal representation could be a topic of another study. Although, I do not want to go into any further detail, I will give examples from *PI* in order to show how Wittgenstein constructs his view of 'family of meanings'.

"Ethics is the general enquiry into *the right way of living*"

This set of descriptions does not give us single clear explanation of ethics. It is not easy to describe ethics using the concept of family resemblance as to describe what a game is.[63] Rather, at this point, Wittgenstein deals with the common features of the above expressions, and not the common features of ethics. But this early mention of the family resemblance paves the way to understanding ethics as a form of life, as a language game with its own set of rules. I will investigate the details of this possibility in Chapter V where I consider later Wittgenstein's conception of ethics. But in the arguments of LE there is no reference or room for this kind of comment. In this context the family resemblance method is used just to understand the resemblance of the synonymous words.

When we look at these synonymous words, as Wittgenstein points out in *PI*, we cannot see anything that is common to all. But, they are not randomly chosen synonyms for the word 'good'; for, they will reveal Wittgenstein's conception of ethics to us. James C. Edwards draws our attention to the last phrase, i.e. "the right way of living", considering *Tractatus*, this is the first and the only phrase among them that refers to conduct. Edwards thinks that it is not accidental, because for Wittgenstein problems of conduct are not the primary concern of ethics. For Wittgenstein, he says, the primary concern of ethics "lies in discovering the permanent sense of human life so that life is then understood to be "worth living"".[64] We will see the importance of the phrases 'meaning of life' and 'worth living' in detail in the next section while elaborating on what is the mystical. But, now it is time to go back and find out what the common features of these phrases are.

For Wittgenstein, the characteristic feature of all these expressions is that they can be used in two different senses: (1) trivial or relative sense, (2) ethical or absolute sense. This distinction takes us to the strongest argument of LE which is:

> Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearance of a judgment of value: . . . although all judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statement of facts, no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value (LE, p.6).

[63] Consider *PI* 69.

[64] Edwards, p.82.

Wittgenstein means by the 'relative sense' of a word, a word that satisfies a predetermined standard. ""This man is a good runner" simply means that he runs a certain number of miles in a certain number of minutes, etc" (LE, p.6). Here, the term 'good' refers to a measurement tool where everyone knows what it measures and how it measures. There is no doubt concerning the judgement of good in this sense, because it complies with a pre-determined standard. If we set some agreed standard and make our judgements by means of this standard we will be talking about facts, and nothing ethical. If we agree that 'good' in 'good reading' defines reading 100 pages in a day and one reads 50 pages a day, then when we say 's/he is not a good reader' it will not be an ethical statement, but a fact. As it is a fact that the person does not comply with the agreed pre-determined standard (reading 100 pages in a day), there is nothing ethical in our judgement. Actually, it is not even a judgment; it is simply a matter of fact.

At first sight this argument seems very straightforward, easy to understand and even commonsensical and seems to imply no ethical connotations. But, we, as a group of people, could determine some standards and base our judgements on them. We could also determine some standards that have ethical connotations. These standards could be met in terms of facts and still be ethical judgements for us. This idea will be welcome by the ethical relativists, who believe that in particular societies and cultures human convention define morality. This need for a pre-determined standard as an external reference point could be regarded as a point of relativistic approach. Here, the relative sense of these expressions still seems problematic. This so-called relativistic approach is seen in the 'private language argument' and the arguments concerning how to play a language game in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. [65] I will discuss 'private language argument' in detail in Chapter V.

A need for public criteria, a pre-determined standard, human convention was widely discussed among the philosophers who studied Wittgenstein and the common ground for these discussions was whether Wittgenstein was a relativist or not. But in LE the distinction of relative and absolute sense of value judgements has another function. What Wittgenstein does in LE is to provide a framework, in which,

[65] Here, Moritz Schlick's example of monogamy and polygamy serves well. See, Chapter IV, "Naturalistic Ethics", p. 88.

some value judgements become relative. How subjective this framework is another question. Wittgenstein says that for this kind of value judgement "there will simply be facts, facts, and facts but no Ethics" (LE, p.7). In the distinction of relative and absolute sense of value judgements, the framework is the fact-value distinction. But behind this distinction is will to show what he really understands when he says ethics.

Wittgenstein gives several examples, such as 'a good chair', 'a good pianist', 'right road', etc., to explain what he means by relative sense of value judgements. In all of these expressions 'good', 'right', etc., are used as replaceable with their pre-determined criteria. When we say that "This man is a good runner" and apply a pre-determined standard to it, good in this statement "simply means that he runs a certain number of miles in a certain number of minutes, etc"(LE, p.6). Normative ethical theories deal with this relative sense of value judgments. The logical positivist's notion of ethics also falls into this category of value judgements. On the other hand, Wittgenstein claims that this is not the way ethics uses these expressions. Louis E. Wolcher, states that "there exists a human impulse to speak about ethical matters in a sense that cannot be reduced to the description of a purely objective relation between conduct and standards".[66] That is what concerns Wittgenstein when he introduces the absolute sense of value judgements.

When it comes to explaining the 'ethical or absolute sense', unfortunately there are no obvious examples as in the case of relative sense. It might be because it is not possible to express ethical judgements with genuine propositions. Wittgenstein did not use specific examples but only metaphors. Maybe it is because "our words will only express facts" (LE, p.7). The 'absolute sense' is described in comparison with the 'relative sense':

> Supposing that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said "Well, you play pretty badly" and suppose I answered "I know, I'm playing pretty badly but I don't want to play any better," all the other man could say would be "Ah, then that's all right." But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said, "You're behaving like a beast" and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better," could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not;

[66] Louis E. Wolcher. *Beyond Transcendence in Law and Philosophy* (London: Birkbeck Law Press, 2005), p.174.

> he would say "Well, you *ought* to want to behave better." Here you have an absolute judgment of value, whereas the first instance was one of relative judgment (LE, p.5).

It is clear that there are no pre-determined standards to control the truth value of the 'ethical or absolute sense' of value judgements. But the main difference is, whereas, as mentioned above, expressions referring to 'relative sense' can be transformed to fact statements, absolute value judgements cannot. In Wittgenstein's own words, "no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgement of absolute value" (LE, p.6). It is very important to understand this statement because it is the very foundation of Wittgenstein's view that ethics must be outside of the boundaries of language. As 'relative sense' associates with ethical subjectivism and has its problems and could be criticised on the same grounds, 'absolute sense' associates with ethical objectivism, where the truth-value of ethical statements is not determined by society, it is true regardless of whether you agree or not. The idea that there must be universal and objective criteria for ethical judgements is appealing. The search for such a criterion, that does not change from society to society or from an individual to individual, that applies to all rational human beings, that does not change from time to time, that was true in the past, that is true in the present and will be true in the future, takes us to the concept of absolute. We will see that universal objectivity of ethical judgements will cause inconvenience to people who regard ethical judgements in Wittgenstein's 'relative sense'. This will be obvious when we discuss the ethical concept of logical positivists.

A relative value judgement can be *described* in terms of facts and by doing so 'it loses all the appearance of a judgment of value'. "[F]acts will contain nothing which we could call an ethical proposition" (LE, p.6). On the other hand absolute ethical judgements cannot be described in terms of facts, so it makes a logical analysis impossible for Wittgenstein. If a sentence cannot be described in terms of facts, it does not express a proposition which is true or false. A word with ethical sense does not add anything to the sentence's factual content, which makes it a "mere pseudo-concept" (*LTL*, p.110).[67] For example, the description of a murder is not different than that of the 'falling of a stone' (LE, p.6), both can be described by

[67] A.J. Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p.110.

facts. The former might cause emotions when we read it but these emotions it arouses do not add anything to its factual content. Similar to Ayer's example of stealing, "if I say to someone, 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money,' I am not stating more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money'" (*LTL*, p.110). In Wittgenstein's example of murder, if I say "It is painful reading the murder of X" I will not be making any additional statement than "X is murdered". Wittgenstein does not deny that a description of a murder might arouse certain feelings in the reader, but what he emphasizes here is that we can only express facts.[68] Feelings cannot be defined as true or false either.

Ayer, in his *Language, Truth and Logic*, introduces the concept of 'descriptive ethical symbols'. Descriptive ethical symbols are somewhat close to Wittgenstein's value judgements in the 'relative sense'. Ayer defines descriptive ethical symbols as sentences that describe behaviour that is right or wrong according to the moral value of a specific society. This kind of sentences could be definable in terms of factual terms (*LTL*, p.108). Talking of a particular society makes it possible to talk about the pre-determined standards of that society. Like Wittgenstein, Ayer thinks that it is not descriptive ethical statement that ethics is concerning with. Similarity of Ayer's conception of ethics to that of Wittgenstein is not a mere coincidence. Ayer openly states that his views were derived from the "doctrines of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, which are themselves the logical outcome to the empiricism of Berkeley and David Hume" (*LTL*, p.9). Although the starting point and the fundamental ideas of ethics are very close, the conclusions that they arrive at are incompatibly different. I will discuss this in detail when I investigate the emotive theory of ethics. For now, I can say that Ayer never troubled himself with the 'absolute sense' of value judgements.

Before going into the details of the metaphorical explanation of 'absolute sense' and the impossibility of transforming the expressions of judgement of value in absolute sense into the factual statements in LE, I would like go back to discussions on *Tractatus* that were considered in the previous section. As mentioned, Wittgenstein states the aim of *Tractatus* in its introduction as setting a limit to the

[68] This could take us the private language argument and also Moore's attack to the subjectivist theory of ethics. This naturalistic approach to ethics discussed in the naturalistic fallacy and will be discussed in naturalistic ethics in the next chapter.

expressions of thought, and within this limit it will be seen what can and what cannot be expressed. The main thesis is that the world and the language share the same logical form: "[a] picture is a fact" (*TLP*, 2.141). Wittgenstein formalises his model on how to set a limit to the expressions of thought through the picture theory which we discussed earlier.[69] *Tractatus'* first proposition is: "The world is all that is the case" (*TLP*, 1). The following propositions that comment on this proposition explain the relationship between facts and the world. We are informed that "The world is determined by the facts, and by their being *all* the facts" (*TLP*, 1.11). Wittgenstein also states that what is the case and what is not the case is determined by the totality of facts (*TLP*, 1.12). Thus what is the case is a fact as what is not the case, and this makes the world, as it is all that is the case, the totality of facts (*TLP*, 1.1). When we consider a proposition as a picture of fact, we accept that a proposition can only express a fact. Such a conception of a proposition connects language and fact. Wittgenstein, with such a conception of a proposition, says that the absolute judgement of value cannot be a statement of fact. In order to grasp the ideas in LE we must remember that at the time Wittgenstein gave this lecture, logical positivism was the prevailing philosophical approach, for which Wittgenstein's philosophy was known to be the main inspiration. Eliminating metaphysics from the language of philosophy is another concern of that approach.

As relative judgement of value is a statement of fact, Wittgenstein's concern is on the absolute judgement of value, where claims that when ethics uses any judgement of value it is not the relative sense of value judgement. This is a strong claim that rejects the possibility that any set of rules of ethics could be stated in relative sense, which I believe in *PI* there is a way beyond this limit. The main concern in the LE is the absolute sense of judgement. The main difference here, apart from the distinction mentioned above, is that absolute sense refers to an 'ought to' situation. You ought to obey the rule, you ought to behave well, it ought to be the right way.

Here Wittgenstein gives the example of an omniscient person that knows everything, even "all the states of mind of all human beings that ever lived" (LE,

[69] See, section "3.1 The Limits of Language – Sayable" and footnote 50 in p.40.

p.6). And if this person writes a book containing "whole description of the world" (LE, p.6), this book will not contain any ethical judgement. The reason being:

> [A]ll the facts described would, as it were, stand on the same level and in the same way all propositions stand on the same level. There are no propositions which, in any absolute sense, are sublime, important, or trivial. (LE, p.6)

But being omniscient is different than being omnipotent, having unlimited power. An omniscient person does not have any power over what he is reporting. Everything stands on the same level because this omniscient person is just an observer and does not interfere any of the facts s/he describes.[70] In the *PI*, Wittgenstein states that: "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is" (*PI,* 124). Louis E. Wolcher, referring this passage states that "[i]n this respect it is not difficult to recognise that the omniscient is a figure for Wittgenstein's own conception of philosophy's task".[71] Thus, philosophy, cannot describe any absolute value judgements as there are no propositions that are sublime, important or trivial, it can only describe facts. That is exactly what he was stating in *Tractatus*: "All propositions are of equal value" (*TLP*, 6.4). Even the example of the omniscient person (the philosopher) echoes the *Tractatus* 6.41:

> The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it no value exists--and if it did exist, it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world (*TLP*, 6.41).

Here, it is clearly pointed out that any proposition cannot have any ethical value. But there is more: even states of mind cannot have any ethical value. Wittgenstein quotes Hamlet: "Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (LE, p.69). He agrees with the first part of the sentence but not with the second.

[70] Cf. Wolcher, pp.175-76. Wolcher says that "even omniscient ones, do not *intervene* in the activity they describe" (Wolcher, p.175).

[71] Wolcher, p.175.

"But what I mean is that a state of mind, so far as we mean by that a fact which we can describe, is in no ethical sense good or bad" (LE, p.6). This sentence explains how he develops his view here, a state of mind is a state of mind when we describe it and when we describe a state of mind it becomes a fact. It becomes a fact when I can describe it by language. It will become a description of fact as in the murder example. This is the limit of my language. "[O]ur words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I pour out a gallon over it" (LE, p.7). Ethics, that is, the ethical judgements of value cannot be described by propositions.

Is my language the limit of my thought? If I cannot express my thoughts does it mean that they do not exist? If the words are restricted to express only facts, does this mean that it is not possible to express any judgement of value? As I cannot express my emotions with a genuine proposition can't I express any judgement of value? For Wittgenstein, I can only express relative value, which can only express a fact. What we cannot express are things like 'absolute right', 'absolute good'; "Things that everybody reacts to, with logical necessity, the same way, regardless of their tastes and inclinations and ashamed for or feel guilty not doing so" (LE, p.7). Here, Wittgenstein is referring to the demands of universal objectivity of the absolute. We must have a universal consensus on the usage of 'absolute good' to be described by the omniscient person, otherwise it will be on the same level with 'good' in the 'good chair'.[72] Thus, the absoluteness of good is what cannot be expressed. Does this hinder us from using such expressions of absolute value? Wittgenstein admitted that even he himself was tempted to use these expressions.

Wittgenstein investigates the cases where we find ourselves using these expressions. In order to have a common ground, he also asks us to recall similar situations where we use these expressions. He gives two examples of absolute value judgements: "feeling absolutely safe" and "wondering at the existence of world" (LE, p.8).

Everyone could intimate him/herself with the feeling of being absolutely

[72] Edwards states with regard to this definition of absolute that it binds us not according to an occurrence of fact or a particular preference, but rather it binds us regardless of our preferences or goals. And he comments that: "It seems obvious that Wittgenstein is here reformulating the Kantian dictum that the Moral Law consist of categorical rather than hypothetical imperatives" (Edwards, p.86).

safe, which the feeling seems to be that no matter what happens I will be safe. We use phrases like "I am absolutely safe, nothing happens to me when I feel secure in an environment". Wittgenstein states that this is a misuse of language, misuse of the word safe. "To be safe essentially means that it is physically impossible that certain things should happen to be and therefore it's nonsense to say that I am safe *whatever* happens" (LE, p.9). Is not it the same to say I am safe and I am safe? If so, is not this a tautology?

The same logic applies to the example of "I wonder at the existence of world". We can wonder at a thing which we could envision not to be the thing it is. For example, wondering the size of a dog is possible only if we envision another dog that we consider to be of normal size. "But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing" (LE, p.9). Is not it the same as saying the world exists and I wonder that it exists? In order to wonder at the existence of the world, should I go beyond the limit and imagine what it is like if it does not exist. I think, Wolcher's criticism here makes sense. He states that: "if we can imagine what it would be like to express the inexpressible, then we ought to be able to express it after all; and if we cannot image this, then it follows that we also cannot meaningfully say 'it' is inexpressible".[73]

In LE, Wittgenstein does not concern himself with the idea that: "We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either" (*TLP*, 5.61). Rather, he concludes that "then it's just nonsense to say that one is wondering at a tautology" (LE, p.9). Just as he said in *Tractatus*:

> Roughly speaking, to say of two things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of one thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing at all (*TLP*, 5.5303).

Wittgenstein takes his argument further and gives us another reason why all ethical and religious expressions are nonsense. He states that all ethical and religious expressions "*seem*, prima facie, to be just *similes*" (LE, p.9). When we use an expression in an ethical sense, although we do not mean the relative sense of this expression, we form a kind of similarity between the two senses of the expressions.

[73]Wolcher, p.189. In section "3.1 The Limits of Language – Sayable" we discussed the issue that in order to draw a limit to what is expressible and inexpressible you must know what is inexpressible. See footnote 46 in p.38.

When we use the word good in the following sentences, “This is a good fellow”, “This is a good football player”, we use the word good in two different ways, but still there is something similar in both senses of the word. It is the same when we talk of someone’s life being valuable; there is an analogy with valuable jewellery. In religion when we talk of God we speak allegorically, we conceive him as a human being who has great power. Wittgenstein puts it very clearly that “It is the paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have supernatural value” (LE, p.10) which is already stated in *Tractatus* as: “How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher” (*TLP*, 6.432).

Wittgenstein, giving the example of miracle to meet this paradox, claims that no matter how hard we force ourselves to express any absolute value or how hard we try to find ways to express miracles “we cannot express what we want to express and that all we *say* about the absolute miraculous remains nonsense”(LE, p.11). We will be using both the absolute and the relative sense of the word ‘miracle’ once we express it in the relative sense, and it will lose all its reference to any absolute value.

So, does the problem derive from the fact that we cannot find a proper way to express absolute value? That is what Wittgenstein’s imaginary interlocutor puts forth:

> Well, if certain experiences constantly tempt us to attribute a quality to them which we call absolute or ethical value and importance, this simply shows that by these words we don't mean nonsense, that after all what we mean by saying that an experience has absolute value *is just a fact like other facts* and that all it comes to is that we have not yet succeeded in finding the correct logical analysis of what we mean by our ethical and religious expressions (LE, p.11).

Wittgenstein does not agree with this response. It is not the case that we could not find the correct logical analysis yet, but it is absolutely impossible to find a way to express them. They are nonsense because “their nonsensicality was their very essence” (LE, p.11). Trying to express them is trying to go beyond the limits of language.

For Wittgenstein, it is a hopeless case to attempt to try to exceed the boundaries of language, thus ethics cannot be a science, because “what it says does

not add to our knowledge in any sense" (LE, p.12). As, "[a] tautology follows from all propositions: it says nothing" (*TLP*, 5.142). He concludes almost the same way he did at the end of *Tractatus*. "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (*TLP*, 7).

On the other hand, in the last sentences of his lecture he admits that when he talks about ethics, his own tendency – like the tendency of all men – was "to run against the boundaries of language" (LE, p.12). Although he says that ethics with the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, says nothing, he still has a great respect for it. The closing sentence with a different tone to the rest of speech states that: "But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting [the tendency to talk about ethics] deeply and would not for my life ridicule it" (LE, p.12).

Wittgenstein described to Waismann and Schlick, one month after the speech, what was in his mind when he was stating the closing sentences of the lecture. Wolcher quotes him to point out the difference between Wittgenstein as a person and Wittgenstein as a philosopher. Wittgenstein stated that:

> At the end of my lecture on ethics I spoke in the first person. I think this is something very essential. Here there is nothing to be stated any more; all I can do is step forth as an individual and speak in the first person. . . . All I can say is this: I do not scoff at this human tendency in man; I hold it in reverence. And here it is essential this is not a description of sociology but that I am speaking *about myself*.[74]

How Wittgenstein as a person and Wittgenstein as a philosopher struggle on the approach to ethics will be discussed in the next section. But at this point it is important to note that no matter what he states that "[n]o statement of fact can ever be, or imply, judgement of absolute value" (LE p.6) and that "[o]ur words will only express facts" (LE p.7) and says that absolute value judgements is to go beyond the limits of language, his conception of ethics is never in the relative sense, it is always in the absolute sense. Absolute value judgements cannot be expressed by the propositions of natural science, which determines the realm of sayable, that is why

[74] F. Waismann. F. *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*, trans. Schulte, J and McGuinness, B., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p. 117-18; cited in Wolcher, p.193.

ethics is transcendental. We could have a better understanding of Wittgenstein's conception of ethics if we investigate what he means by 'mystical'. The whole lecture could be well summarized by Wittgenstein's own words as: "My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. . . . What [ethics] says does not add to our knowledge in any sense" (LE pp.11-12). But he still holds it in reverence.

3.3. The Mystical: *Sub Specie Aeternitatis*

We have seen that although Wittgenstein regards trying to express absolute value as 'to run against the boundaries of language' he still respects the others who have such a view, by admitting that he has the same tendency. Even though he commits himself not to run against the boundaries of language, he has a tendency to comment on ethics, but he does it by remaining silent about it. His silence should not be mistaken for ignorance. We will see in the next chapter that it is the logical positivists who ignore the absolute sense of ethics, not Wittgenstein himself.

His letters to his friend Paul Engelmann and to his publisher Ludwig von Ficker express his silent attitude towards ethics. He points out that *Tractatus'* main point is "an ethical one" and that the preface and the conclusion (*TLP*, 7) express very well what the book is about. He commends his silence by saying "I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it".[75]

Consequently, in this section, I will investigate what it is about ethics that Wittgenstein could not express in the book, but the book itself reveals to us. This

[75] This quotation is from the letter to von Ficker which is quoted by Edwards in *Ethics without Philosophy* (on p.25), a translation by B.F. McGuinness appears on page 16 of: G.H. von Wright's historical introduction to Wittgenstein's *Prototractatus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). A full quotation of the letter will be illuminating: "You see, I am quite sure that you won't get all that much out of reading it; its subject-matter will seem quite alien to you. But it really isn't alien to you, because the book's point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now but which I will write out for you here, because it will perhaps be a key to the work for you. What I meant to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where *many* others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it. And now for that reason, unless I am very much mistaken, the book will say a great deal you want to say. Only perhaps, you won't see that it is said in the book. For now, I would recommend you to read the *preface* and the *conclusion*, because they contain the most direct expression of the point of the book."

means that I will concentrate on Wittgenstein's conception of ethics and mysticism. He thinks that he does explain himself without going to the other side of the limit, without running against the boundaries. We will see whether he accomplishes this and also try to look into his silence. But I will always bear in mind the question why he did not choose to say what he wants to say without committing himself to analytic philosophy, without locking himself to the 'cage' of language which is limited with the propositions of natural science. It seems that even Kant crossed what he deems the limits of knowledge.[76] After all, does he not say that "I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*"? (*CPR*, p.29) If ethics is as important for Wittgenstein as it was for Kant, why does he limit himself to the analytic philosophers' view? Has Bertrand Russell misinterpreted *Tractatus* when he says that the book deals with 'the principles of symbolism' and the 'misuse of language'? Is he wrong to think that Wittgenstein in this book was "concerned with the conditions which would have to be fulfilled by a logically perfect language"? (*TLP*, pp. ix-x) How could he not (as a friend and mentor) see that its main concern is an ethical concern, if it is that obvious?

Bertrand Russell in the Introduction to *Tractatus,* concerning ethics, says the following:

> The whole subject of ethics, for example, is placed by Mr Wittgenstein in the mystical, inexpressible region. Nevertheless he is capable of conveying his ethical opinions. His defence would be that what he calls the mystical can be shown, although it cannot be said. It may be that defence is adequate, but for my part, I confess that it leaves me with a certain sense of intellectual discomfort (*TLP*, pp.xxiii-xxiv).

Maybe because Russell says that Wittgenstein is capable of conveying his views on ethics, makes Wittgenstein seem to disapprove Russell's Introduction to

[76]Kant seems to be sensitive about the limits of knowledge, so about the limit between the world of understanding and the world of senses. He says: "By *thinking* itself into a world of understanding practical reason does not at all overstep its boundaries, but it would certainly do so if it wanted to *intuit* or *feel itself* into it" (AK 4:458, p.62). Overstep the boundary is to "pretend to be cognizant of something which it knows nothing" (AK 4:458, p.62). But does not this sound like crossing the limit when he says: "the idea of a pure world of understanding as a whole of all intelligences, to which we ourselves belong as rational beings (though on the other side we are also member of the world of sense), remains always useful and permitted idea for the sake of a rational belief, even if all knowledge stops at its boundary" (AK 4:462, p.66). In the Introduction of the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, Andrews Reath says that "while Kant's epistemology undermines traditional metaphysics, it unexpectedly creates the possibility in principle of making assertions about what lies beyond experience" (*Critique of the Practical Reason*, p. xi).

the book.[77] I will examine what the difference is between what can be said and what can be shown and also refer Russell's interpretation of the *Tractatus* later, but here the important point is not that everyone agrees with Wittgenstein that he did not cross the boundaries, as he himself claimed. Maybe it is inevitable to cross the boundaries when you are yourself setting the limit. Even silence as an attitude may not be a defence, as Wittgenstein's silence is also regarded as being a 'noisy silence'- "as noisy in its own way as the noisiest speech".[78] I believe Wittgenstein's silence is not exactly a silence in Zen understanding, it might be if he chose to remain silent and not utter a word about it, but he announced that he is going to remain silent and explained why he is going to do so and what he is going to be silent about. Therefore, in a way Russell is right in saying that Wittgenstein conveyed his ethical opinions even if he announced that he is going to remain silent. To decide on this point, we must look what he says in the inexpressibility of ethics.

The first thing he says about ethics is that there cannot be propositions of ethics. "Propositions can express nothing that is higher" (*TLP*, 6.42). At this point we must recall his conception of a proposition which was mentioned in the section on what can be said. Propositions are either true or false (*TLP*, 4.06), they are "picture[s] of reality" (*TLP*, 4.01). They are about what is the case, they are about facts. Propositions are only capable of expressing what the case is, as they are expressing statements of fact, "All propositions are of equal value" (*TLP*, 6.4). As in the case of the falling of a stone and a murder. So, "Propositions can express nothing that is higher" (*TLP*, 6.42). On the other hand, ethics, as discussed in "A Lecture on Ethics", in an absolute sense is not related to facts. Ethics in absolute sense is not

[77] G.H. von Wright, on this issue, states that "The problem of finding a publisher caused difficulties and the matter was further complicated by Wittgenstein's strong disapproval of Russell's Introduction to the book. In July 1920 Wittgenstein wrote to Russell that he himself would take no further steps to have it published and that Russell could do with it as he wished" ("Bibliographical Sketch", p.11).

[78]Wolcher, p.205. Wolcher, in his "A Zen Reading of Wittgenstein's Thesis of Silence" in *Beyond Transcendence*, gives example of *Vimalakirti's* silence and draws a parallel to Wittgenstein's silence. He tells us that in the text *The Vimalakirti Sutra*- which is regarded as the most influential work in the Mahãyãna canon- "Manjushri poses a question – 'how does the bodhisattva go about entering the gate of non-dualism?' – to a room of deities. Thirty-one very intelligent and insightful aspirants give profound, but wordy, answers, and these make up the bulk of sutra. But the text goes on to record that the layman Vimalakirti himself 'remained silent and did not speak a word.' He refers to this particular silence to make a point. . . . Manjushri goes on to say *'Excellent, excellent! Not a word, not a syllable – this truly is to enter the gate of dualism.*' . . . Although Wittgenstein, like Vimalakirti, was also trying to teach us something by remaining silent about the absolute, there is one major difference between them: using silence as an expedient means it is not the same as advocating a philosophical thesis of silence" (Wolcher, p.205).

concerned with what is the case, but what 'ought to' be the case. Therefore, ethical statements cannot be regarded as propositions. Consequently, "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words" (*TLP*, 6.421). Moreover, "Ethics is transcendental" (*TLP*, 6.421). But, what does it mean that 'ethics is transcendental'? In order to understand this proposition we need to understand what transcendental means for Wittgenstein and also look for other examples of transcendental.

Wittgenstein does not define what transcendental means for him. But we know that he draws a limit to language. On one side of the limit lies what can be said and on the other side what cannot be said. As he said in "A Lecture on Ethics", whilst explaining the absolute sense of value, trying to talk about ethics, is trying to go against the boundaries. Ethics, being in the realm of the unsayable, is on the other side of the limit. What is transcendental is something that transcends the limits of language, which goes beyond the boundaries of language. Therefore, ethics is transcendental. Wittgenstein combines this with the mystical, he says that "[t]here are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical" (*TLP*, 6.522). This connection is even clearer in the *Notebooks*, where he says: "But this is really in some sense deeply mysterious! It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed!" (*NB*, p.78) I will go into the detail on his conception of mystical, but before doing so, I must mention something about transcendental, which at first sight seems surprising. It is not only that ethics is transcendental, but also that logic is transcendental (*TLP*, 6.13). So, how does this fit into the context of transcendental? Do ethics and logic have something in common, as they are both transcendental? Russell finding Wittgenstein's 'attitude towards the mystical' interesting, explains this point as follows:

> [Wittgenstein's] attitude upon this grows naturally out of his doctrine of pure logic, according to which the logical proposition is a picture (true or false) of the fact, and has in common with the fact a certain structure. It is this common structure which makes it capable of being a picture of fact, but the structure cannot itself be put into words, since it is a structure of the words, as well as of the facts to which they refer (*TLP*, p. xxiii).[79]

[79] Russell's "Introduction" in *Tractatus* in the English translation (edition of 1922) reprinted in 2005 edition.

For Wittgenstein "the world and life are one" (*TLP*, 5.621). With this assertion he connects world, life, logic, ethics and religion.[80] All the references to fear of death, eternity, and God (in the *Notebooks*) suggest that Wittgenstein's mysticism and views on ethics are somewhat related to religious ideas. After all, he says that what is said of ethics is valid for religion too. During the First World War, in 1914, he read Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief* and carried it with him everywhere which made the soldiers call him 'the one with the Gospels'.[81] For G.H. von Wright, "Tolstoy exercised a strong influence on Wittgenstein's view of life".[82] Edwards quotes from *The Gospel in Brief* Tolstoy's summary of the "sense of the teaching" of Jesus in twelve chapters, and draws parallel with Wittgenstein's philosophy.[83] All could have had effects on Wittgenstein, but I think, among all of them four are outstandingly related to Wittgenstein's views in the *Notebooks* and the *Tractatus*. Those being:

> 7. Temporal life is food for the true life.
> 8. Therefore the true life is independent of time: it is in the present
> 10. Therefore man should strive to destroy the illusion of the temporal life of the past and the future.
> 11. True life is in the present, common to all men and manifesting itself in love.

The influence can be seen in Wittgenstein's conception of eternity, living in the present and its connection with happiness. "Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy" (*NB*, p.74). And true life that manifests itself in love is mystical. As stated earlier, what is mystical cannot be put into words, but it manifests itself (*TLP*, 6.522). The relationship of the mystical and eternity will be understood better in connection with the interaction, if any, between the self, the will and the world.

---

[80] Wittgenstein says in the *Notebooks* that what he knows about God and the purpose of life is that "this world exists" (*NB*, p.72). But there is something problematic with the meaning of life and the world that he knows exists. "That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it" (*NB*, p.73). And he says "That life is world" (*NB*, p.72). The same idea repeated in the *Tractatus* as: "The world and life are one" (*TLP*, 5.621). But this time in connection to logic and the limits of logic, where the limits of the world are the limits of logic (*TLP*, 5.61) as well as the limits of language (*TLP*, 5.6).

[81] Norman Malcolm. *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?* (London: Routledge,1997), p.8

[82] G.H. von Wright. "Bibliographical Sketch," p.10

[83] Edwards, p.29

What is my connection with the world? The connection of philosophy with the self is "the fact that 'the world is my world'" (*TLP*, 5.641). What he means by "the world is my world" is manifested "in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world" (*TLP*, 5.62). Where am I in this world then? Wittgenstein's answer comes as an analogy: "I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field" (*NB*, p.73). Am I just reporting the facts of the world? Does Wittgenstein mean human beings, human souls when he is talking about self? Wittgenstein makes a distinction between the psychological self and the philosophical (metaphysical) as he does for the will. The self as a human being, human body or human soul is the concern of psychology (*TLP*, 5.641) as the will 'as a phenomenon' (*TLP*, 6.423). Is there a way to talk about the self 'in a non-psychological way'? Considering the expression 'the world is my world', yes there is, it is the philosophical self, or 'the metaphysical subject' (*TLP*, 5.641). The metaphysical subject is "the limit of the world – not a part of it" (*TLP*, 5.641). In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein states that "The I is no object" (*NB*, p.80). He adds, "I objectively confront every object. But not the I" (*NB*, p.80). This brings light to his analogy of the visual field and the philosophical self not being the part of the world. First of all, "you do *not* see the eye". And you cannot infer that "it is seen by an eye" through anything that is in the visual field (*TLP*, 5.633).

This consciousness of the self as "I am my world" (*TLP*, 5.63) takes us to the realm of solipsism. But just after he says "I am my world" Wittgenstein adds that "[t]here is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas" (*TLP*, 5.631). As the idea cannot be seen, the self is not part of the world and it does not think and entertain ideas, "there is no knowing subject" (*NB*, p.86). Edwards is quite right to say that the solipsism Wittgenstein mentions is not like solipsism; la Descartes.[84]

As the knowing subject is not the part of the world, it is not in the world, it vanishes and when it vanishes there remains only the world.[85] Moreover, the concern of Wittgenstein is the philosophical self's own experience of the world and it has nothing to do with the existence of others. He does not deny the existence of

[84] Edwards, p.37

[85] Wittgenstein states that: "Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it" (*TLP*, 5.64).

others. In the *Notebooks* he says: "The human body, however, my body in particular, is part of the world among others, among beasts, plants, stones etc. etc." (*NB*, p.82). This point will become clearer if we understand the relationship of the self and the will. We must search for what the will is, not as a phenomenon (of the psychological self), but rather 'as the subject of ethical attributes' (of the metaphysical self) (*TLP*, 6.423).

We have seen that for Wittgenstein there is no thinking subject, but apparently there exists a willing subject. "The thinking subject is surely mere illusion. But the willing subject exists" (*NB*, p.80). The existence of the willing subject is connected to the existence of the philosophical subject, the I. Wittgenstein states that: "If the will did not exist, neither would there be that centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics" (*NB*, p.80).

Although the philosophical self cannot be a part of the world, "my will penetrates the world" (*NB*, p.73). But, even if the will penetrates the world it does not influence the events in the world. "I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless" (*NB*, p.73). What purpose does will serve if it does not change the happenings of the world? Wittgenstein's answer is: "I will call "will" first and foremost the bearer of the good and evil" (*NB*, p.76). Thus, 'what is good and evil' has nothing to do with the world, "what is good and evil is essentially the I" (*NB*, p.80). Consequently, "The world is independent of my will" (*NB*, p.73). As been said earlier, there is no value in the world, there are only facts. And the facts are independent of what is good and evil. Since 'all the propositions are of equal value', "A stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, all stand on the same level" (*NB*, p.84). That is the reason why "what happens, whether it comes from a stone or from my body is neither good nor bad" (*NB*, p.84). They are all independent of my will, which is the bearer of good and evil; that is why I am completely powerless. The good and the bad will, if they change anything, "can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by means of language" (*TLP*, 6.43).

What is it that will may be capable of changing? Only the limits of the world? But am I that powerless? Cannot I put my will into action and interact with what is happening, influence it, change it? Surely, our will causes an action. What is it then to say that 'willing is acting' (*NB*, p.88) or "one cannot will without acting"? (*NB*, p.87)

Wittgenstein makes a distinction between the will 'that sets the human body in motion' (*NB*, p.77) and the will 'which is the bearer of ethics' (*NB*, p.80). [86] Such a distinction requires two different acts of the will. "The one relates to the visual part of the world, the other to the muscular-feeling part" (*NB*, p.87). Wittgenstein suggests a thought experiment which shows us that we do not necessarily need the act of muscular-feeling part to exercise our will.[87] He says:

> Let us imagine a man who could use none of his limbs, and hence could, in the ordinary sense, not exercise his *will*. He could, however, think and *want* and communicate his thoughts to someone else. Could therefore do good or evil through the other man. Then it is clear that ethics would have validity for him, too, and that he in the *ethical sense* is the bearer of a *will* (*NB*, pp.76-77).

What is the difference between these two types of action? In the 'act of muscular-feeling part' it seems that my will causes the action on the other hand, says Wittgenstein, "the act of will is not the cause of an action but is the action itself" (*NB*, p.87). So, I must ask, how can the act of will be an action? This gets slightly more meaningful when Wittgenstein tells us what 'the will' really is; "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world"[88] (*NB*, p.87). Then, what he says about the will becomes understandable, that is, will can only alter the limits of the world. The fact will be the same fact, what changes is my attitude. As said before, concerning LE, events are not good or bad, it is our attitude that gives them the property of goodness or badness. In the same passage Wittgenstein says that "the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole" (*TLP*, 6.43). Our attitude will change the world totally, whereas the fact

---

[86] Cyril Barrett applies the terms Wittgenstein uses for the distinction of the self to the will. He calls the will 'as a phenomenon' the will 'that sets the human body in motion' (*NB*, p.77) psychological will, whereas he calls the will 'which is the bearer of ethics' (*NB*, p.80) the metaphysical will. He says that we are conscious of the psychological will "in desiring, deciding, refusing to act and such like" and "we are not directly conscious of" the metaphysical will (Cyril Barrett. *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.53). I will use the term psychological will and the ethical will when it is necessary to make this distinction.

[87] Without realising this distinction, "the consideration of willing makes it look as if one part of the world were closer to me than another (which would be intolerable)" (*NB*, p.88). As Barrett puts it, "the action as a *fact* has not changed; its *significance* has" (Barrett, p.34).

[88] When you hold that ethical statements cannot be expressed, cannot be described by facts, then something related to us but not takes in place in the realm of facts, becomes helpful, such as attitude. We will see that emotive theory of ethics almost entirely depends on the idea of disagreement in attitude. But their difference is that they are not concerned with the absolute sense of value, but the relative sense of value.

remains the same. So as he suggested, the world of a happy man will not be the same as that of an unhappy man, because both have different attitudes to the world. Whether the good will be the waxing of the world is not said, but the connection to the happy and unhappy man seems to suggest that the good would be the waxing of the world whereas the bad would be the waning of it. And he combines it with ethics as the general enquiry into 'the right way of living'. The last phrase mentioned in LE, states that "the happy life seems to be justified, of itself, it seems that it *is* the only right life" (*NB*, p.78).

For Wittgenstein, the concept of good life, happy life, right way of living is connected with the aspect of eternity. He says that "the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*" (*NB*, p.83). Thus, as mentioned before in line with Gospels – and/or Tolstoy's influence - "Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy" (*NB*, p.74). By eternity Wittgenstein does not understand something like 'infinite temporal duration' or 'eternal survival after death' rather, for him, eternity means 'timelessness'. If by eternity we understand timelessness, "then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (*TLP*, 6.4311). How then, can we live in the present and see the world *sub specie aeterni*? What does he mean? Wittgenstein immediately combines it with what is mystical and says that:

> To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole – a limited whole.
> Feeling the world as a limited whole- it is this that is mystical (*TLP*, 6.45).

This suggests a kind of awareness of the limits of the world,[89] the limits of language. What can be said is limited by the propositions of natural sciences and they are not timeless. "The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* from outside" (*NB*, p.83). This is Wittgenstein's fundamental thesis, as Russell puts it, "it is impossible to say anything about the world as a whole, and . . . whatever can be said has to be about bounded portions of the world" (*TLP*, p.xix). Speaking of the totality of things is

[89] Edwards suggests that: "To feel the world as a limited whole it is necessary to feel its limit, i.e., to be aware of oneself as that limit of the world" (Edwards, p.46).

speaking of necessity.[90] Statements about facts are always accidental, as are the propositions of natural sciences. They are temporal, not eternal. We cannot talk about the laws of nature, as he says: "If there were a law of causality, it might be put in the following way: There are laws of nature. But of course that cannot be said: it makes itself manifest" (*TLP,* 6.36). So, it is outside the limit. Since, "Outside logic everything is accidental" (*TLP,* 6.3) and "what is certain a priori proves something purely logical" (*TLP,* 6.3211) whatever we say about facts will never be more than accidental. Therefore, it is possible to interpret his view on this limited whole as a manifestation of the problem of universality in the realm of facts. As the only propositions that are meaningful are propositions of natural sciences, and as we cannot have a priori knowledge through experience, if we say that "the law of causality is not a law but the form of a law" (*TLP*, 6.32), then we can only talk about the limited world that we know through experience, thus we can conclude that there is nothing mystical or ethical in seeing the world as a limited whole. After all, he says that he sets the limit of language, and the limit is defined by the facts. But what is mystical is feeling the world as a limited whole. But these feelings cannot be put into words. However, we are still urged toward the mystical, this time it is the feeling that the world is a limited whole, another time it is the feeling of absolute safety. "The urge toward the mystical comes from the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science" (*NB*, p.51).

Nevertheless, when you view the world *sub specie aeterni*, you are not concerned with what is accidental, what is the case, you are concerned with the eternal, the absolute. You are not concerned with the future as well as past, when you are living in a timeless present, you are not concerned with 'temporal gain and advantage.'[91] But ethics has nothing to do with temporal gain, it has nothing to do with reward or punishment. What Wittgenstein says on this issue deserves full quotation:

---

[90] Russell in his "Introduction" to *Tractatus*, explains this in relation to Wittgenstein's conception of names and identity. He states that: "There is no way whatever, according to him, by which we can describe totality of things that can be named. In other words, the totality of what there is in the world. In order to be able to do this we should have to know of some property which must belong to everything by a logical necessity" (*TLP*, p.xviii).

[91] Barrett says that for Wittgenstein: "the person of the bad will does not live in the eternal present. He or she is concerned with the future, with temporal gain and advantage" (Barrett, p.39).

> When an ethical law of the form, 'Thou shalt . . .', is laid down, one's first thought is, 'And what if I do not do it?' It is clear, however, that ethics has nothing to do with punishment and reward in the usual sense of the terms. So our question about the *consequences* of an action must be unimportant. – At least those consequences should not be events. For there must be something right about the question we posed. There must indeed be some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but they must reside in the action itself.
> (And it is also clear that the reward must be something pleasant and the punishment something unpleasant) (*TLP*, 6.422).

When you read the passage, it is not possible to miss the similarity to Kant's view on reward and punishment concerning moral law, it is as if Wittgenstein is paraphrasing Kant. The similarity is not only that they say reward and punishment have nothing to do with ethics, and if you act in a certain way to avoid punishment or gain reward, the act in question is not a moral act. But they both attribute an ethical sense to reward and punishment. To say that the consequences of an action are not important, but that the ethical sense of reward and punishment is in the action, is no different than stating the following, as Kant did:

> Now, one must first value the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate worth that compliance with it gives a person in his own eyes, in order to feel that satisfaction in consciousness of one's conformity with it and bitter remorse if one can reproach with having transgressed it (AK 5:38).

Although for different reasons both Kant and Wittgenstein arrive at the same conclusion that to act in a right way for the consequences of an action, like acting in the 'right way' to go to Heaven, is not acting morally. It is only having the immediate reward (pleasantness/ satisfaction) or punishment (unpleasantness/bitter remorse) for the action itself that one can see oneself moral. For Wittgenstein, when you live in the eternal present you will have no concern of the consequences of your actions. But when you live in the eternal present you are in the realm of what cannot be said. Although, as mentioned earlier, the strictly correct method of philosophy is "say nothing except what can be said", i.e., say nothing except the propositions of natural science. If you manage to live in the present and view the world *sub specie aeterni*, you 'transcend these propositions' and "will see the world aright" (TLP, 6.64).

Although my aim is to understand Wittgenstein's views on ethics, in this chapter I specifically concentrated on the *Notebooks*, *Tractatus* and "A Lecture on Ethics", that is, on his early works. His later philosophy was excluded, to be studied in the final chapter. As we saw, in his early works there is no room for expressing ethical statements, which, I believe, his later period provides this opportunity.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICAL VIEWS OF LOGICAL POSITIVISM

In my introduction I explained that my main concern was the possibility of a language of ethics and stated that I will concentrate on analytic philosophy and specifically on logical positivism, where the question of whether an ethical language is possible or not becomes a major concern. Although, the main scope of this study is the logical positivist approach, I began with G.E. Moore's views on ethics, considering as the gateway to analytic ethics. There I searched for an answer to questions such as, what is good, what is the role of intuition in recognising what good is and are there ethical facts? Moore's views will provide a basis for the following discussions. Especially when I investigated what the naturalistic fallacy is, I noted that it is dependent on the presupposition that although there must be objective criteria for recognising 'good,' it does not denote a natural object for Moore. There is a clear-cut fact value distinction in the logical positivistic viewpoint, this gives us another insight into the fact-value dichotomy.

In the previous chapter I investigated early Wittgenstein's conception of ethics. As Wittgenstein's influence on logical positivists, mainly on Vienna Circle, is commonly known, the discussions in the previous chapter will be important to see parallelisms and divergences. Thus, in this chapter I will refer to those discussions and to *Tractatus*, especially in the section where I will investigate how and why logical positivists rejected metaphysics. We will see whether Wittgenstein's influence took them to the same conclusion or not.

Before going into the details of the logical positivist's view of ethics, I will discuss their general standpoint, which will show us how they constructed their views on ethics. Although, in this chapter my main concern is the logical positivists' view of ethics – in line with Wittgenstein's views – it is not possible to isolate ethics and just concentrate on it without going into some detail on their main theses, since there is a strong resemblance between their arguments concerning ethics and

metaphysics. Nevertheless, next two sections of this chapter are mainly devoted to the logical positivist's conception of ethics.

In understanding the main thesis of logical positivism A.J. Ayer becomes an outstanding figure. His work *Language, Truth and Logic* (*LTL*), which was first published in 1936, is regarded as the manifesto of Logical Positivism in the English-speaking world. It had a major effect on not only his contemporaries, but also on today's philosophical discussions. It will be one of my main sources in the enquiry of the history of the logical positivism.

Since my investigation is still on ethics, most of the arguments and doctrines of the logical positivism, most of the discussions, critiques of these arguments, whether they are still valid or not will remain untouched. I shall narrow down this investigation to 'the elimination of metaphysics', but again 'the elimination of metaphysics' is still a subject matter that needs to be studied on its own. My main concern in 'the elimination of metaphysics' is the similarities and differences between the logical positivists' and Wittgenstein's arguments concerning ethics. Thus the problem comes down to the question 'why are both ethics and metaphysics trying to be eliminated in the logical positivist approach?' In order to understand why ethics (likewise religion and aesthetics) fall into the same category as metaphysics for Ayer and the logical positivists I will start with the question 'what is there a problem concerning metaphysics?'

When I talk of the Logical Positivists I refer to the Vienna Circle and do not extend this reference to G.E. Moore, Russell or Wittgenstein. Although these philosophers' ideas, especially Wittgenstein's, had a great impact on the Vienna Circle members, I will not label them as logical positivists, not only because Wittgenstein himself never associated himself with the Circle or defined himself as a Logical Positivist – he never defined himself as belonging to any school at all – because his philosophical standpoint has as many differences as similarities with the Vienna Circle, which will be discussed throughout this chapter.

4.1. Historical Background of the Vienna Circle

The foundation of the Vienna Circle can be traced back to 1907, when mathematician Hans Hahn, physicist Phillip Frank and Otto Neurath who studied sociology, economy and philosophy came together to discuss the philosophy of

science in regular meetings. These meetings continued till 1912. Between 1914 - 1918 there was the interruption of World War I, and Hahn and Frank left Vienna. In 1921 Hahn was back in Vienna. He and Frank convinced Moritz Schlick to move to Vienna in 1922 to become a professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna. Philosophers, scientists and mathematicians who had common ideas started to meet again under Schlick's direction. In 1926 at the invitation of Hahn and Schlick, Rudolf Carnap came to the University of Vienna. The leading members of the Circle, or as Ayer puts it at that period, the members of the 'club', were Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Herbert Feigl, Friedrich Waismann, Edgar Zilsel, Victor Kraft along with the scientists and mathematicians Philipp Frank, Hans Hahn, Karl Menger, and Kurt Gödel.[92]

In 1921 Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was published and "at Vienna University the mathematician Hans Hahn gave a seminar on the book in 1922. . . . [I]t later attracted the attention"[93]of the Circle and was discussed in their regular meetings. Wittgenstein never attended the Circle's meetings, but met Schlick in 1927 and attended regular Monday meetings in the presence of a limited number of the members of the Circle, those being Schlick, Waismann, Carnap and Feigl. Schlick persuaded him to attend the meeting by assuring him that the discussions were not necessarily to be on philosophy. It was quite a shock for the members of the Circle, instead of discussing *Tractatus* Wittgenstein read them the poems of Rabindranath Tagore "whose poems express a mystical outlook diametrically opposed to that of the members of Schlick's Circle".[94] Wittgenstein's reading Tagore instead of discussing philosophy with them is mentioned by Cyril Barrett who emphasized that the logical positivists took him literally and did not realize that that it was not what he meant,[95] that is why they were confused. Carnap expresses it as:

> [W]hen we were reading Wittgenstein's book in the Circle, I had erroneously believed that his attitude towards metaphysics was

[92] See, A.J. Ayer (ed.). "Editor's introduction: I. History of The Logical Positivist Movement" in *Logical Positivism* (New York: The Free Press, 1959), pp.3-10.

[93] Ray Monk. *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991), p.213.

[94] *Ibid*., p.243.

[95] Barrett, *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief*, p. 253

> similar to ours. I had not paid sufficient attention to the statements in his book about the mystical, because his feelings and thoughts in this area were too divergent from mine. Only personal contact with him helped me to see more clearly his attitude at this point.[96]

But this didn't diminish the impact of Wittgenstein on the Circle as Neurath puts it: "Wittgenstein's writings have been extraordinarily stimulating, both through what has been taken from them and through what has been rejected".[97]

The Vienna Circle manifesto *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung. Der Wiener Kreis (The Scientific Conception of the World. The Vienna Circle*) published in 1929, is one of the most important turning points that transformed them from being a club to an organized movement. The official philosophy of the Circle, i.e. "to create a new, logically rigorous form of empiricism according to which all meaningful - scientific - propositions are reducible to propositions about immediately given experience" [98], that was announced in this manifesto had its background in the discussions of *Tractatus.* The Tractarian view that "[a] proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions" (*TLP*, 5) was elaborated by the Circle and especially by Carnap and his scientific approach. Neurath explains their aim as:

> Continuing the work of Mach, Poincare, Frege, Wittgenstein and others, the "Vienna Circle for the Dissemination of the Scientific World-Outlook (*Weltauffassung*) seeks to create a climate which will be free from metaphysics in order to promote scientific studies in all fields by means of logical analysis.[99]

The aspiration was to carry the movement onto an international platform, the Vienna Circle organized a series of international congresses of which the first was held in Prague in 1929, followed by congresses in Königsberg (1930), Prague (1934), Paris (1935), Copenhagen (1936), Paris (1937), Cambridge, UK (1938), Cambridge, Mass(1939). The Vienna Circle used their publications as another important outlet of the movement. One of the most significant publications was their journal *Erkenntnis* which was published between 1930 – 1940 under the editorship of

---

[96] Cited in Ray Monk. *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991), p.243.

[97] Otto Neurath. "Protocol Sentences" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959). p.208. This article published in Vollume III of Erkenntnis (1932/33).

[98] Micheal Friedman. "Logical Positivism" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge

[99] Otto Neurath, "Sociology and Physicalism" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.282. This article was first published in Vollume II of *Erkenntnis* (1931/2).

Carnap and Reichenbach. All these efforts led them to achieve their goal of carrying the movement to an international platform. Moreover, they had a great influence on twentieth century philosophy. Now, let us see, which ideas of this new form of empiricism had a significant impact on philosophy of this era.

4.2. The Elimination of Metaphysics

Surely, The Circle's is not the first attempt to eliminate of metaphysics from philosophical inquiry. Here is Hume's view:

> When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we take? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quality or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. [100]

Ayer thinks that the above quotation of Hume describes the position of positivists very well. Still very close to this general standpoint of positivism Logical Positivists added 'logic' to their standpoint because they thought they could advance their position by using the discoveries in modern logic.[101] These discoveries are seen as "the development of a *new, scientific method of philosophizing*".[102]Carnap describes this method as:

> Perhaps this method can be briefly characterized as consisting in the *logical analysis of the statements and concepts of empirical science*. This description indicates the most important features that distinguish this method from the methods of traditional philosophy.[103]

Carnap states that with the scientific method of philosophizing, he will demolish the superiority of philosophy over empirical sciences and philosophy can be seen in concert with empirical science. This method points out the role of

---

[100] David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.211. This quotation also appears in Logical Positivism, A.J Ayer, p.10.

[101] A.J.Ayer. *Logical Positivism*. p.10.

[102] Carnap, Rudolf. "The Old and the New Logic" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, A.J (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.133; first published in the first issue of *Erkenntnis* (1930-31).

[103] *Ibid.*, p.133.

philosophy in empirical sciences. Thus the role of philosophy is to clarify the statements of empirical sciences by reducing them to fundamental statements and fundamental concepts. Quite parallel to Wittgenstein's definition of the aim of philosophy: "Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts" (*TLP*, 4.112). What is in Carnap's mind is also logical clarification, because he introduces logic as the method of this new way of philosophising. Thus placing logic as the method of philosophising frees logic from being just a branch of philosophy and gives it the importance that it deserves. "Logic is understood here in the broadest sense. It comprehends pure, formal logic and applied logic or the theory of knowledge".[104]

Carnap, in his article "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language", points out that there have always been opponents of metaphysics and it has been criticized on many different grounds, but with the development of logic, by means of logical analysis, "a radical elimination of metaphysics is attained, which was not yet possible from the earlier anti-metaphysical standpoints".[105] Among the other anti-metaphysical standpoints the originality of logical positivists', which is adapted from Wittgenstein, as described by Ayer is:

> [I]n their making the impossibility of metaphysics depend not upon the nature of what could be known but upon the nature of what could be said. Their charge against the metaphysician was that he breaks the rules which any utterance must satisfy if it is to be literally significant.[106]

Carnap, also points out the difference between the logical positivists' position towards metaphysics and the earlier anti-metaphysicians as they "do not regard metaphysics as "mere speculation" or "fairy tales"". [107] This is a severe attack on metaphysics, the reason he does not regard metaphysics as a 'fairy tale' is that he thinks fairy tales are 'perfectly meaningful' and they contradict with experience but not with logic. Moreover, "metaphysics is not "*superstition*""; in superstition you

[104]Carnap, "The Old and the New Logic," p.133.

[105] Rudolf Carnap. "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, A.J (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.61.This article first published in *Erkenntnis,* Vol.II(1932).

[106] A.J.Ayer. *Logical Positivism*. p.11.

[107] Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 72.

believe in a false proposition and that is quite possible to do, so metaphysics is not comparable with believing "meaningless sequences of words". He adds that:

> Metaphysical statements are not even acceptable as "*working hypotheses*"; for a hypothesis must be capable of entering into relations of deducibility with (true or false) empirical statements, which is just what pseudo-statements cannot do.[108]

Carnap makes a distinction between the loose sense and the strictest sense of a statement being meaningless. In the loose sense a statement could be called meaningless if it is obviously (empirically and/or logically) false or pointless or contradictory. For example, "persons A and B are each a year older than the other" or "in 1910 Vienna had 6 inhabitants". These sentences are "pointless or false; for it is only meaningful sentences that are . . . divisible into (theoretically) fruitful or sterile, true or false". [109] Whereas metaphysical statements cannot fulfil this criterion they are in the strictest sense meaningless. They might seem to be statements at first sight, but they are not. Thus, Carnap calls them 'pseudo-statements'. He states that "logical analysis reveals the alleged statements of metaphysics to be pseudo-statements".[110]

He recognizes two kinds of pseudo-statements, the first kind is one that contains a word that you mistakenly think has a meaning, the second kind contains words which are meaningful, but they are "put together in a counter-syntactical way". [111] His argument is that metaphysics entirely consists of both kinds of pseudo-statements.

Carnap accepts that, with rare exceptions, every word originally had a meaning, but frequently its meaning changed throughout its historical development. Through this journey, sometimes a word looses its original meaning, but it does not acquire a new meaning, "there remains the word as an empty shell".[112] As it used to have a meaning in the past, we are tempted to associate a connection with some

---

[108] Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 72.

[109] *Ibid*., p.61.

[110] *Ibid*., p.61.

[111] *Ibid*., p.61.

[112] *Ibid*., p.66.

mental images and have the idea that it is connected to a mental image or feelings in the new context of the word. But this seeming association does not make the word meaningful rather "it remains meaningless as long as no method of verification can be described".[113]

Carnap claims that most of the 'specifically metaphysical terms' such as 'God', 'the Idea', 'the Absolute', 'thing in itself', 'essence' and 'the being of being' are "all devoid of meaning" because they do not have sense and they do not assert anything.[114]To clarify his view he gives the example of the term 'principle' and the word 'God'. I will go through the details of the example on the word 'God' for two reasons. The first and most obvious one is to understand the process, i.e. of how a word looses its original meaning, but cannot acquire a new one, and the second is that it will give us an insight into where religion is positioned in the Logical Positivist view.

Carnap begins his analysis by differentiating the linguistic use of the word 'God' into three contexts, the mythological, the metaphysical and the theological. In the mythological sense the word 'God' has a meaning. In the metaphysical sense it looses its mythological meaning and it is given a new meaning. In mythology the word 'God' is used in two contexts. One usage is referring 'God' "to denote physical beings which are enthroned on Mount Olympus" and the other usage is referring "to spiritual beings which, indeed, do not have manlike bodies, yet manifest themselves nevertheless somehow in the things or processes of the visible world". [115] In both contexts the word 'God' is connected to the visible world, and this makes the statements concerned with it empirically verifiable. Thus, it is important to be able to demonstrate a visible process. Whereas in its metaphysical use, or rather as Carnap puts it, in the "metaphorical use of the word" it does not have such a character. In its metaphysical use the word "refers to something beyond experience".[116] While emphasizing the connection of old usage, Carnap thinks that metaphysical usage does not provide a new meaning to the word 'God'. Even if it

[113] *Ibid*., p.66.

[114] *Ibid*., p.67.

[115] *Ibid*., p.66.

[116] *Ibid*., p. 66.

seems like that it has a meaning in its new use, it is just a pseudo-definition, which contains 'logically illegitimate combinations of words' or words such as 'the absolute', 'the autonomous', which Carnap regarded as metaphysical. The charges against metaphysics are purely linguistic; this clarifies the difference between Logical Positivists and the other or earlier anti-metaphysicians.

When we continue to read Carnap's example in the theological use of the word 'God', we will also find the answer to our questions "How Logical Positivists regard and/or position religion?" and "Does the use of words like 'God' fall in the same category as metaphysics and ethics?" Carnap states that: "The *theological* usage of the word "God" falls between its mythological and metaphysical usage". [117] Thus, Carnap's criticism changes according to where the theologian is placed within the spectrum of mythological and metaphysical usage. Even the ones that prefer mythological usage have problems. Although, having an empirical concept of God will save your statements from falling into the category of 'pseudo-statements', it takes you to a point that you must accept that "the statements of theology are empirical and hence are subject to the judgement of empirical science".[118] I think, this point of view will not be popular among theologians. On the other hand, the situation is clear for the ones that use the metaphysical concept of God, their statements are treated the same way as all metaphysical statements are treated; they are pseudo-statements. No excursion to the outside of experience is allowed. "Logical analysis, then, pronounces the verdict of meaninglessness on any alleged knowledge that pretends to reach above or behind experience".[119] This not only applies to speculative metaphysicians, but also to those metaphysicians who start with experience but seek to attain knowledge that transcends experience. Also Carnap extended this verdict to the philosophy of norms and values, including ethics and aesthetics that appear 'as a normative discipline'. "For the objective validity of a value or norm is (even on the view of philosophers of value) not empirically verifiable nor deducible from empirical statements; hence it cannot be asserted (in a

[117] *Ibid*., p. 66.

[118] *Ibid*., p. 67.

[119] *Ibid*., p. 76.

meaningful statement) at all".[120] Here, Carnap makes a very important distinction, which sets the limits of studying ethical statements as a logical positivist, which is the distinction between 'factual judgements' and 'value judgements'. If in normative ethics you find 'empirical criteria' in the use of ethical concepts, then those concepts will be employed as factual judgements, not value judgements. This view is represented by Schlick and will be discussed in depth in the section on 'naturalistic ethics'. On the other hand, if you hold the view that there is no 'empirical criteria' in the use of ethical concepts, then you will conclude that they are pseudo-statements. "It is altogether impossible to make a statement that expresses a value judgment".[121] This view is represented by Ayer and will also be discussed in depth in the section on 'emotive theory of ethics'. So I will not go into further detail here, but it is important to note that logical positivists' standpoint only allows these two interpretations, i.e. naturalist and emotive theories concerning ethical statements.

At this point, let us look at Ayer's conception of the principle of verification. Ayer started by questioning the metaphysical propositions, i.e. what premises these propositions were deduced from. For Ayer, a sentence needs to be factually significant. It can be factually significant if we know 'how to verify' it. Here, we need to depend on experience and know what observations guide us "to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false". [122] Ayer reformulated the principle of verification[123] and makes another distinction between the 'weak' and 'strong' sense of verifiability. A proposition is verifiable in the strong sense "if, and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience" and verifiable in the weak sense "if it is possible for experience to render it probable" (*LTL*, p.18). The idea of conclusive verifiability has its own difficulties which were widely discussed by the logical positivists. The main difficulty can be clearly seen if you apply the principle of conclusive verifiability to the general propositions of law. As long as these propositions aim to include all cases, it is not possible to verify them

[120] *Ibid*., p. 77.
[121] *Ibid*., p. 77.

[122] A.J Ayer. *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p.16.

[123] Ayer states that "one way of describing the use of principle of verification would be to say that it provided a means of determining when an indicative sentence expressed a proposition, or, in other words, of distinguishing the statements that belonged the class of propositions from those did not"(*LTL*, pp. 174-175).

conclusively by a finite number of observations. Here, it seems that Kant's point would be valid. Kant states that "[t]he strict universality of the rule is never a characteristic of empirical rules; they can acquire through induction only comparative universality, that is, extensive applicability" (*CPR*, p.125). Of course, this point is recognized by Ayer, but the logical positivist standpoint limits the alternatives to extend to experience.

Most members of the Vienna Circle, as the followers of Wittgenstein, although disagreeing on the details of the method of philosophy that Wittgenstein proposed in *Tractatus* (*TLP*, 6.53)[124], adapted the method of verification as a common method. With all the difficulties of conclusive verifiability they were "satisfied with a weaker criterion by which it was required only that a statement be capable of being in some degree confirmed or disconfirmed by observation".[125] Although, despite Ayer's attempts, this weaker sense couldn't be formalized adequately, it is regarded as a founding principle.

Considering that the Vienna Circle members were mainly interested in natural sciences, there is no doubt why *Tractatus* 6.53 appeals to them. They did not consider philosophy as part of science or any other discipline, as was clearly stated by Wittgenstein, rather they thought that it would "contribute in its own way to the advance of science. They therefore condemned metaphysics" [126] because they think metaphysics fails to meet this requirement. As ethics and aesthetics fail to meet the requirements of method of verification it is treated almost the same way metaphysics is treated.

---

[124] In *TLP* 6.53 Wittgenstein says the following: "The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science – something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person – he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy – *this* method would be the only strictly correct one" (*TLP*, 6.53).

[125] A.J. Ayer (ed.). "Editor's introduction" in *Logical Positivism* (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.14.

[126] Ibid., p.17. Ayer also states that "[a]mong the superstition from which we are freed by the abandonment of metaphysics is the view that it is the business of the philosopher to construct a deductive system (*LTL*, p.30).

4.3 Tautologies and Nonsense

To understand Wittgenstein's conception of what the tautology is and its significance is critical because logical positivists use it as a vital point to differentiate meaningful statements from metaphysical utterances. Carnap almost paraphrases Wittgenstein's remarks[127] on tautology in defining the limits of meaningful statements. He makes an analytic-synthetic distinction. He states that tautologies, according to Wittgenstein's definition, are quite similar to Kant's 'analytical judgements'. Carnap accepts both Kant's and Wittgenstein's account that such statements say nothing. He states that propositions of logic are of this kind, in line with Wittgenstein, but different from Kant, he also includes propositions of mathematics in this category.[128] Echoing Wittgenstein he states that propositions of logic and mathematics are not meaningless, because "[t]hey are not themselves factual statements, but serve for the transformation of such statements" [129] In addition to analytic statements, there are empirical statements. For logical positivists and Wittgenstein, any statement that is neither analytic nor empirical is 'automatically' meaningless. Thus, Carnap concludes that, as metaphysical statements do not fall into either category they are inevitably pseudo-statements.[130]So, how does this apply to ethical statements?

To say that ethical statements are tautologies would make them meaningful statements in terms of Ayer's and Carnap's definitions but conflicts with that of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein openly asserts that they are nonsense. Surely, Ayer

---

[127] Wittgenstein states that tautologies and contradictions are 'extreme cases' of truth-conditions. "We say that the truth-conditions are *tautological*" (*TLP*, 4.46). Tautologies show that a proposition says nothing, since a tautology is true in every condition and a contradiction is not true in any condition, then "Tautologies and contradictions lack sense"(*TLP*, 4.461). Thus they say nothing (*TLP*, 5.142). Although they say nothing and lack sense they are not nonsensical because they serve a purpose. "They are part of the symbolism, much as '0' is part of the symbolism of arithmetic" (*TLP*, 4.4611).

[128] This is an important point where they are seperated from Kant. Kant regards propositions of mathematics as synthetic.

[129] Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 76.

[130] Ibid., p.76. Carnap is not alone; Ayer arrives at a similar conclusion that "a priori propositions, which have always been attractive to philosophers on account of their certainty, owe this certainty to the fact that they are tautologies. We may accordingly define a metaphysical sentence as a sentence which purports to express a genuine proposition, but does in fact, express neither a tautology nor an empirical hypothesis. And as tautologies and empirical hypotheses form the entire class of significant propositions, we are justified in concluding that all metaphysical assertions are nonsensical" (*LTL*, p.24).

and Carnap do not accept the idea that ethical statements are tautologies. Here, I will concentrate on their interpretation of Wittgenstein in terms of meaningful statements, more accurately, their view that tautologies are meaningful statements.

Ayer and Carnap might have missed Wittgenstein's point when he says that "[a] proposition is the expression of its truth-conditions" (*TLP*, 4.431) and that "[t]he truth-conditions of a proposition determine the range that it leaves open to the facts" (*TLP*, 4.463). They also seem to have missed Wittgenstein's point that "[a] tautology has no truth-conditions" (*TLP* 4.461). But it is almost impossible to ignore *TLP* 6.2 and *TLP* 6.22.

> T# 6.2 Mathematics is a logical method.
> The propositions of mathematics are equations, and therefore pseudo-propositions.
>
> T# 6.22 The logic of the world, which is shown in tautologies by the propositions of logic, is shown in equations by mathematics.

To say that equations are pseudo-propositions and tautologies have a similar function as equations in logic is, in a way, to say that tautologies are pseudo-propositions. From this it is difficult to conclude that they are the only meaningful analytic statements. It is obvious that this is not a Wittgensteinian approach.

Cyril Barrett points out that in *Tractatus* there are three different words used for describing pseudo-propositions. Which are; "*bedeutunglos* ('meaningless'), *sinnlos* ('lacking in sense') and *unsinnig* ('nonsensical')".[131] The ones in the category of 'meaningless' are not even defined as pseudo-propositions. We could define three kinds of pseudo-propositions that fall into the category of *sinnlos*[132]:

1. Propositions of logic (tautologies)
2. Mathematical propositions (equations)
3. A priori principles of science (law of causality)

There is a difference between pseudo-proposition that 'lack sense' and the ones that are 'nonsensical'. In *Tractatus* 4.461 Wittgenstein states that

[131] Barrett, Cyril. *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.12

[132] Cf. Barrett, pp. 12-15 also *Tractatus* 3.328, 4.461,4.4611, 4.462, 5.4733,6.1, 6.11, 6.113, 6.211, 6.32.

"Tautologies and contradictions lack sense" and adds that, however, they are not nonsensical (*TLP*, 4.4611). The reason why they are not 'nonsensical' is they are still useful. Their use is defined as: "They are part of the symbolism, much as '0' is part of the symbolism of arithmetic" (*TLP*, 4.4611). As the use of '0' in arithmetic is to enable calculations, (it makes possible the calculations which cannot be possible using Roman numerals), tautologies serve a similar purpose.

The third kind of pseudo-propositions, which are 'nonsensical' are introduced by Wittgenstein as:

> Most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only point out that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language.
>
> (They belong to the same class as the question whether the good is more or less identical than the beautiful.)
>
> And it is not surprising that the deepest problems are in fact *not* problems at all (*TLP*, 4.003).

But this does not give us an example of nonsensical pseudo-propositions. Not surprisingly, examples of nonsensical pseudo-propositions are ethical statements. Wittgenstein states that "it is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics" (*TLP*, 6.42).

Up to now we have dealt with how the Carnap and Ayer defined meaningful propositions, their arguments on metaphysics the similarities and differences between their views and those of Wittgenstein. Finally, we have stressed that they misunderstood or disagreed with Wittgenstein about pseudo-propositions. In the next sections I will move to the Circle's consideration of ethics and investigate how close they are to the position of ethics of early Wittgenstein. By doing, so I will depend on the above categorisation of pseudo-propositions.

As was mentioned, the general standpoint of logical positivism allows two versions of meta-ethical theories. Presupposing that there is a fact-value distinction, one standpoint, namely naturalistic ethics, says that if ethical judgements are not matters of fact, they express nothing, and if they are a matter of fact then ethics is the subject matter of science. The other, namely emotive theory of ethics, says that ethical value judgements do not concern matters of fact, they just express

emotions. In the next two sections I will be investigating these two views. We will see what it means by 'ethics is inexpressible' and what kind of value judgements can be expressible for logical positivists.

4.4 Naturalistic Ethics and Moritz Schlick

In the first part of this chapter, I discussed the logical positivist's general standpoint, especially their refutation of metaphysics and their method of verification or justification of meaningful propositions. By doing so, I investigated how they defined meaningful propositions and pseudo-propositions and what can be said and what cannot be said according to their view. I also concentrated on how they constructed their views on ethics and how they could diverge whilst accepting the same thesis. As I mentioned while I was discussing the fact-value dichotomy, the logical positivists' standpoint – that ethical value judgements are not matters of fact – can allow two versions of this point of view. Ethical value judgements can either express nothing, and that they are nonsense, or they can only express emotions. I also said that the difference between these standpoints could be seen clearly in Moritz Schlick's (representing the former) and Ayer's and Stevenson's (representing the latter) points of view. In this part, under the heading of ethical naturalism, I will be dealing with the idea that ethical value judgements express nothing, mostly depending on Schlick's arguments.[133] The next section will examine the idea that value judgements express emotions.

The view that ethical words, such as good, correspond to a natural object is generally categorised as ethical naturalism. In a wider perspective, it is a view that abandons any link to supersensible/supernatural account of ethics. Alternatively, if we recall some of the definitions of Moore's naturalistic fallacy (like 'reduction of the ethical to the non ethical' and 'identifying G with some *natural* predicate'[134]) and

[133] Although, my investigation of naturalistic ethics is restricted to Schlick, here we must note that Schlick's views are not the only example of naturalistic ethics. Naturalistic ethics was also represented by Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957), Clarence Irving Lewis (1883-1964) and Edward Westermark (1862-1939).

[134] If we recall our discussion on naturalistic fallacy, a full explanation was 'Identifying G with some *natural or metaphysical* predicate.' As naturalists have no problems in terms of metaphysical predicates, all being abandoned, I am not consider the issue of metaphysical predicates. Also, in Moore's definition emotivist theories cannot be defined as naturalistic, this will be discussed in the next section.

say that this is mostly committed by the naturalists, we arrive at a narrower sense of ethical naturalism. In this sense of ethical naturalism, ethical knowledge, if any, needs to be acquired by experience. Thus, statements of ethical value judgements could be examined in the same way as empirical propositions. As we examined previously, the logical positivists' refutation of metaphysics is based on the fundamental idea that any meaningful statement should be capable of being empirically verified. This includes value judgements, whether they are ethical or not. How do we differentiate between ethical value judgements and non-ethical value judgements then? Is it necessary to differentiate them at all?

If we consider the question 'do we learn ethical value judgements in the same way we learn non-ethical judgements of value?' the answer would be 'yes' if we accept that the word 'good,' for example, has no different meanings in statements like 'this is a good chair' and 's/he is a good person.' On the other hand, if we hold that the word good in these sentences has different meanings, the answer will be 'no'[135].

As we investigated what 'natural' means for Moore and noted that his definition is somewhat vague, here, it will be useful to define briefly what natural means in terms of naturalistic ethics. Natural means "that such facts are to be identified with, or seen as constituted by, facts open to investigation by natural science".[136] Schlick's position, no doubt, represents such a view. He openly states that "[i]f there are ethical questions which have meaning, and are therefore capable of being answered, then ethics is a science".[137] So, before deciding whether ethics is a science or not, we need to answer the question, 'are there ethical questions that

[135] Cf. Carl Wellman, in *The Language of Ethics* he says the following: "Traditionally empiricism has maintained that all words drive their meaning from experience. This view presupposes that a word is meaningful only when it stands for some concept and that concepts are copies of previous experiences. Presumably ethical words acquire their meaning in the same way as any others." This seems to explain the rationale that the answer will be 'no'. (Carl Wellman. *The Language of Ethics* (Cambridge: Harward University Press, 1961, p.31).

[136] Roger Crisp. "Fact /Value Distinction" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge.

[137] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J. Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959) p.247. This is Chapter I of Schlick's Problems of Ethics, copyright 1939 by Prentice-Hall Inc., New York. It was first printed in 1930.

have meaning?' This is the key question that defines your standpoint. Let's see how Schlick answers this question.

First of all, looking at the fundamental nature of ethics Schlick defines it as 'theory or knowledge'. He puts it clearly that ethics 'seeks knowledge' and it 'seeks to understand' its subject matter. What is the subject matter of ethics then? The subject matter of ethics – if we think that it is a science – must be known as clearly as the subject matter of 'biology' or 'optics.' The object of ethics is:

> The ethical questions concern "morality," or what is morally "valuable," what serves as a "standard" or "norm" of human conduct, what is "demanded" of us; or, finally, to name it by the oldest, simplest word, ethical questions concern the "good."[138]

Schlick thinks that, as we are talking about ethics and the questions that are related to it in ordinary life without difficulty, then as we know the word 'light' even before there was such a science of optics, we must know the meaning of the names of the objects in ethics. So restricting the subject matter of ethics to the definition of 'good' is not reasonable, it might have started with defining 'good,' but it should not end when we define it. Neither is the "correct determination of the concept "good"" the business of ethics. Otherwise, it could mean that we created a concept of 'good' which did not exist before. Although Schlick allows the idea of inventing the concept 'quite arbitrarily', he does not accept defining the concept 'completely arbitrarily'; for the person who is defining the word 'good' will be "bound by some norm, some guiding principle, the concept of the good would already be determined by these norms".[139] In this line of argument, R.M. Hare's main criticism of naturalistic ethics is that defining the word 'good' arbitrarily becomes meaningful. Hare points out that this is different from a logician's arbitrary definition of 'his own technical words' to provide clarity. Considering the nature of the study, this way of defining concepts is not acceptable for the word 'good'. The reason is:

> '[G]ood' in this context is not a technical term used for talking about what the logician is talking about; it itself is what he *is* talking about; it is the object of his study, not the instrument. He is studying the function of the word 'good' in language; and so long

[138] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p.248.

[139] Ibid., p.250.

> as he wishes to study this, he must continue to allow the word the function which it has in language, that of commending. If by an arbitrary definition he gives the word a different function from that which it now has, then he is not studying the same thing any longer; he is studying a figment of his own devising.[140]

Schlick escapes this criticism by saying that the concept of good is already determined by norms, but whether these norms "allow the word the function which it has in language" depends on what he understands by these norms. At least at this point he does not accept the 'completely' arbitrary definition.

Since we regard 'norms' as the guiding principles, the idea that the word 'good' is unanalyzable or indefinable, as G.E. Moore suggests, loses its significance. Moore says that yellow is indefinable, but we can still "fix its meaning" and "in ethics we must be able to give exact conditions under which the word "good" is applied, even though its fundamental concept be indefinable".[141]

This process of 'fixing its meaning' by defining yellow as a colour of an object, say lemon or pointing at something yellow takes us into the realm of facts. As we discussed before, it is difficult, if not impossible, to point at 'good.' At this point, says Schlick, most philosophers develop a false hypothesis that taking the fundamental concept of good given, we possess a special 'moral sense' that point out the 'presence of good.' So we are able to say that good has an objective character. But this hypothesis falls short in explaining the variations in moral judgement. So how would 'ethics' take its place, if it could, in the realm of facts?

Schlick's mention of norms does not presuppose a normative ethics. His method is somewhat similar to Wittgenstein's, he introduces 'normative ethics' as one of the approaches that draws a connection between facts and values, but it is not what takes ethics to be. Having known that Wittgenstein has a great influence on him, it is not surprising that he follows Wittgenstein's steps.[142]

He defines norms as follows:

---

[140] R.M. Hare. *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.92.

[141] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p.251.

[142] It is reported by Waismann that in one of the meetings of Vienna Circle with Wittgenstein in attendance, on 17 December 1930, they discussed three topics: "Schlick's ethics, value, and religion – and on each Wittgenstein's thinking has pushed past its *Tractatus* conception." James C. Edwards. *Ethics Without Philosophy Wittgenstein and the Moral Life*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1982), p.96.

> The common characteristics which a group of "good" acts or dispositions exhibits can be combined in a *rule* of the form: A mode of action must have such and such properties in order to be called "good" (or "evil"). Such a rule can also be called a "norm". Let it be understood at once, however, that such a "norm" is nothing but a mere expression of fact; it gives us only the conditions under which an act or disposition or character is actually called "good," that is, is given a moral value. The setting up of norms is nothing but the determination of the concept of the good, which ethics undertakes to understand.[143]

Introducing 'norms' or 'standards' to define (to fix) the meaning of the word 'good' reminds us of Wittgenstein's relative sense of value. His emphasis on norms does not suggest that ethics is a 'normative science,' rather it is the starting point of his quest to define whether it is a 'normative science' or a 'factual science'. As the characteristics of good "must be capable of exhibition by simply pointing certain facts"[144] you could distinguishing the 'formal' and 'material' characteristics of 'good'. Schlick says that in the external or formal characteristic of good, "the good always appears as something that is demanded, or commanded";[145] as seen in Kant's moral philosophy, in which the formal characteristic is displayed in 'the categorical imperative'[146]. This formal characteristic of good is not only seen in Kantian ethics, but also in others, as theological ethics taken to rest on God's command. Schlick appreciates the formal characteristics of good as a preliminary step, the mistake, he thinks, is considering it as the only characteristic of good. On the other hand, there are material characteristics of good which, for him, need to be considered.

---

[143] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p.255.

[144] Ibid., p.252.

[145] Ibid., p.252.

[146] Schlick is right to say that Kant's moral philosophy can be categorized as formal. Kant defines formal and material in the *Groundwork* as: "Practical principles are *formal* if they abstract from all subjective ends, whereas they are *material* if they have put these, and consequently certain incentives, at their basis" (AK 4:428). And the formula of objective principle comes from categorical imperative as he says: "The representation of an objective principle, insofar as it is necessitating for a will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called an **imperative**" (AK 4:413). A priori and a posteriori distinction are much related to the distinction of formal and material. Kant says that: "For, the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posterior principle, which is material, as at a crossroads; and since it must still be determined by something, it must be determined by the formal principle of volition as such when an action is done from duty, where every material principle has been withdrawn from it." (4:400, p.13) In highlighting the material characteristics of good, Schlick does not accept Kant's views on materiality.

The way Schlick formulates his ideas of what could be the material characteristics of good is very similar to Wittgenstein where in "A Lecture on Ethics" he compares substitutes for good to the Galton's composite photographs method. Schlick's suggested procedure is:

> In grouping together the individual cases in which something is designated as morally good, we must search for the common elements, the characters in which these examples agree or show similarities. These similar elements are the characters of the concept "good"; they constitute its content, and within them must lie the reason why one and the same word, "good," is used for the several cases.[147]

The critical question at this point is, 'are there any such common features?' At first sight it seems that there are more incompatibilities than similarities in various actual cases. Here the question is the universal validity of these common features. Schlick gives the example of polygamy to point out that a discrepancy in ethical judgements is only 'apparent and not final.' He states that what is morally judged is not polygamy or monogamy rather what is morally valued is the 'peace of family' or 'order of sexual relationships'. One culture believes that these can be attained by polygamy whereas the other believes that they can be attained by monogamy. Both are trying to attain the same end by different means. What is different is the "virtue of their insight, capacity of judgement or experience".[148]

Carl Wellman criticises this view on the grounds that obligation can be analysed in terms of what is accepted and what is forbidden by a society, and this will give it an empirical characteristic, but "to accept this view is to make all recommendations for social reform self-contradictory".[149] Wellman's criticism is based on the idea that if we accept that the empirical characteristic of ethics is the acceptance of a society, then any action or any ethical value judgement that is not accepted by a society will not have such an empirical character. Generally, social reforms go beyond the norms of a society. Thus, such conception of obligation cannot explain social reforms. For Schlick, it is not necessarily so, he accepts that

[147] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p.253.

[148] Ibid., p.254.

[149] Wellman, pp.36-37.

there will be individuals whose concept of good is different from 'people of their time and community' and those 'exceptions' would advocate a new meaning of the word 'good' so "it is quite important to make out the content and causes of their opinions as in any other more regular cases".[150] This criticism does not seem to apply to Schlick because, with his procedure he is leading us to 'normative ethics' which he thinks cannot be the 'sole task of ethics'.

Applying this procedure of common features we end up having 'norms' as mentioned above. When we apply the procedure to norms it leads us to 'moral principles'. If we think that the aim of ethics is to determine the concept of good and find out that this can be accomplished by providing moral principles through norms, then we could conclude that ethics is a 'normative science'. But, for Schlick, positioning ethics as a normative science makes ethics seen something completely different from 'factual sciences' and this position is fundamentally false.

The first reason he thinks that it is fundamentally false is this: Even if we accept ethics as a normative science, it does not matter whether it is normative or factual, a science can only 'explain' and cannot "establish a norm". That is to say, "the origin of norms always lies outside and before science and knowledge".[151] He thinks that, if we explain 'what is good?' using norms we can only tell what it 'actually' means rather than what it should mean. For him, the search for an 'absolute justification' of 'ultimate value' is senseless because, "there is nothing higher to which this could be referred".[152] This is an obvious influence of Wittgenstein, where in *Tractatus* he says: "All propositions are of equal value" (*TLP*, 6.4). So, the justification process ends at the highest rule, on which the justification of others depends. What are we trying to attain? Absolute certainty? Schlick states that "[a]ll important attempts at establishing a theory of knowledge grow out of the problem concerning the certainty of human knowledge. And this problem in turn originates in the wish for absolute certainty".[153]

---

[150] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" pp.254-255.

[151] Ibid., p. 257.

[152] Ibid., p. 257.

[153] Moritz Schlick. "The Foundation of Knowledge" in *Logical Positivism* ed. A.J. Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p.209.

Similarly for ethics, the problem turns out to be the certainty of ethical knowledge. Schlick says that "the question regarding the validity of valuation"[154] is not answered through a theory of norms. Schlick thinks that even if ethics is a normative science, you cannot escape its connection to the factual sciences, because "[t]he ultimate valuations are facts existing in human consciousness" and for him this is "the most important of the propositions which determine its task".[155]

Although the attempt of the theory of norms does not go beyond trying to find the 'meaning of the concept of good', Schlick appreciates it as a preliminary step into the main concern of ethics. But, he immediately adds that "only where the theory of norms ends does ethical explanation begin".[156]

A system of norms provides "a relative justification of the lower moral rules by the higher".[157]At this point; we need to go back to the distinction between formal and material characteristics of 'good'. As Kantian ethics is given as an example to 'formal' and the theory of norms as an example to 'material' characteristics let us refer to Kant's definition of material and formal. When it comes to the justification of moral rules and the universality of them, Schlick's conception of the theory of norms almost brings us to Kant's hypothetical imperative. Only through the hypothetical imperatives can we talk about the relative sense of values. Kant puts it as follows:

> The ends that a rational being proposes at his discretion as *effects* of his actions (material ends) are all only relative; for only their mere relation to a specially constituted faculty of desire on the part of the subject gives them their worth, which can therefore furnish no universal principles, no principles valid and necessary for all rational beings and also for every volition, that is, no practical laws. Hence all these relative ends are only the ground of hypothetical imperatives (AK 4:428).

For Kant, hypothetical imperatives do not provide strict universal validity. Here we come across with the idea of causality, which is important both for Kant and Schlick, although they reach totally different conclusions. Schlick says that

[154] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p. 257.

[155] Ibid., p. 258.

[156] Ibid., p. 260.

[157] Ibid., p. 261.

scientific knowledge "refers to the cause, concerns not the justification but the explanation of moral judgements".[158] Kant says that moral law is a law of a special causality "just as the metaphysical law of events in the sensible world was a law of causality of sensible nature" (AK 5:47). But this is quite different from what Schlick has in mind when he says that 'ethics seeks causal explanation'. The difference is that Kant asserts that moral law is "a law of causality through freedom and hence a law of possibility of a supersensible nature" (AK 5:47), Schlick in no way could accept this. I believe, Schlick could sacrifice the idea of strict universality and he could live with the universality that experience provides. Hence his attention turns from justification to explanation.

The explanation of moral judgements takes us into the realm of observable causes and effects. Schlick openly states that "the explanation of moral judgement cannot be separated from the explanation of conduct".[159] So the question becomes to 'why is it *a* standard of conduct?' rather than 'what is *the* standard of conduct?' We need to look at the behaviour of people to understand and explain because a person's "valuations must somehow appear among the motives of his acts; they cannot, in any case, be discovered anywhere else".[160] Considering that language is also a kind of action Schlick states that: "What a man values, approves, and desires is finally inferred from his actions".[161]

Schlick suggests that instead of just focusing on moral conduct, it is better to study 'motives of conduct in general.' So first we must study the 'natural law governed behaviour' and then study moral behaviour, and find what it is that is special in moral action. And this brings us to the conclusion that "moral behaviour is purely a psychological affair".[162] This does not mean that 'there is no ethics' but that ethics belongs to the realm of psychology because its method is psychological.

As we are concerned with conduct and said that ethics' method is psychological, let us refer to Charsles L. Stevenson's distinction between

[158] Ibid., p. 261.

[159] Ibid., p. 261.

[160] Ibid., p. 262.

[161] Ibid., p. 262.

[162] Moritz Schlick. "What is the Aim of Ethics?" p. 263.

'disagreement in belief' and 'disagreement in attitude' which gives us another insight. This provides us an alternative approach from a logical positivistic perspective. Stevenson's approach to ethics will be the subject of the next section so I will not go into great detail here. The reason I refer to Stevenson at this point is to show that coming up with the conclusion that ethics is psychology is not the only way for a logical positivist and does not help Schlick avoid the problems that he raised in terms of normative ethics. If we apply the term 'good' to conduct, we are concerned with the approval or the disapproval of that conduct. Stevenson says that approval or disapproval is a disagreement of attitude rather than a disagreement of belief. He states that naturalistic theories "identify an ethical judgement with some sort of scientific statement, and so make normative ethics a branch of science".[163] This is exactly what Schlick claims. This is what causes the confusion on what the disagreement is really about. If we say that ethics is a part of psychology or a branch of another science, then we should say that it must represent a disagreement of belief as the scientific argument does. Stevenson says that naturalistic theories imply "that disagreement about what is good is disagreement in belief about attitudes";[164] disagreement in belief about attitudes is still a disagreement in belief and it is still different from disagreement in attitude. He argues that naturalistic theories applying a scientific method of argument miss that "the conspicuous role of disagreement in attitude is what we usually take, whether we realise it or not, as the distinguishing feature of ethical arguments".[165] Stevenson accepts that both disagreement in belief and disagreement in attitude are of special concern to arguments about values, although attitude can change by a change of belief, disagreement in attitude predominates in arguments about values. The two reasons he gives are:

> 1) it determines what sort of disagreement in belief is relevantly disputed in a given ethical argument, and
> 2) it is determined by its continued presence or its resolution whether or not the argument has been settled.[166]

---

[163] Charles L. Stevenson. *Facts and Values* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,1963), p.3.

[164] *Ibid*., p.3.

[165] *Ibid*., p.4

[166] *Ibid*., p.6

With this line of argument he concludes that "normative ethics is not a branch of any science" and especially "ethics is not psychology".[167] So this is the point where Schlick and Stevenson diverge. Stevenson continues as follows:

> Insofar as normative ethics draws from the sciences, in order to change attitudes *via* changing people's beliefs, it *draws* from *all* the sciences; but a moralist's peculiar aim – that of redirecting attitudes – is a type of activity, rather than knowledge, and falls within no science.[168]

As we already noted, separating 'value judgements' into two categories, as 'relative' and 'absolute' is enforced by the fact-value distinction. The reason is that that we could explain certain uses of 'good' with the help of facts whereas other uses of the word good could hardly be explained by facts. That is why Schlick and Wittgenstein had the urge to introduce the relative and absolute sense of value judgements. But, at this point, the main difference between Wittgenstein and Schlick is that Wittgenstein was aware that relative value judgments are not problematic, the real issue was in the absolute sense. Schlick never attempted to approach absolute value judgements and tried to explain only relative value judgements. So we can ask, is it really only relative value judgements that we are concerned with ethics? I suppose, this is not what Wittgenstein understands of ethics. Thus, saying that ethics is psychology, is only answering the questions related to relative value judgements.

In the next section, continuing with Stevenson, I will investigate what the emotive theory of ethics says and whether it could provide us with a possibility of expressing ethical value judgements in an absolute sense.

4.5 The Emotive Theory of Ethics and A.J. Ayer & C.L. Stevenson

Previously I stated that Logical Positivists, distinguishing strictly between fact and value and presupposing that ethical judgements are not factual, provided us with two points of view on ethics. In the naturalistic ethics section I introduced the first of these views: ethical value judgements express nothing, the only way to let them have a meaningful expression is letting ethics be a branch of a science or, as Schlick states

---

[167] *Ibid*., p.8

[168] Ibid., p.8

'a branch of psychology.' As we discussed, this approach does not seem to be sufficient to explain the absolute sense of ethical judgements. One could say that they do not have such a claim anyway. There, I also introduced Stevenson's view on naturalistic ethics while discussing the nature of disagreement in ethical judgements. As mentioned, Stevenson pointed out the main failure of naturalistic ethics is missing what the disagreement in ethical judgements is really about. Naturalistic ethics identifies ethical judgements with scientific statements and consider disagreement in ethical judgements as disagreement in belief about attitudes. For Stevenson, disagreement in belief about attitudes is simply disagreement in belief and it is different from disagreement in attitudes. This is one of the main differences between the emotive theory and the naturalistic ethics. This emphasis on attitude comes from the assumption that ethical sentences do not have descriptive meaning.[169]

All these discussions lead us to the emotive theory of ethics. Thus, in this section, I will concentrate on the emotive theory of ethics, which is an alternative Logical Positivist approach. In general, the emotive theory of ethics states that ethical value judgements can only express emotions. I will refer to Ayer and Stevenson as the representatives of the emotive theory of ethics. Here, we must keep in mind the assumption of a strict fact-value distinction. This assumption holds for the emotivists as well for the naturalists. It would be useful to start by investigating the nature of ethical statements from the emotivist view point.

Ayer distinguishes four kinds of proposition concerning ethics, these are:

1) Propositions which express definitions of ethical terms,
2) Propositions describing the phenomena of moral experience and their causes,
3) Propositions which are exhortations to moral virtue
4) Actual ethical judgements[170]

His division of labour on these propositions is as follows: the second kind of propositions are the concern of psychology or sociology, the third kind are

[169] Carl Wellman, points out that the 'epistemological developments' show us the "possibility that some sentences have non-descriptive meanings" and this possibility paves the way to the emergence of emotivism. He summarises the 'central thesis' of the emotive theory as: (1) "distinctive feature of ethical sentences is their normativeness." (2) "ethical sentences cannot be understood in terms of descriptive meaning" (3) "ethical sentences possess no real objective validity. Since ethical sentences are not basically descriptive, they cannot be said to be either true or false." (4) "ethical disagreements are disagreements in attitude rather than belief" (Wellman, pp.90-91).

[170] *LTL*, p. 105

not a propositions at all so "they do not belong to any branch of philosophy or science" (*LTL*, p.105), and the fourth kind as they are neither comments nor definitions, "they do not belong to ethical philosophy" (*LTL*, p.105). So, only the first kind of propositions is left to be the content of ethical philosophy. According to Ayer, philosophy should not make any declarations on ethics rather, "it should, by giving an analysis of ethical terms, show what is the category to which all such pronouncements belong" (*LTL*, p.105).

Ayer clearly puts that his inquiry does not concern whether we could define 'good' with other words or not, but "whether statements of ethical value can be translated into statements of empirical fact" (*LTL*, p.106). As we saw in the previous section, naturalists hold that they can be, but when we translate them into statements of facts, they become statements of scientific facts. So that naturalists, at least Schlick, think that as they can be translated into scientific facts, and ethics should be a branch of science. Although naturalists came to this conclusion, beginning with normative ethics, the same starting point led Ayer (and we can say this applies to Stevenson too) to a different conclusion. Ayer makes an important distinction between 'normative ethical symbols' and 'descriptive ethical symbols' which makes his approach different from naturalists. For Ayer, descriptive ethical symbols are definable in factual terms, but normative ethical symbols are not so (*LTL*, p.108). By positioning oneself as an advocate the view that of normative ethical symbols not being definable in factual terms, one can be called an absolutist[171]. Ayer is aware that such a situation will be in conflict with one of the main thesis of Logical Positivism, which is "a synthetic proposition is significant only if it is empirically verifiable" (*LTL*, p.109). However, he avoids this objection by stating that although he is in agreement with absolutists in accepting that ethical concepts are unanalysable, his difference is that he is able to "say that the reason why they are unanalysable is that they are mere pseudo-concepts" (*LTL*, p.110).

Here, it seems that Ayer is following the footsteps of Wittgenstein since he says that they are 'pseudo-concepts'. Surely, that is what Wittgenstein states. But Ayer's argument is somewhat different than Wittgenstein's point. Let us examine

[171] Ayer defines the absolutist view of ethics as "the view that statements of value are not controlled by observation, as ordinary empirical propositions are, but only by a mysterious 'intellectual intuition'. A feature of this theory, . . ., is that it makes statements of value unverifiable" (*LTL*, p.108).

Ayer's example, i.e., 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money.' Ayer states that the presence of an ethical symbol, i.e., 'wrong', in this statement "adds nothing to its factual content" (*LTL*, p.110). So this statement says nothing more than that 'you stole that money.' Stating that it is 'wrong' or 'right' demonstrates only the person's approval or disapproval but does not change the factual content. It is "merely expressing certain moral sentiments" (*LTL*, p.110). Could Wittgenstein agree that it expresses anything? I do not think so. Wittgenstein states that 'description of a murder' is not different than the 'falling of a stone' (LE, p.6). It is a matter of fact and so there is no place for values in it. It says nothing more than that and expresses nothing else.[172] Although Wittgenstein accepts that murder arouses certain feelings there is no value in it. For Ayer, although such statements embody pseudo-concepts that cannot be true or false so have no factual content, they are not nonsensical in the sense that Wittgenstein holds, they express emotions. So Ayer's approach, at this point, although holding Wittgensteinian assumptions in mind, is closer to Hume rather than to Wittgenstein. Hume states that:

> Enquire then, *first*, where is that matter of fact, which we here call *crime*; point it out; determine the time of its existence; describe its essence or nature; explain the sense or faculty, to which it discovers itself. It resides in the mind of the person, who is ungrateful. He must, therefore, feel it, and be conscious of it. But nothing is there, except the passion of ill-will or absolute indifference. [173]

So when we consider a crime, say 'stealing money' or 'murder', I think Ayer will agree with Hume that there is no 'matter of fact.' Furthermore, the view that such acts "are only crimes, when directed towards persons" [174] could imply that it is our attitude towards facts that makes such acts a crime. 'Attitude' is an important notion for the emotive theory of ethics. I have no claim here that Hume is an early emotivist or Ayer's emotivism is based on a Humean approach, which I believe

---

[172] As we may recall from the previous section, Schlick's need to base value judgements on explanation rather than justification arises from the desire to distinguish fact and value. His approach is more akin to Wittgenstein than it is to Ayer, when he stated that so called ethical statements are like the propositions of science they cannot assert value but facts.

[173]David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* edited by J.B. Schneewind (Indianapolis: Hackett publishing Company,1983), p.84.

[174] *Ibid*., p.84.

deserves a full range of study, but it is important to point out the similarity of Ayer's conclusion to Hume's[175]. Hume concludes:

> Consequently, we may infer, that the crime of ingratitude is not any particular individual *fact*; but arises from a complication of circumstances, which, being presented to the spectator, excites the *sentiment* of blame, by particular structure and fabric of his mind.[176]

To state that ethical statements 'express certain moral sentiments' is no less problematic than stating that they can be reduced to scientific propositions. Here, again the problem of universal truth in ethical judgements haunts us, as it did when we were investigating the naturalistic account. At this point, let us consider how emotivists position themselves with respect to objectivity and universality of ethical judgements. Before considering the universality of ethical judgements let us begin with the seemingly easy path and try to see what emotivists, especially Ayer, thought

[175] Ayer accepts Hume's distinction between 'relations of ideas' and 'matters of fact.' He says the following: "Like Hume, I divide all genuine propositions into two classes: those which, his terminology, concern 'relations of ideas' and those that concern 'matters of fact'" (*LTL*, p.9). In Ayer's terminology, these would be 'analytic' and 'synthetic', but the similarity here does not necessarily presuppose a similarity in their ethical analysis. Ayer states that "discussion of psychological questions is out of place in a philosophical inquiry; and we have already made it clear that our empiricism is not logically dependent on an atomistic psychology, such as Hume and Mach adopted, but is compatible with any theory whatsoever concerning the actual characteristics of our sensory fields. For the empiricist doctrine to which we are committed is a logical doctrine concerning the distinction between analytic propositions, synthetic propositions, and metaphysical verbiage; and as such it has no bearing on any psychological question of fact" (*LTL*, pp.128-129). On the other hand James Fieser, referring to Ayer's writing on Hume, thinks that Ayer classifies Hume as an emotivist. And he quotes Ayer, ". . . if we did insist on extracting from Hume a reformulation of our moral statements, we should come nearer the mark by crediting him with the modern "emotive" theory that they serve to express our moral sentiments rather than with the theory that they are statements of fact about one's own or other people's mental condition" (A.J. Ayer, Hume, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), p.85). But this is not necessarily evidence that Ayer 'casts' Hume as an emotivist, but rather this is a hypothetical 'what if' evaluation. That is to ask 'what if Hume is given the choice between naturalistic and emotivist account of ethics?' I agree with Ayer that Hume might probably choose the emotivist account, but I do not agree with Fieser that it makes Ayer classify him as an emotivist. (See, James Feiser. "Is Hume a Moral Sceptic?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 50 (Sep., 1989), p.96) Also, C.L. Stevenson does not consider Hume as any kind of emotivist and counts his theory among the naturalistic theories. (Stevenson, p.3) Hilary Putnam thinks that Stevenson misinterpreted Hume "as holding that value judgements are factual judgements" (Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy*, p.150) See the rest of note 16 on how Putnam criticises Stevenson on this account. As I said this comparison deserves a full study which for the sake of this study but falls beyond the scope of this thesis.

[176] Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* p.84.

of the universality of empirical facts. On this issue, although Ayer only refers to Hume, he echoes Kant[177]:

> [N]o matter how many such singular propositions we succeed in establishing we are never entitled to regard the universal proposition as conclusively verified. However often we may have observed the dissolution of pieces of gold in aqua regia, we must still allow it to be possible that the next piece with which we experiment will no so dissolve.[178]

Then, how does he proceed with this idea? What about the validity of judgements? How does this fit with his synthetic-analytic distinction? Ayer, more radical than Schlick, states that empiricists (he defines himself as one) do not have any difficulty with the idea that "no general proposition referring to a matter of fact can ever been shown to be necessarily and universally true" (*LTL*, pp.64-65). This does not mean that it is irrational to believe a proposition whose validity 'cannot be logically possible.' So Ayer declares that empiricists (at least himself) could live with a probable hypothesis. But the real difficulty arises when one deals with the truths of logic and mathematics. Ayer thinks that there are only two alternatives for an empiricist; he could say that mathematical and logical truths "are not necessary truths" or that "they have no factual content" (*LTL*, p.65). Both alternatives have their difficulties and seem unsatisfactory. But, as Ayer admits, accepting that existence of some facts can "be known independently from experience" (*LTL*, p.66) will destroy all the basis of the empiricists' attack on metaphysics. As we know Logical Positivists, following Wittgenstein, state that "the truths of logic and mathematics are analytic propositions or tautologies" (*LTL*, p.71). This assumption does not only cut off the first alternative but also the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements. So, in actual fact there is left only one alternative that such an assumption allows us, which is to say that truths of logic and mathematics 'have no factual content.' This is what Ayer understands by 'analytic' anyway. Where then

[177] Ayer does not mention to Kant on this issue, although he basically says the same thing, accepting Kant's path could take him to the point that 'propositions of mathematics are synthetic' and this dangerous path to a synthetic a priori propositions. Although he chooses Kant terminology, Ayer follows Hume's path and he refers to Hume. He states that "as Hume conclusively showed, no general proposition whose validity is subject to test of actual experience can ever be logically certain." (*LTL*, p.64) He adds that: "And we have shown that validity of such propositions cannot be established a priori, as Hume himself made clear" (*LTL*, p.166).

[178] A.J.Ayer. *Logical Positivism,* p.229.

could he position ethical statements as he states that they have no factual content, and that they cannot be empirically verified? Ironically, Ayer's understanding of 'analytic' makes ethical statements look like analytic, but obviously it is not the case. We cannot talk of the truth of ethical statements because they are not propositions, besides they do not employ genuine concepts, so there is not a problem of universal justification to discuss. Is it that simple as it sounds? It is worth investigating this a little further.

Ayer makes a distinction between 'assertion of feelings' and 'expression of feelings.' At first sight this seems just playing with words, however with a closer analysis of the terms 'assertion' and 'expression' we can see that this is a very important point to enable Ayer to distinguish himself from the subjectivists' account of ethics. Assertion, in its content, has a declaration, an admission, which takes us to a statement that we can argue its validity and/or truth. Whereas expression is just putting into words, and as Ayer puts it, we do not even need words. This takes us to 'expressiveness' that associates the term expression with emotion and links it in a way to attitude. Expressions, as I noted, do not need to be verbalised, but surely when we talk of the language of ethics, we are dealing with verbalised expressions, though even if one expresses something verbally it does not necessarily assert anything in the way that we understand assertion, i.e., declaration, contention, admission do. We sometimes use these words in ordinary language synonymously. To clarify their different uses, Ayer states that "the assertion that one has a certain feeling often accompanies the expression of that feeling" (*LTL*, p.113), that is why we could easily miss the point of this distinction. Considering the difference, you do not need assertions for the expressions of feelings, whereas "the assertion that one has a certain feeling always involves the expression of that feeling" (*LTL*, p.113). Here, Carl Wellman's question "what exactly is the difference between describing and expressing an attitude?"[179]is meaningful. In order to clarify this point, let us use Ayer's example, i.e., 'I am bored.' Consider yourself sitting at a conference room forcing yourself to listen to a speech that you are not interested and you feel bored. You could say 'I am bored' but equally you could express your boredom by looking at your watch frequently, by yawning, secretly reading your messages from your

[179] Wellman, p.108

mobile phone or say 'I wish this was over.' So, why is this distinction important? Ayer states that holding that ethical statements are assertions of feelings, subjectivists think that they "assert the existence of certain feelings, we hold that ethical statements are expressions and excitants of feeling which do not necessarily involve any assertions" (*LTL*, p.113). Well, even if we accept that the distinction Ayer draws is meaningful, where does it lead us? Ayer thinks that by this distinction he could 'escape' from the objections of the validity of ethical judgements whilst 'ordinary subjectivists'[180] cannot. If, you say that ethical statements assert the existence of certain feelings, then you should say that the validity of ethical judgements be "determined by the nature of their author's feelings" (*LTL*, p.113). If Ayer uses ethical assertions instead of ethical expressions, he should have to admit that they are propositions that need to correspond with certain facts. But as he defines ethical symbols as pseudo-concepts they cannot be propositions at all as they are not assertions. So by saying that "ethical judgements have no validity" (*LTL*, p.113) he has no problem of validity to deal with.

Why then do we have disagreement on ethical judgements and resolve them since we cannot talk about the validity of ethical judgements, since they cannot be true or false? Both Ayer and Stevenson say that we do not. It is not ethical judgements that we disagree about, rather it is facts. Ayer thinks that we cannot "show by our arguments that [someone] has [a] 'wrong' ethical feeling towards a situation" (*LTL*, p.114) especially if s/he holds 'a different set of values.' We need to base our argument on a fact; Ayer thinks that it might be possible to have an argument "on moral questions only if some system of values is presupposed" (*LTL*, p. 115). This somewhat sounds like Wittgenstein when he suggests that it could be legitimate to talk about value judgements[181] if we have pre-determined standards. This takes us back to the norms that we discussed in the previous section. As we

[180] Ayer defines what he means by a subjectivist account and why he does not adopt their 'analysis of ethical terms' as follows: "We reject the subjectivist view that to call an action right, or a thing good, is to say that it is generally approved of, because it is not self-contradictory to assert that some actions which are generally approved of are not right, or that some things which are generally approved of are not good. And we reject the alternative subjectivist view that a man who asserts that a certain action is right, or that a certain thing is good, is saying that he himself approves of it, on the grounds that a man who confessed that he sometimes approved of what was bad or wrong would not be contradicting himself" (*LTL*, pp.106,107).

[181] I am referring to relative value judgements. Relative value judgements are not considered as a concern of ethics by Wittgenstein.

know, Schlick concluded that such an attempt to base value judgements on norms makes ethics a branch of psychology. Although Ayer and Schlick do not share the same views on the factual content of ethical value judgements, this line of argument forced Ayer to come to a similar conclusion. If, for Ayer, we accept that there could be disagreement in the case of pre-determined standards then we can only legitimately inquire "the moral habits of a given person or group of people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings" (*LTL*, pp.116-117). Then, we could say that ethics is a branch of psychology or sociology. But Ayer states that the 'defect' in this approach and its supporters is "that they treat propositions which refer to causes and attributes of our ethical feelings as if they were definitions of ethical concepts" (*LTL*, pp.117-118). Hence, ethical statements are not descriptive since ethical feelings that we referred to are not descriptions of ethical concepts.

The idea that ethical statements are not descriptive is an important thesis of the emotive theory of ethics that distinguishes it from naturalistic ethics. At this point, to refer to C.L. Stevenson's views on the non-descriptive character of ethical judgements will clarify Ayer's point. Stevenson has no doubt that "there is always some element of description in ethical judgements"[182] but description is not the only nor the main element of ethical judgements. He states that the main function of ethical judgements "is not to indicate facts but to *create* and *influence*".[183] This is the most important distinction between Schlick and Stevenson. It takes us from observing, describing and explaining conduct – as if it is a scientific fact – to a point to "*change* or *intensify*". He puts the distinction as: "[t]hey *recommend* an interest in an object, rather than state that the interest already exists".[184] What, then, do we want to influence? Behavioural change? Attitudinal change? How is it related to the disagreement in ethical judgements?

Ayer thinks that we can only agree on facts, not on values and as ethical statements do not have factual content, such agreement does not apply to them. So the attempt is just to try to influence our opponent's attitude. Ayer says that when we disagree with someone on the moral value of an action "the dispute is not really

[182] Stevenson, p.16

[183] Stevenson, p.16

[184] Stevenson, p.16.

about a question of value, but about a question of fact" (*LTL*, p.114). In such a dispute we try to show that our opponent "is mistaken about the facts of the case" (*LTL*, p.114). We try to provide related facts to make him/her agree with us "about the nature of the empirical facts for him to adopt the same moral attitude towards them as we do" (*LTL*, p.115) But, is agreeing on facts sufficient to resolve the disagreement? Not necessarily. Even if the person that we disagree with accepts and agrees on 'all the facts' we provided to support our argument, we could still disagree "about the moral value of the actions under discussion" (*LTL*, p.115). Here, to understand the nature of this disagreement I would like to further consider Stevenson's distinction between disagreement in attitude and disagreement in belief by referring to his examples, which I believe provide more clarity to Ayer's assumptions.

In the previous section I mentioned Stevenson's distinction between 'disagreement in belief' and 'disagreement in attitude' in the context that the disagreement of judgement of value that naturalists stress is disagreement in belief. Even if the disagreements that naturalists are concerned with seem like disagreement in attitude, they are only 'disagreement in belief about attitudes' which is still a disagreement on belief. The disagreement in belief occurs "when Mr. A believes *p*, when Mr. B believes *not-p*, or something incompatible with *p*";[185]whereas disagreement in attitude occurs "when Mr. A has a favourable attitude to something, when Mr. B has an unfavourable attitude to it".[186] So in the former they try to change each others' belief while in the latter they try to change each others' attitude.[187] In the first case the disagreement is on belief, since p and not-p cannot both be true, disagreement can be resolved by facts. On the other hand, in the second case, disagreement is in attitude "both of which cannot be satisfied".[188] Ayer says that it is not possible to resolve this kind of disagreement by referring to facts. If we take Stevenson's example of two friends who decided to have dinner out might not agree

[185] Stevenson, p.1.

[186] Stevenson, p.1.

[187] Stevenson defines attitude as: "it designates any psychological disposition of being *for* or *against* something. Hence love and hate are relatively specific kinds of attitudes, as are approval and disapproval, and so on." (Stevenson pp.1-2)

[188] Stevenson, p.2.

which restaurant to go, the distinction will be clearer. By not agreeing which restaurant to go to, what they are disagreeing not about facts, like whether the favourite restaurant of one is expensive or not, but about whether he likes to eat there or not. Their disagreement is about being for or against eating there, even if they agree on the fact that the proposed restaurant is expensive, it might not change their attitude. But unfortunately, disagreement in ethical judgements does not occur as simply as in this example.[189] Stevenson, like Ayer, adds that: "It is logically possible, at least, that two men should continue to disagree in attitude even though they had all their beliefs in common".[190]

Carl Wellman criticises emotivists on the basis that even if we evaluate 'all the facts' as 'all the relevant facts' it seems impossible to "establish empirically that two people do disagree on an ethical question even though they agree on all the facts".[191] Stevenson's response to this criticism is this: "Whether this logical possibility is an empirical likelihood I shall not presume to say; but it is unquestionably a possibility that must not be left out of account".[192] Then, what about religion? Even in the same religion there are sects. They share the same basic beliefs but still have different attitudes to religion. All Christians for example, believe that there exists a god and Christ is the son of God, but they still have disagreement in attitude. We may also remember Schlick's example on polygamy and monogamy. As we have seen, both views about marriage have their basis in the belief that there needs to be peace in family or in the order of sexual relationship. They have different attitudes although they agree on the same basic belief. Though it

[189] Stanley Cavell states that typical examples chosen to illustrate ethical judgements and scientific ones are like "You ought to keep promises" and "All metals expand when heated." Neither, for illustration of ethical judgements we have examples such as: "If what a person does was done by accident, then he is not to be blamed – at least not as severely as if he deliberately did it." Nor, for illustration of scientific judgements the examples are like: "men are unconsciously motivated to action." Cavell suggests that we choose our examples "by a point of departure." On Stevenson's distinction of disagreement in attitude and belief, Cavell says the following: "If you begin by being struck with the peculiarity of ethical arguments as perhaps unsettleable, and struck how different other questions are, then you will pick examples from science which illustrate its capacity for agreement, and you will then have the idea, or illusion, that you know that, and why, science is rational and morality not" (Stanley Cavell. *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.262-263).

[190] Stevenson, p.7.

[191] Wellman, p.101

[192] Stevenson, p.7.

is possible to say that these examples do not rule out Wellman's objection because in these examples the agreement is on belief, and not on facts, I think the stress for the assumption of the agreement of facts is to show, in the first place, that although we agree on belief we may still have disagreement in attitude as Stevenson puts it. Ayer and Stevenson hold that disagreement in belief could be resolved by facts, the facts in question here could change according to the belief at hand; it could be metaphysical or intuitive.

After all, considering Wellman's argument, the relationship between attitude and belief is not clear. Stevenson sets this relationship as "attitudes are often functions of beliefs, an agreement in belief may lead people, as a matter of psychological fact, to agree in attitude".[193] But, does not this mean that if we change the belief this will change the attitude? If so, does not this suggest that if we resolve the disagreement in belief the disagreement in attitude will also be resolved? Does not this contradict the idea that even if we agree on belief we could still have disagreement on attitude? But this could be a contradiction if you presuppose that ethical statements are descriptive and have a cognitive nature. In addition, we cannot observe causes and effects, and cannot say that this belief causes this attitude. As we just noted, sharing the same belief does not necessarily results in the same attitude. I think, whether we could resolve disagreement in ethical judgements is an important issue because it is another way of questioning whether rational discussion on ethical judgements is possible.

On this possibility, Stevenson's answer is that "purely intellectual methods of science, and, indeed, *all* method of reasoning, may be insufficient to settle disputes about values".[194] So, Stevenson rules out all methods of reasoning. Ayer also emphasizes the impossibility of rational argument by stating that: "For our judgement that it is so is itself a judgement of value, accordingly outside the scope of argument" (*LTL*, p.115). This is not an argument that we could disregard easily, as Hilary Putnam puts it, the logical positivist views "were influential for a large part of the twentieth century in convincing people that there could be no such thing as

[193] Stevenson, p.6.

[194] Stevenson, p.8.

reasoning about ethical questions".[195] Yet again, behind this argument we could find our indispensable fact-value distinction. Here, there is also a dichotomy between 'cognitively meaningless judgements' and 'cognitively meaningful judgements'. By cognitively meaningful judgements it is meant that "every judgement that can figure a rational *argument*".[196] Putnam states that 'cognitively meaningful judgements' include an additional dichotomy, which is, the fact-value dichotomy. This dichotomy shows itself in "the idea that "value judgements" are subjective and that there cannot really be reasoned *argument* about values".[197] If we accept that disagreement on ethical questions is disagreement in attitude, then enquiring whether ethical judgements are subject to rational discussion or not is, in a way, enquiring whether attitudes are subject to rational discussion or not. Among others, Wellman criticises the view that attitudes (also ethical judgements) are not subject to rational discussion at length.[198]

Although there are many criticisms of this view, i.e., that value judgements are outside the scope of rational argument, for the sake of understanding the emotivists point let us accept that it is not possible to have a rational argument on ethical judgements. Where does this take us? If we cannot have a rational discussion of ethical judgements, what purpose do they serve? Ayer states that "I should simply be evincing my feelings, which is not at all the same thing as saying that I have them" (*LTL*, p.112). This is a very interesting assertion, demonstrating feelings is different than having them. If I claim the existence of feelings by stating that I have

---

[195] Putnam, Hilary. *Ethics without Ontology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005, p.111).

[196] Putnam, Hilary. *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.61.

[197] *Ibid*., p.61.Also, in *Ethics without Ontology* Putnam says the following: "Logical positivists indeed believed that they had given logical analysis of *all* possible kinds of cognitively meaningful judgements, and that analysis showed that value judgements could not have "cognitive meaning."" (Putnam, *Ethics without Ontology,* p.148n2)

[198] See Wellman, he lists nine reasons why emotive theory of ethics (Wellman, pp.118-127) "mistakenly assumes that attitudes are not subject to rational criticism." (p.118) He states that: "Agreement is not the basis of which opinion is correct; rather agreement presupposes individual judgement upon the correct opinion. Each person must judge in the light of the evidence. Agreement is the product, not the premise, of such reasoning. Thus the fact that disagreement cannot be resolved does not show that there is no correct or incorrect opinion; on the contrary, disagreement is genuine only when it is a difference of opinion over which of the two judgements is the right one." (Wellman, p.121) He also convincingly states that "It is in the experience of realizing that our past attitudes have sometimes been mistaken that we recognize the claim to objective validity which attitudes possess." (Wellman, p.122) See also Cavell's *The Claim of Reason*, pp. 259-273,

them then my expression of the feelings will have an empirical status, i.e., the statement will be true if I have them and false if I do not have them. On the other hand, if I do not say or claim that I have them then the statement will not have such a cognitive meaning. This is almost similar to G.E. Moore's conception of 'good'; as a non-natural, non-existing object. In Ayer's case, we have a non-natural, non-cognitive, non-descriptive, non-existent feeling. We express feelings that do not exist or do not necessarily exist, actually whether they exist or not is immaterial, because our aim is just to demonstrate or express our feelings. So if the issue has nothing to do with existence of feelings, what do we achieve by expressing our feelings? Our approval or disapproval of certain moral acts? To display our attitudes? To influence other people's attitudes? For what?

Gidon Gottlieb states that in the absence of 'models of reasoning' we cannot evaluate arguments in law and morals. And he explains its consequences as:

> [Arguments] would then be evaluated only in terms of their success in persuasion. Assessment in terms of effective persuasion would reduce legal and moral arguments to a genus of advertising. 'Sound' legal and moral arguments would then resemble good advertisements – they would be those that persuade best. There is little doubt that in the final analysis the failure to design a rational model in lieu of the displaced analytic and synthetic ideals, would consecrate the devaluation of legal and moral argument to a species of rhetoric, often less effective than advertising.[199]

Cavell echoes Gottlieb in response to Stevenson's "characterization of the moralist[200] as someone "who endeavours to influence attitudes", Stevenson was led to ask, "How, then, are moralists and propagandists to be distinguished?"[201] Cavell thinks that a moralist to be seen as a propagandist has serious consequences and he says that "[t]o propagandize under the name of morality is not immoral; it denies morality altogether".[202]

---

[199] Gidon Gottlieb. *The Logic of Choice* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1968), p.31.

[200] Stanley Cavell covers this issue in *The Claim of Reason* in Chapter X, "An absence of Morality"(pp.286-289).

[201] Cavell, p.286

[202] *Ibid*., p.288

Stevenson thinks that 'the role of thought or cognitive inquiry' in ethical judgements is to establish "the ordinary causal proposition that X leads to Y".[203] But, he says, it does not explain how a belief 'strengthens' someone's approval of X. And he believes that the reason is, the belief does not have "any power in itself to do this".[204] How, then, does this effect occur? Stevenson says that:

> It strengthens the man's approval of X only because Y too is an object of his approval. If Y were different to him he would feel that any question about the relation of X to Y was foreign to his problem. His reasoning serves, then, purely as an *intermediary* between his attitudes: by connecting his thought of X with his thought of Y it also connects his attitude toward X with hid attitude toward Y, letting the one be reinforced by the other.[205]

This highly psychological explanation of the relationship between attitudes and belief could be the work of psychologists and it does not help us to resolve the conflict. "The ethical problem lies in the *resolving* the conflict, not in describing or explaining it".[206] Thus Stevenson's attitude to ethical problems does not change even if hypothetically he gives reasoning a role.

In this section I investigated the emotive theory of ethics as another logical positivistic standpoint on ethics, primarily referring to Ayer and Stevenson. We saw that having the fact-value dichotomy in mind, they chiefly analysed normative ethical statements and differing from naturalists they concluded that ethical statements cannot have any truth conditions, they simply express emotions. Emotive theory of ethics somehow shows the 'inadequacy' of naturalism and intuitionism by stating that ethical statements are not cognitive as they do not have truth value and they are not descriptive, but as Wellman rightly puts it "one cannot conclude that ethical sentences have emotive meaning from the inadequacy of naturalism and intuitionism alone".[207] Emotive theory also had its obstacles, while it points out that ethical statements are nonsense in lacking cognitive meaning, it also holds that statements must have a role, so they accept the impact but dismiss the

[203] Stevenson, p.57

[204] Stevenson, p.57

[205] Stevenson, p.57

[206] Stevenson, p.58

[207] Wellman, p.98

substance. Thus to give a role of influence to ethical statements by stating that they evoke attitudes by expressing emotions did not help them great deal. This point of view lead us to the discussion of attitude and belief; the distinction between attitude and belief on the basis that one is descriptive and the other is not was very weak and hardly explained the dependence of attitude on belief. Furthermore, the emphasis on influence brought up the comparison of a moralist with a propagandist. Stevenson could not provide support on behalf of emotivist theory to its critics. Nevertheless, the theory provided us a new perspective which is quite different from the traditional, wherein ethical statements are not descriptive and are not non-cognitive. Ayer says that: "[i]f a mystic admits that the object of his vision is something which cannot be described, then he must admit that he is bound to talk nonsense when he describes it" (*LTL*, p.124). Had he stopped at this point, he would be very close to Wittgenstein when he said that "Ethics is transcendental" (*TLP*, 6.421). But by assigning a role of influence to ethical statements, Ayer chooses another path, that being to investigate the undeniable existence of ethical statements. In the next chapter, I will investigate later Wittgenstein to find out if there is another way out.

CHAPTER V

ETHICS IS A FORM OF LIFE-LATER WITTGENSTEIN

5.1 The Way Out of the Fly-bottle

We have seen in early Wittgenstein that the strictly correct method of philosophy is described as: to say "nothing except what can be said" and "whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions "(TLP, 6.53) With the restriction of what can be said to the "propositions of natural science", this method of philosophy while giving no room for ethics as a branch of philosophy, gave rise to a 'scientific method of philosophy' which was promoted by logical positivists. As we have seen in the logical positivists, what can be said is determined by the method of verification. And the method of verification produced two meta-ethical theories, i.e., naturalism and emotivism. The former states that ethics, in an 'absolute' sense is something that cannot be expressed and ethical statements in an absolute sense are not meaningful propositions and if we conceive ethics in a 'relative sense' it can only be a branch of psychology or sociology. The latter states that ethical utterances only have emotive meaning. And as the emotivists hold that ethical expressions are about attitudes not beliefs, they disregard the alternative that ethics can even be a branch of science. But both meta-ethical theories espoused by the logical positivists state that ethics is not a branch of philosophy. The method of philosophy we hold affects how we see ethics. Consequently, the scientific method we investigated in the previous chapters does not allow ethics to be a branch of philosophy. As this scientific method is promoted by early Wittgenstein, in order to understand later Wittgenstein's conception of ethics, we must look at whether later Wittgenstein still holds this method or directs us to an alternative.

First of all, later Wittgenstein states that: "There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies" (*PI*, 133). This passage, without doubt, shows Wittgenstein's divergence from his early view that there is only one 'strictly correct method' of philosophy. Now, we can consider more

than one method and these methods do not necessarily need to be scientific. Wittgenstein states that:

> Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness (*BB*, p.18).

For Wittgenstein, giving a definition of something means drawing a sharp boundary. Consider the word 'wishing', Wittgenstein states that descriptions of "various cases of wishing" should satisfy us. If you think that the descriptions of various cases are not all the cases that we call "wishing" then you are free to "build up more complicated cases" (*BB*, p.19). For Wittgenstein, "there is not one definite class of features which characterize all cases of "wishing" (*BB*, p.19). But instead of describing the cases that we call wishing if you want "to give a definition of wishing, i.e., to draw a sharp boundary, then you are free to draw it as you like; and this boundary will never entirely coincide with the actual usage, as this usage has no sharp boundary" (*BB*, p.19).

If there is no sharp boundary and I can draw a boundary as I wish, then this boundary is arbitrary. When we are investigating the limits of language in early Wittgenstein, we saw that in terms of altering the limits we were "completely powerless" (*NB*, p.73). Now, we have such the power to draw a boundary as we wish and we can even "jump over the boundary" (*PI*, 499) Here, the boundary is personal.[208] In the *Tractatus* the limits of language are clear and show us what can and cannot be said. And the limits of the language are not arbitrary otherwise we would be able to draw a boundary and include ethics within it so we could claim that now we draw our own boundaries and for us ethics is within the limits of language. Surely to say that everyone has a chance to draw his/her own boundary as s/he likes is not an acceptable idea for early Wittgenstein. Also, our desire for objectivity and generality could not be accomplished with the possibility of arbitrary boundaries which could change from one person to another. Here, we must remember that,

[208] James C. Edwards states that "[i]n the *Tractatus* the term [nonsense] functions finally and impersonally. If something is nonsense, then it is nonsense for everyone, now and forever. The limits of thought are permanently fixed, and given by the nature of thought itself" (Edwards, p.149).

although early Wittgenstein draws sharp boundaries in the *Tractatus*, he never claims that the general or universal terms are in the realm of what can be said.

It seems that for later Wittgenstein the general and universal terms are still problematic. Wittgenstein tells us that craving for generality (that our preoccupation with the method of science is the main source of it) [209] does not allow us 'to build up more complicated cases' through "primitive forms of language". Wittgenstein states that:

> The study of language games is the study of primitive forms of language . . . If we want to study the problems of truth and falsehood, of the agreement and disagreement with reality, of the nature of assertion, assumption, and questions, we shall look at primitive forms of language . . . If we look at such simple forms of language . . .[w] e see activities, reactions, which are clear-cut and transparent (*BB*, p.17).

If we want 'to build up more complicated cases', e.g. for the use of the word 'good' we must look at the individual cases where we use the word 'good', the activities and the reactions will show us the use of it clearly. Then we must free ourselves from our scientific preoccupations that cause "the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case" (*BB*, p.18). For Wittgenstein, "[p]hilosophy really *is* 'purely descriptive'" (*BB*, p.18). Defining a general use of the word 'good' or saying that it is indefinable is the result of our preconception of the scientific method of philosophy. But with a conception of descriptive philosophy the scientific method is no longer useful. Wittgenstein says that "[p]hilosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything"[210] (*PI*, 126). He openly states that "our considerations could not be scientific ones" (*PI*, 109). For Wittgenstein, there

---

[209] Wittgenstein says the following:"This craving for generality is the resultant of a number of tendencies connected with particular philosophical confusions" These being:
(a) "The tendency to look for something in common to all the entities which we commonly subsume under a general term"(*BB*, p.17).
(b) "There is the tendency rooted in our usual forms of expression, to think that the man who has learnt to understand a general term, say, the term "leaf", has thereby come to possess a kind of general picture of a leaf, as opposed to the picture of leaves" (*BB*, p.17-18).
(c) "[T]he idea we have of what happens when we get hold of the general idea 'leaf', 'plant', etc.etc, is connected with the confusion between a mental state, meaning a state of hypothetical mental mechanism, and a mental state meaning a state of consciousness (toothache, etc.)" (*BB*, p.18).
(d) "[O]ur preoccupation with the method of science. I mean the method of reducing the explanation of natural phenomena to the smallest possible number of primitive natural laws; and in mathematics, of unifying the treatment of different topics by using a generalisation" (*BB*, p.18).

[210] In line with this assertion, Wittgenstein echoing his views in the *Blue Book* states that: "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it" (*PI*, 124).

cannot be anything hypothetical that would impinge upon our thoughts. He states that:

> We must do away from with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. . . . The problems are solved, not by reporting new experience, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of our language (*PI*, 109).

Obviously, later Wittgenstein has a totally different view on the method of philosophy than early Wittgenstein. It is clear that he moves from explanation to description. But the role of language in the battle between philosophy and our bewitched intelligence is not that clear. Depending on our method of philosophy the language could be either a tool of philosophy in this battle or language could be the thing that bewitches our intelligence. On this battlefield, language could be either the enemy or the ally of philosophy. If we use language as a tool against our bewitched intelligence and free our intelligence from the language that bewitches our intelligence by its scientific preoccupations then philosophy could win the battle. What would be the consequences of winning this battle? More importantly what would be its consequences in our quest, i.e. whether we could express ethical value judgements? Does this give us room to legitimately express ethical value judgements? We see that discarding the scientific method in philosophy destroyed the sharp boundaries that were drawn in *Tractatus*. Since, in *Tractatus*, with the refuted scientific method, ethical utterances were nonsense as they were not the picture of reality. With a new conception of philosophy and a dual conception of language, Wittgenstein does not hold, as clearly as in *Tractatus*, that ethical utterances are nonsense. I think the language that has the role of picturing reality is the one that factors that bewitch our intelligence. So we could ask: What happened to the conception of nonsense and the picture theory of language in Wittgenstein's later works? First we should look at nonsense.

What can be said and what cannot be said is the criterion of nonsense in *Tractatus*. [211] Nonsense is in the domain of what cannot be said. As we discussed, ethics is in the domain of what cannot be said. Wittgenstein draws the limits of the

[211] Edwards states that: "The realm of sense is the realm of what can be said" (Edwards, p.106) and he adds that "In the *Tractatus* nonsense is specified against an explicit theory of meaningfulness-within-a-language" (Edwards, p.108).

language which define what can and cannot be said. The picture theory of language clarifies the limits of what can be said and what cannot be said. As ethics is nonsense in early Wittgenstein, then, understanding Wittgenstein's notion of nonsense is important to gain an insight into his views on ethics in his later period. Wittgenstein states that:

> To say "This combination of words makes no sense" excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language. But when one draws a boundary it may be for various kinds of reason (*PI*, 499).

Considering that I can draw the limits as I wish, then does Wittgenstein suggest that I decide what 'nonsense' is? Is the procedure simply excluding the words which I regard as nonsense from the boundaries I draw? So, is the conception of 'nonsense' arbitrary as the boundaries of language in later Wittgenstein? Wittgenstein repeats his view:

> When a sentence is called senseless, it is not as it were its sense that is senseless. Rather a combination of words is being excluded from language, withdrawn from circulation (*PI*, 500).

Therefore, we can say that what cannot be said is not senseless at all; it is just excluded from the language. If I draw the limits of my language in such a way that does not exclude ethics, I could take ethics back into circulation. After all, Wittgenstein tells us that "Sometimes you have to take an expression out of language, to send it for cleaning, - & then you put it back into circulation" (*CV*, p.44). Is it the absolute sense of value judgements that was sent for cleaning by early Wittgenstein and put back into circulation by later Wittgenstein? Could I express the judgements of value freely? Wittgenstein states that "it is the particular use of a word only which gives the word its meaning" (*BB*, p.69). So, the particular uses of the word 'good' will give the word 'good' its meaning. Wittgenstein also states that "*[p]ractice* gives the words their sense" (*CV*, p.97e). Thus, we must look at the particular cases where we use the 'good', let the practice give it its sense.

So, it seems that there is room for the expression of judgements of value as well as there is room that judgements of value are not nonsensical. But, it is too early a stage to arrive at such a conclusion. When we look at the use of the word 'good' there is a possibility that we might only find the examples of the use of 'good'

in a relative sense. If we search for examples from Wittgenstein, his remarks on religion will help us to understand how he uses the words that are 'higher', that have an absolute sense of value. While doing so, we must keep in mind the arguments of "A Lecture on Ethics". To recall, Wittgenstein states that when we speak of God, we use a language that "represents him as a human being of great power" (LE, p.9). In ethical and religious languages we use similes, and in order to legitimately express the value judgements by using "a simile must be the simile for *something*. And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile I must also be able to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stands behind it" (LE, p.10). And Wittgenstein concludes that we cannot find facts behind the simile, so what seems like a simile turns to out be nonsense. Wittgenstein's description of God as a human being and the notion of a miracle in 1944 seems to resemble the "A Lecture on Ethics". Take this remark for example:

> A miracle is, as it were, a gesture which God makes. As a man sits quietly & then makes an impressive gesture, God lets the world run on smoothly & then accompanies the words of a Saint by a symbolic occurrence, a gesture of nature. It would be an instance if, when a saint has spoken, the trees around him bowed, as if in reverence. – Now, do I believe that this happens? I don't (*CV*, p.51).

Here, he uses the language of religion and the language he uses represents God as a human being as he says, this is what happens in the language of religion. For Wittgenstein, a miracle "is simply an event the like of which we have never yet seen" (LE, p.10). Wittgenstein states that he does not believe that such a miracle, that the trees bow to the words of a saint in reference, happens. He says that the reason he does not believe it is that "[t]he only way for me to believe in a miracle in this sense would be to be *impressed* by an occurrence in this particular way" (*CV*, p.51). Although he says that he is not impressed he does not say that it is nonsense. But the religious remarks he makes lose their miraculous appearance when he questions it. The method of verification whether a simile (also a miracle) is nonsense or not, for early Wittgenstein, is to check whether it corresponds to facts or not. For later Wittgenstein, criterion of verification seems to be the occurrence of a particular case of a language game and believing it. If we look at the following remark of Wittgenstein, we will see how believing effects the meaning of a word:

> I am reading: "& no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but the Holy Ghost." And this is true: I cannot call him *Lord*; because that says absolutely nothing to me. I could call him "the paragon", "God" even or rather: I can understand it when he is so called; but I cannot utter the word "Lord" meaningfully. *Because I do not believe* that he will come to judge me; because *that* says nothing to me. And it could only say something to me if I were to live *quite* differently (*CV*, p.38).

Separating an exemplar (the paragon), a spirit (Holy Ghost) and a supreme being (God) from a Lord seems to be related with the uses of these words.[212] The first three (i.e., the paragon, Holy Ghost and God) are metaphysical uses but the last one, i.e., Lord, is a simile. A simile that makes us believe that the word in use corresponds to actual happenings, there are particular occurrences, practices that we can refer to. If we believe it, it becomes meaningful, but if not, like Wittgenstein, it is not meaningful. If I were to live quite differently then I might have a different attitude that enables me to believe. This is like the difference between the life (world) of a happy man and an unhappy man. Wittgenstein says that "[t]he believer's relations to these messages [the Gospels] is *neither* a relation to historical truth (probability) *nor yet* that to a doctrine consisting of 'truths of reason'" (*CV*, p.38). Considering "the nonsensical use of language", early Wittgenstein's focus was going beyond the boundaries and what cannot be said, whereas later Wittgenstein's focus of attention turned to "the non-rational grounding of religious belief".[213]This is clear when Wittgenstein questions belief in Christ's resurrection. He says: "But if I am to be REALLY redeemed, - I need *certainty* – not wisdom, dreams, speculation – and this certainty is faith. And a faith is faith in what my *heart*, my *soul*, needs, not my speculative intellect" (*CV*, p.38). In "A Lecture on Ethics" Wittgenstein says that expressions of ethics and religious belief are not nonsensical because we have not yet found the 'correct analysis' of religious and ethical expressions, "but that their nonsensicality was their very essence" (LE, p.11). Barrett draws a parallel with this

[212] Lord has an earthly equivalent to somebody who holds sway or has authority over others and therefore the ability to pass judgement upon them (e.g., in Britain you could find titles such as Lord Chief Justice, First Sea Lord or even House of Lords. A judge in court is also addressed as "my Lord". Also the word Lord is the part of British aristocracy which were the ruling class.) Wittgenstein seems not to accept such a role for this spiritual entity, i.e., morally speaking it cannot judge him or his actions.

[213] Barrett, p.193

and says that for later Wittgenstein the "lack of rational grounding" is not because the arguments are not expressed in a better way "but because non-rationality was their very essence".[214]

Thus it seems that even if we draw the boundaries as we wish we still have difficulties with ethical and religious expressions in an absolute sense. Also quite differently from his early remarks (*PI*, 499 & *PI* 500), Wittgenstein states that:

> The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery (*PI*, 119).

Here, again we come across with the idea of "running against the limits of language". But which limits? Does he not tell us that we do not have any sharp boundaries anymore? This passage seems to echo "Tractarian themes: the limits of language; and metaphysical philosophy as the "plain nonsense" produced when those limits are ignored".[215] But if we remember our discussion on the scientific method of philosophy, we can read it in another way. Surely, the limits of language in question here are the Tractarian limits, which are drawn by early Wittgenstein and his followers. But, I think, the 'plain nonsense' is not referring only to metaphysical philosophy but also to scientific philosophy. Wittgenstein states that his aim is: "to teach [us] to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense" (*PI*, 464). He also states that his aim in philosophy is "[t]o shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (*PI*, 309). Then we could say that while we are within the boundaries of scientific philosophy (like a fly in a bottle) the nonsense is masked, in order to see it clearly we must go beyond the boundaries (let the fly out of the fly-bottle). The discovery will not really be a discovery unless we escape the boundaries and our attempts, trials (the bumps) to escape it will be valuable once we get out. This is a way out from a paradigm and it is not so different than questioning the rationality of a belief. It does not matter whether it is an ethical, a religious or a scientific belief. 'Believing' for Wittgenstein means, "submitting to an authority" and "[h]aving once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it in question & then once again find it convincing" (*CV*, p.52). Once you start to

[214] Barrett, p.193

[215] Edwards, pp.107-8

question your ethical or religious belief then you start to look at than differently, it is the same for the method of philosophy that you use, once you rebel against your method it is hard to find this method as convincing as it once was.

We see that whether we have sharp boundaries or not does not affect whether we could express the judgements of value in absolute sense or not. I think, at this point we should look at the main criterion of nonsense, i.e., the picture theory of language, to see how this criterion is affected when we get rid of the sharp boundaries. After all, it is the picture theory of language, which sharpens the limits of language and decides what nonsense is and thus what can be said. With the idea of arbitrary boundaries, it seems hard to hold onto the picture theory of language. Then, we must try to answer the question will it be possible to express the judgements of value in absolute sense if we let go the picture theory of language.

5.2. The Picture Theory of Language

Now, we must investigate whether the idea of the picture theory of language changes for later Wittgenstein. We could assume that his view must have changed as for later Wittgenstein it cannot be applied to the limits of language and the determination of nonsense as we discussed above. If there is a radical change in this view, then, what took its place in later Wittgenstein? How does a change in the conception of the picture theory of language affect the inexpressibility of ethical concepts? To begin with, we must remember what the picture theory of language is in early Wittgenstein and how it works as a criterion to decide what can be and cannot be said. In order to understand how we are led to the distinction between sayable and unsayable in early Wittgenstein we need to look at the fundamentals of the Augustinian picture of language. First, let's have a look what Augustine says:

> When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of the other parts of the body, and the tone of the voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after

> I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires. (Augustine, *Confessions*, I. 8.) [216]

What is the underlying idea of this picture of language then? Wittgenstein's response to this question is: "In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands"(*PI*, 1). Early Wittgenstein acknowledged this idea of picture of language. In *Tractatus* it is put as "[a] name means an object. The object is its meaning" (*TLP*, 3.203).[217] Basically, in a simplified way, it is correlating words with objects (entities). If we recall from our investigation on the early Wittgenstein's views on 'what can be said', *Tractatus* deals with the limits of the language, i.e. what can be said and what cannot be said and the Augustinian picture of language forms the roots of 'what can be said' in Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of language.'[218] This is the idea of language as a picture of reality. The effort to describe how things are in reality by the means of the 'picture theory of language' is reduced to ostensive definition in *Philosophical Investigations*. As we said earlier, for Wittgenstein, description must take the place of explanation. As a consequence, Wittgenstein shifts from the view that the sign is "the representative of an object" (*TLP,* 3.22)[219] to the view that a sign is "a

---

[216] This passage is quoted in the *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 1). This is the first paragraph of the *PI*. And the first 27 exegesis of *PI* are devoted to this discussion. They were underlying the switch of his thought on this subject. Thus, they can be seen as a self-criticism. I take it as the indication of the move from truth-functions to language games.

[217] It follows in *TLP* 3.22: "In a proposition a name is the representitive of an object." in *TLP* 3.3 "Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning."

[218] In 1914, before *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein proclaims his view as: "In the proposition a world is as it were put together experimentally. (As when in the law court in Paris a motor-car accident is represented by means of dolls, etc.)" (*NB*, p.7) The idea of language as a picture of reality developed in *Tractatus.* Here, Wittgenstein uses the example of hieroglyphic script (see *TLP*, 4.016). He openly declares that "[a] proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents" (*TLP*, 4.021). So far, the relationship between fact and what can be said is almost constructed. With one more additional information (or criterion) 'what can be said' and why logical positivists were fascinated with this idea will be clear for us. It comes from *TLP* 4.0311: "A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no. In order to do that, it must describe reality completely. A proposition is a description of a state of affairs." The two alternatives, which are yes or no, apparently can be formalized as 'true or false' as "a proposition is a truth function of elementary propositions."(*TLP*, 5) When understanding comes down to truth-functions of the proposition we can clearly see the connection of fact-value and analytic/synthetic distinction. From this picture of language, although it has different grounds and implications for Wittgenstein, logical positivists arrived at the conclusion that "the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification"(Carnap,"The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language", p.76)

[219] See also *TLP*, 3.3

preparation of description" (*PI*, 49) [220]in language games. That shift allows ostensive definitions as a possible language game among others and avoids the idea that objects are correlated to names.

This shift is very important for contemplating the possibility of a language of ethics. Because the view that the sign is the representative of an object and the propositions are the picture of reality draw a sharp boundary between facts and values. Consequently, propositions related to facts are sayable and the rest are not and this applies to judgements of value; judgements of value that correspond to facts are sayable but those that do not are not. So, we could say that, if we could relate our judgements of value to facts then we could legitimately express them. As mentioned before, Wittgenstein's distinction between relative sense and absolute sense of value (ethical and non ethical judgements of value) is the result of seeking for the legitimacy of expressing value judgements by checking whether they correspond to a fact or not. On the other hand, when Wittgenstein says that "naming is a preparation of a description" the sharp boundaries between fact and value disappear. Naming is not a move but just preparation for a move in a language-game, simply like putting a chess piece in its place on the board. The thing that is named only has a name in the language-game, not outside it. By this conception, a thing that is named does not represent an object outside the language-game. When we name a chess piece as 'king' in chess the 'king' has a meaning within this particular game. Likewise, we could name a thing as 'good' in a language-game and it could have a meaning in this language-game. Now we have a chance to express value judgements in language-games. Without considering whether the word 'good' corresponds to a fact, whether my utterance pictures the reality or not, I could use the word 'good' in a language-game and give it a meaning within this particular language-game. Wittgenstein says that when we are searching for the meaning of the word 'good' we must look at the language-games that the word 'good' is used (*PI*, 77). But we still have some difficulties. The word 'good' has its meaning within the language-game but every game must have rules and we need to know how to follow the rules of the game in order to be able to play the game. The rules of the game are, in a way, pre-

[220] The passage continues as follows: "Naming is so far not a move in the language-game – any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. We may say: *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named. It has not even got a name except in the language-game."

determined standards to play the game. It seems that, the conception of a rule as a predetermined standard can only lead us to the relative sense of value judgement. If we are only concerned with the relative sense of value judgements, then whether the sign is a representation of an object or a preparation of a description does not make much difference. Because relative sense of value judgements already represent facts and Wittgenstein's picture theory of language let them into the realm of what can be said. But on the other hand, if we have the absolute sense of value judgements in our minds when we are talking of ethics, as in the case of early Wittgenstein, then we should seek whether the shift from explanation to description gives room for expressing the value judgements in absolute sense.

At this point it is important to understand the difference between defining or explaining the word 'good' and describing it. Wittgenstein thinks that trying to find "definitions corresponding to our concepts in aesthetics or ethics" will not solve our problem, rather he suggests: "In such a difficulty always ask yourself: How did we *learn* the meaning of this word ("good" for instance)? From what sorts of examples? in what language-games?"(*PI*, 77) Let us follow Wittgenstein's suggestion and ask "How do we learn words like 'good'?" We could even reformulate the question and ask: "How do we learn words like 'good' in ethical and non-ethical sense?"

Although there are different answers to this question, there seems to be an agreement in the choice of examples. When this issue is addressed Wittgenstein almost always used two cases as examples. One concerns how a child learns words like good, the other, how an adult learns them in a foreign language, say how a Turkish adult who doesn't speak English at all learns to employ these words. Separating two conditions of learning ethical words enables us to cover the different aspects of the issue. By choosing the example of a child we might think that we are disregarding the effect of society and preset values at hand. Wittgenstein states that "[l]anguage games are the forms of language with which a child begins to make use of words" (*BB*, p.17). And he also points our attention to "primitive forms of language" to free our mind from "the confusing background of the highly complicated process of thought" (*BB*, p.17). Thus, as suggested by Wittgenstein, without bewitching our intelligence by means of a complicated language, it would be

better to look at primitive languages. Therefore I will address the case of a child rather than a foreign adult and ask "How does a child learn the use of words like 'chair', 'pain' and 'good'?

The most common answer to how a child learns a language is by 'ostensive teaching of words'. Wittgenstein puts this in the very opening section of *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*) as: "An important part of the training will consist in the teacher's pointing to the objects, directing the child's attention to them, and at the same time uttering a word; . . . This ostensive teaching of the words can be said to establish an association between the word and the thing"(*PI*, 6).[221] So when a child directs its attention to an object, say to a chair, we point at the chair and utter the name of the object. This is a simple protocol and seems to apply well to words like chair, table and cat. It gets more complicated when it comes to the name of colours and numbers because there is always a room for confusion. When we point two marbles and call that is two, there is always a chance that it could be understood that we are referring to the marbles but the not to numbers. As Wittgenstein puts it, "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case" (*PI*, 28). Moreover, "[w]ith different training the same ostensive teaching of these words would have effected a quite different understanding"[222] (*PI*, 6).

When it comes to value judgements ostensive teaching of words has its limits. Existence or non existence sets the limits when we teach words by referring objects through showing. We cannot point to a 'good' and say that it is a 'good.'

---

[221] Wittgenstein calls this process "ostensive teaching of words" rather than "ostensive definition" "because the child cannot as yet *ask* what the name is"(*PI*, 6). Wittgenstein introduces an imaginary language between a builder and his assistant as an example to demonstrate a complete primitive language, which is also consistent with Augustinian picture of language. This imaginary language consists of four words, these being: "block", "pillar", "slab", and beam". The builder (A) and his assistant (B) use these words like that: "A calls them out; –B brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call" (*PI*, 2). And Wittgenstein thinks this process of using words "as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language" (*PI*, 7). And he calls these games "language-games". He also calls the primitive languages, such as the above example, language-games. Finally, he describes what a language-game is like that: "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and actions into which it is woven, a "language-game" (*PI*, 7).

[222] Wittgenstein states in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* that: "The behaviour of humans includes of course not only what they do without ever having learned the behaviour, but also what they do (and so, e.g. say) after having received training. And this behaviour has its importance in relation to the special training. – If, e.g., someone has learnt to use the words "I am glad" as someone else learnt to use the words "I am frightened", we shall draw unlike conclusions from like behaviour" (*RPP*, 131).

Then, instead of ostensive definition we could use the method of description, but again we need to depend on the child's comprehension of the language, it needs to know the other words we will use. Rather than the difficulties of ostensive definition and description the difficulty is directing the child's attention to the 'good'. But at this point we should accept that the same techniques of teaching do not apply to words that signify an object and words that do not signify any actual object. Yet, we do not even come close to the answer to the question of how the child learns the different uses of 'good'. Here, we struggle with object-not object distinction and the difficulties of picture theory of meaning rather than the fact-value distinction.

Wittgenstein thinks that Augustine's mistake is treating the case of the child in the same way as the case of the foreign adult:

> Someone coming into a strange country will sometimes learn the language of the inhabitants from ostensive definition that they give him; and he will often have to *guess* the meaning of these definitions; will guess sometimes right, sometimes wrong.
>
> And now, I think, we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it had already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only yet not speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself" (*PI*, 32).

Concerning the example of the foreign adult, as the person knows another language and assuming that she has the concepts of numbers, colours and ethical words, could it be possible that she learns ethical and non-ethical words in the same way? In the case of foreign adult, as s/he already uses the colour words and words like 'good', 'bad' and 'beautiful' in her/his own language, there might be more room for the ostensive definition than the child's case. We could, like Wittgenstein's interlocutor, say that "an ostensive definition explains the use – the meaning – of a word when the overall role of the word in language is clear" (*PI*, 30). Then, this takes us to the idea that "[t]o understand a language means to be master of a technique" (*PI*, 199). Here, it is important to note that Wittgenstein also points out that if we go to a foreign country with entirely different traditions, even if we have a mastery of the country's language "[w]e do not *understand* the people" (*PI*, p.190). Thus, 'to be master of technique' is not just being able to speak the language, but also to know the customs, traditions and activities that take place in the context that

we are trying to understand. After all, for Wittgenstein, we "know what a word means *in certain contexts*" (*BB*, p.9).Therefore a foreigner that knows another language could only guess what is pointed at. There could be 'characteristic experiences' of pointing to a shape or colour, but if we think that it is a matter of guessing – interpretation – there is always a chance of interpreting the word in a different way than the other person is trying to convey. Wittgenstein explains the limitation of this kind of language learning as follows:

> Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word. If you describe the learning of language in this way, you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like "table", "chair", "loaf", and of people's names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself (*PI*, 1).

The ostensive definition as a method of teaching a language does not show us that we learn ethical value judgements differently than the way we learn non-ethical value judgements. What it states is that we do not learn words of judgement of value (both ethical and non ethical) as we learn colour and number words, or the object words. Ostensive definition is mainly object-dependent; words which are not object dependent (which are self-contradictory or fictitious) can hardly be taught by means of it. Even if ostensive definition could be applied to words that correspond to objects, in ordinary life the teaching process does not take place as it is suggested by ostensive teaching of words. As a matter of fact, you do not see parents walking around the house pointing to objects and repeating the names for the child to learn them. They simply talk to them, use sentences like "give me the toy", "where is your toy?"

Description by other words could work in some situations but not in all. You could describe a 'unicorn' as a horse that has a horn, for this description the other person or the child has to know the words horse and horn. In addition to the description, you need imagination and cognitive capability to understand these words. Children's fairy-tales are full of such imaginary things and reading and talking about imaginary things is not problematic.[223] In the ordinary use of language

[223] However, the case of uttering unreal and self-contradicting words troubled especially analytical philosophers and they tried to solve the problem of using these words meaningfully without assuming their existence. Briefly, in his theory of description, Russell analyzes complex descriptive names like 'the author of Waverly' as a part of a whole sentence like 'the author of Waverly was a poet.' Quine

we also make value judgements like "this is a good chair" and "this is a good person" and it is not an issue for us. But the presupposition that a name corresponds to an object causes a problem when we want to use absolute value judgements. As mentioned above, Wittgenstein thinks that trying to find "definitions corresponding to our concepts in aesthetics or ethics" will not solve our problem. Rather we must look "from what sorts of examples" (*PI*, 77) we learned the use of the words. Wittgenstein also states that: "But I *can teach* a person the use of the world! For a description of those circumstances is not needed for that" (*Z*, 115). The way of teaching without a need for description is to teach the person "the word *under particular circumstances*" (*Z*, 116).

Therefore, we must look at the particular circumstances that the word 'good' is used. The main difference in how we learn the words of judgement of value and the other words, seem to be the gestures, tone of the voice, behaviours of encouragement or discouragement followed by the action. Here, we are talking of acts, certain types of behaviour, not only words, objects and their names. Wittgenstein states the following:

> We say to a child "No, no more sugar" and take it away from him. Thus he learns the meaning of the word "no". If while saying the same words, we had given him a piece of sugar he would have learnt to understand the word differently. (In this way he has learnt to use the word, but also associate a particular feeling with it, to experience it in a particular way.) (*PG*, p.64)

When a child demonstrates a behaviour that we do not approve of, we say "No!" "Don't do that!" "That is bad". This may even be followed by a punishment. The child understands by the gesture and the tone of voice that we are upset, not happy, not approving its behaviour. The word 'bad' then could be associated by the child with something painful.[224] When the child starts to understand

---

explains this as: "the seeming name, a descriptive phrase, is paraphrased *in context* as a so-called incomplete symbol. No unified expression is offered as an analysis of the descriptive phrase, but a statement as a whole which was the context of that phrase still gets its full quota of meaning – whether true or false" (Willard Van Orman Quine. "On What There is" in *From a Logical Point of View*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), p.6). Russell's theory of description could be helpful in some sense, but as it is designed to solve the problem of uttering these words meaningfully without assuming of their existence, it won't be a solution to how we learn them.

[224] Halil Turan describes this process of learning as "learning by experience of pleasure and pain" and states the following: "Does not "yes" mean that something, a certain act, a certain claim, some reasoning or some judgement is permissible, useful, of consequence, of utility? . . . [M]y memory

what the common features are in all the cases that make the parents unhappy, upset. When it received an answer of 'no', then the use of the word 'bad' will have a certain meaning. Throughout its cognitive development the child constructs more complex rule systems. Learning through constructing similar rule systems and associating these rules with pain and pleasure and/or punishment and reward could work for learning value judgements.

At this point, understanding how a child constructs its moral reasoning might help us. Here, I would like to introduce Jean Piaget's work with children on moral reasoning because it will give us an insight into how moral philosophers construct their views as well as children and it will be a reference point to some of our future discussions. Piaget, working with children came to the conclusion that there are two types of moral reasoning, one concerns heteronomous morality and the other autonomous morality. Children up to ten years old are in the heteronomous morality stage and they take the moral rules literally and the consequences of an action are more important than the intention. Piaget, influenced by Kant, said children of eleven and older, move from blind obedience to an autonomous morality. At this point, it would be useful to recall what heteronomous and autonomous are in Kant's sense. One of the practical principles of the will is "*will giving universal law through all its maxims*" (AK 4:432). By this principle human beings, as rational beings, are subject to and bound by the laws given by themselves so they only need to act "in conformity with their own will". The idea is that we make the laws that we are required to obey, we have to conform to our own laws. But there must be a motivation to conform to the law. Kant names two motivations; one is conditional and related to 'one's own or another's interest', for example, disobedience of the law could be punished or obedience could be rewarded, Kant counts this as heteronomy of the will, whereas the other motivation is unconditional and not related to any interest other than acting in accordance with one's own law, which Kant calls 'the principle of the autonomy of the will.'

---

suggests that in all such cases I have received an answer, the ("yes" or "no") answer has directly or mediately been associated with some pleasure or pain. If my expectation fails or my claim is rejected, I am frustrated: I feel pain" (Halil Turan. "The Existence of Other Egos and the Philosophy of Moral Sentiments" *Analecta Husserliana* LXXXIV, 2005, p.179).

This Kantian influence is seen more obviously in Lawrence Kohlberg's[225] argument concerning the stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg, taking into account Piaget's studies, worked with children on moral dilemmas and concluded that there are six stages of moral reasoning. Which are:

1. Punishment-obedience orientation
2. Instrumental relativist orientation
3. Good boy – nice girl orientation
4. Law and order orientation
5. Social contract orientation
6. Universal ethical principle orientation

According to Kohlberg, children develop their moral reasoning from self-interest with an egocentric approach to autonomous ethical principles. So, while the first five of the stages imply motivation of certain kinds of interest, like avoiding punishment, acceptance, approval and the will to conform the peers or society, the final stage implies motivation as a rational being. The bad news is that, several years after his original description of these stages, in another article he pointed out that he came to the conclusion that the sixth stage is a theoretical ideal and hardly ever occurs in real life.[226]

Thus, with this insight, we could conclude that children do not need an object dependency when they are learning how to make judgements of value, they simply reflect their parents' actions, they are concerned with the punishment or reward they receive for their actions. Children learn what is right to do (what the parents approve and reward) and what is wrong to do (what the parents disapprove and punish). As I mentioned earlier, the gestures, tone of the voice of the parents, behaviours of approval or disapproval followed by action and the child's experience of its own reflections (through experiencing pain and pleasure) makes it learn how to use words like 'good', 'bad' and 'beautiful' and how to make judgements of value. I believe that in the learning process 'this food is bad' comes before the phrase 'this

[225] Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) is an American psychologist. Following Piaget's studies he studied moral reasoning and develepment. His work on moral reasoning overlaps with moral philosophy. His work seen as a contribution to descriptive ethics, as his moral studies concerned more on what people think right is.

[226] Robert F.Biehler and Jack Snowman. *Psychology Applied to Teaching* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), p.78.

person is bad.' The sentence 'you ought not to behave badly' will not be the first application of the word 'bad' that the child learns.

We must remember that for early Wittgenstein, as for Kant, punishment and reward have nothing to do with ethics (in the absolute sense) and Wittgenstein does not regard ethics as the expression of feelings[227], as the emotive-theory of ethics did. What he suggests is that we learn the use and the meaning of the word 'good' in particular circumstances in particular language-games. But, the word 'good' learned through particular language-games still seems to be used in the relative sense of value judgement. In order to play a game we must know the rules of the game and within the rules of the game we will determine what 'good' is. At this point we could wonder whether the learning process we discussed ('learning by experiencing pleasure and pain') could, in a way, bind the expression of 'good' (in absolute sense) to the expression of 'pleasure' and/or 'pain'. In other words, do we use the word 'good' (in absolute sense) in a language-game in the way we use the word 'pain' in a language-game? Is there any resemblance between expressions of feeling (pain) and expressions of judgements of value (good)? Are they the same kind of language-games? Are they language-games at all? If they are, how do we play such language-games? If we could "imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expressions to his inner experiences"(*PI*, 243), then we might also imagine a language by which we perhaps could express judgements of value in an absolute sense. Is such a language possible?

First of all, we must look at what it means to play a language-game.[228] Criteria for playing a language game are interpreted in various ways. The most

[227]Wittgenstein says that "[w]e may say that the words "fine", "oh", and also "perhaps" are *expressions* of sensations, of feeling. But I don't call the feeling the meaning of the word. We are not interested in the relation of the words to the sensation, whatever it may be, whether they are evoked by it, or are regularly accompanied by it, or give it an outlet. We are not interested in any empirical facts about language, considered as empirical facts. We are only concerned with the description of what happens and it is not the truth but the form of description that interest us. What happens considered as a game" (*PG*, p.66).

[228] What Wittgenstein's interlocutor questions is even more fundamental, that being: "You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common in all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language" (*PI*, 65).Wittgenstein's reply is this: " – Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but they are *related* to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language"" (*PI*, 65).

common one is that for someone to play a language game there must be a public criteria. Introducing public criteria of being able to play a language game is similar to saying that the judgement of value is determined by society. Such dependence on a society for Wittgenstein could only take to judgement of value in relative sense. Could we not make moral value judgements in isolation? Baker and Hacker state that : "If somebody, whether living in isolation or in society, satisfies the criteria for giving orders, framing rules and applying them, asking questions, etc., then he is correctly said to play these language-games; …" [229]

The need for a public criteria to play a language-game, to make ethical value judgements, enforce the norms that are determined by the group of people who plays this game, makes the acceptance of a society compulsory. It seems that we need at least one more person. That is to say, Robinson Crusoe on his island will not be able to play a language-game without Friday. Rather, if we accept what Baker and Hacker state, we can say that Robinson can only play a language game, say making ethical value judgements, if he applies the rules of the game that he learned when he was living in a society. But how can we distinguish whether he actually obeys the rules or he thinks that he obeys the rules? Wittgenstein states that: "And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule" (*PI*, 202). So, cannot we obey a rule privately? Wittgenstein's answer is very clear, he says: "it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it" (*PI*, 202).

This view leads us to Wittgenstein's 'private language argument'. Although, in the *Philosophical Investigations* the 'private language argument' is introduced later (in *PI* 243) than above mentioned remark, Saul A. Kripke states that this remark (i.e., it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately'), "the conclusion is already stated explicitly".[230] Does this mean that for later Wittgenstein ethics is still in the realm of what cannot be said? Therefore, in order to find out whether it so we need to examine the private language argument.

---

[229] G.P Baker and P.M.S. Hacker. *Wittgenstein Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (New York: Blackwell, 1988), p. 177.

[230] Saul A. Kripke. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1982, p.3).

5.3 The Private Language Argument

The 'private language argument' is mostly based on the discussion of sensations[231]. As I said earlier, the way we learn and use the word 'good' seems to be similar to the way we learn and use the word 'pain' than the word 'table'. Therefore, Wittgenstein's examples, based on sensations, could provide us a better understanding of whether his views on absolute sense of ethics are maintained or changed and, also, whether we could apply the 'private language argument' to ethics.

The 'private language argument' is introduced by Wittgenstein's interlocutor's question: "But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expressions to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and the rest – for his private use?" (*PI*, 243) He seems surprised by the idea that we cannot obey a rule privately. We do, in our ordinary language, perfectly express our inner expressions, do we not? We blame ourselves, punish ourselves, give ourselves orders, most commonly we ask a question of ourselves and answer it and we speak to ourselves. Are these not examples an instance of the private use of inner experiences? Wittgenstein's reply is:

> But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language (*PI*, 243).

Thus, what Wittgenstein says is impossible is not that a person speaks or writes of her inner sensations, but that another person cannot understand her. Once again, we come across the need for an 'other'. In order to be able to express my private sensations legitimately I need someone to understand me. But when I say "I am in pain" or "I believe in God" people understand me, as well as I understand them when they make the same utterances. However, Wittgenstein questions this sort of understanding. He asks: "How do I know that two people mean the same thing when each says he believes in God?" (*CV*, p.97) As we discussed earlier, we must look at the particular language games in which we use these words, to understand the rules of the language game and obey them. And in addition we are told that following a

[231] Kripke says that "[t]he 'private language argument' as applied to *sensations* is only a special case of much more general consideration about language . . .sensations has a crucial role as an (apparently) convincing *counterexample* to the general considerations . . ." (Kripke, p.3).

rule is a practice. Since we cannot follow a rule privately then I need public criteria to say that you and I mean the same thing when we both say "I believe in God". Thus, only with a presupposition of a community view could we understand "how a practice yields objective standards for determining what is correct".[232] How does this work?

Wittgenstein states that "a person goes by a sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom" (*PI* 198). This is generally regarded as the famous remark that refers to a community view. This remark associates Wittgenstein's example of the right road in "A Lecture on Ethics", where he says: "if I say that this is the *right* road I mean that it is the right road relative to a certain goal" (LE, p.5). In both cases we need a pre-determined standard. That is to accept that "[t]he standard behaviour of the members of the group is an external measure of what each individual does".[233] Wittgenstein says that "[i]f language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements" (*PI,* 242). Then to decide whether we mean the same thing when we utter a judgement of value we depend on the judgements of others. Thus following a rule has a social nature.[234] "*Practice* gives the words their sense" (*CV*, p.97). It is not only words but also the bodily signs that give meaning to words. The smile, gesture, the tone of the voice or a certain pattern of behaviour are sometimes more useful in our effort to understand (even verify) the 'sincerity' of the expressions of the inner experiences of others.[235] At this point we

---

[232] Baker & Hacker (1988), p.170. Baker and Hacker gives various examples of Wittgenstein's remarks considering community view. They refer to *PI* 198, 199, 189, 208, 179, 207, 25, 206 and 242.

[233] *Ibid*., P.170.

[234] Baker and Hacker say the following: "It is tempting to claim that a practice is a *shared* pattern of behaviour, the common property of a group or community of like-minded and consenting adults. On this view, calling following a rule 'a practice' is meant to highlight the essentially social nature of what we call 'following a rule': it is necessarily a custom established in the activities of a group. This seems to offer an immediate answer to the question of how a practice provides criteria of correctness for actions" (Baker & Hacker (1988), p.170).

[235] Turan explains how we verify the sincerity of others expressions of emotions as follows: "One can safely assume that what value words ultimately refer to are memories of "inner" experiences accompanied and marked by primitive signs, elements of inarticulate language, of certain "outer" bodily movements. . . . Even an intricate feeling like remorse, for example, can be recognized from bodily signs, and indeed I continue to make use of these signs in my actual experience in order to verify the sincerity of linguistic expressions people use to describe their emotions" (Turan, p.181).

should go back to our discussions on how a child learns value judgements and ask specifically how a child learns the word 'pain'? Wittgenstein gives a generally accepted way of how we teach a child the word 'pain' as:

> [w]hen a child behaves in such-and-such a way on particular occasions, I think it feels what I feel in such cases; and if I am not mistaken in this, then the child associates the word with the feeling and uses the word when the feeling reappears (*RPP*, 146).

Therefore, we assume that a child feels what we feel on certain occasions. If we saw the child crying and holding its jaw and we notice that its cheek is swollen then we associate this occasion with our own experiences when we had toothache and say to him "Oh! Do you have a toothache?" Or if we see the child holding its stomach and doubled up and see tears in its eyes then we associate it with our experience of stomach ache and we say "you have pain" or "you have stomach ache"[236]. And the child associates the word pain with what it was experiencing at that moment and uses it the next time it has a similar feeling.[237]

Wittgenstein replies to the question "how we teach a child the word pain" as follows[238]: "So if anyone did not know whether the word "pain" names a feeling or behaviour, the explanation would be instructive to *him*" (*RPP*, 146). So what we learn from this explanation is only information on what the word 'pain' names and it also informs us that "that the word is *not* used now for this feeling now for that" (*RPP*, 146). But he also points out that it might also be the case that the word could be used for different feelings.

---

[236] Wittgenstein states that: " A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behaviour" (*PI*, 244). But this does not mean that the word "pain" means "crying", instead Wittgenstein says that "the verbal expression of pain replaces crying but does not describe it" (*PI*, 244).

[237] Turan indicates a similar procedure and he says the following: I recognize others' feelings by looking for similarities between the signs by means of which I judge that they have those feelings and those signs in exemplary cases of experience in which I must have come to recognize these feelings as such, and have learned to call them such. (Turan, p.181)

[238] In *Zettel* Wittgenstein makes the exact remark on how we teach a child the word "pain", but there he replies to the question "what does this explanation explain" as: "Being sure that someone is in pain, doubting whether he is, and so on, are so many natural, instinctive, kinds of behaviour towards other human beings, and our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this relation. Our language-game is an extension of primitive behaviour. (For our language-game is behaviour.) (Instinct)" (*Zettel,* 545).

There is always a case where we might misinterpret the behaviour and associate it with different feelings. Someone could hold his/her stomach and double up with tears in his/her eyes out of laughter, not pain. Also, there is always a possibility that someone could 'simulate pain', that is: "he can behave as if he had pains without having them" (*RPP*, 143). And such a simulation of pain and sincerely having pain "might have the same expressions in behaviour"? (*RPP*, 144) Would I be able to distinguish them? If I think I can, what kind of evidence do I have to verify my judgement? "How do I know that the child I teach the use of the word 'pain' does not misunderstand me and so always call "pain" what I call "sham pain"?" (*RPP*, 145) It seems that the only one certain thing in the expression of feelings is that I do not doubt that I have that feeling. I know that "I have pain". But, most of the time I am in pain other people also know that I am in pain. Wittgenstein states that the other person can only guess that I am in pain and do not know that I am in pain with the certainty I know. It makes sense to doubt other people's pain but not our own, likewise it makes sense to say "I believe that he is in pain", but not to say "I believe I am in pain". Wittgenstein states that:

> The child that is learning to speak learns the use of the words "having pain", and also learns that one can simulate pain. This belongs to the language-game that it learns.
>
> Or again: It doesn't just learn the use of "He has pain" but also that of "I believe he has pain". (But naturally not of "I believe I have pain")[239] (*RPP*, 142).

Where we can only guess other people's feelings and from our guesses we can only believe that they have certain sensations. Can we say that we really understand their expressions? Wittgenstein's example of the 'beetle in a box' will be helpful in understanding his point. He says that:

> Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box (*PI*, 293).

Wittgenstein's interlocutor asks what would happen if the word beetle might have a use in these people's language. Wittgenstein replies to this question: "If

[239] Cf. *RPP*, 141. Wittgenstein says that "[t]he uncertainty of the ascription "He's got a pain" might be called a constitutional certainty" (*RPP*, 141).

so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something; for the box might even be empty" (*PI*, 293).

For Wittgenstein, we can express our private sensations, but "another person cannot understand the language" (*PI*, 243). We need an objective standard to confirm that our judgement that such-and- such behaviour is the sign of 'pain' to be able to say that someone is really in pain. For Wittgenstein, the only objective standard – if we can say that it is objective – is the agreement in the language we use. This is not to say that "human agreement decides what is true and what is false" as Wittgenstein's interlocutor suggests. Rather, "[i]t is what human beings *say* that is true or false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life" (*PI*, 241). And our private language does not conform to this criterion. We can only conform to this criterion if we agree with others that from now on when we see such-and-such a behaviour we will use the word 'pain'. And this set of agreements is valid only for a specific language-game and a specific form of life. When we step out that language game, the agreement loses its sense, we cannot apply it to another language game. Wittgenstein states that:

> We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them (*PI*, p.190).[240]

Thus, the idea of agreement on pre-determined standards for the use of language takes us back to early Wittgenstein's notion of relative sense of value judgements. As we discussed, for early Wittgenstein, we can only express the relative sense of value judgements, and the correctness of the use of value judgements is determined by the facts. In later Wittgenstein, we still can only express the relative sense of value judgements, but here, the rules of the language-game, the agreement on the use of language and the agreement of forms of life determine the

[240] Edwards states that it has been pointed out by Stanley Cavell, in "The Availibility of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," *Philosophical Review* 71(1962), that the last sentence literally reads: "We cannot find ourselves in them" (Edwards, p.145 and p.260).

correctness of the use of value judgements. If we consider Baker and Hacker's interpretation of the role of Wittgenstein's notion of rules in a language game as the criterion of correctness we can see the adherence resembles Wittgenstein's early views. Baker and Hacker say that "[t]he rule and nothing but the rule determines what is correct".[241] In "A Lecture on Ethics" Wittgenstein says that when we look at the expressions of value in the relative sense "there will simply be facts, facts, and facts but no Ethics" (LE, p.7). Although the framework changes the conclusion is the same, that is, we can only express the relative sense of value judgements. Later Wittgenstein still thinks that the absolute sense of value could only manifest itself. Wittgenstein, in 1950, still says that:

> If the believer in God looks around & asks "Where does everything I see come from?" "Where does all that come from?", what he hankers after is not a (causal) explanation; and the point of his question is the expression of this hankering. He is expressing, then, a stance towards all explanations. – But how is this manifested in his life?
> It is the attitude of taking a certain matter seriously, but then at a certain point not taking it seriously after all & declaring that something else is still more serious (*CV*, pp.96-97).

This remark is almost exactly echoing Wittgenstein's early views that the good in the absolute sense manifests itself in our attitudes towards the world. When we were investigating the conception of ethics in early Wittgenstein we referred to the following argument: "view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole – a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole- it is this that is mystical" (*TLP*, 6.45). There Wittgenstein gave us an idea how we could alter the world through our attitude to the world but did not tell us how we could see the world as a limited whole. At this point if we look at what Wittgenstein means by a different sense of seeing, we could have a better understanding of how we could change the world without any change in the facts, and how we could see the world as a limited whole, we could also see how the absolute sense of value manifests itself in later Wittgenstein.

[241] Baker&Hacker (1988), p.172

5.4 Aspect Blindness

Wittgenstein makes a distinction between two uses of the word 'see'. One is, 'see' as in the sentence "What do you see there?" (*PI*, p.165) As an answer you describe what you see there. It is seeing this and that. The other use of the word 'see' is: "I see a likeness between these two faces" (*PI*, p.165). Wittgenstein says that if you describe the two faces you 'see' as in the sense that 'what you see there' someone might draw the two faces accurately, but might not notice the likeness that you 'see' (in the second sense of 'see'). Although the drawing is the same, one might notice the likeness whereas the other might not. Without any change in the drawing if you 'suddenly notice' the likeness of the two faces, you 'see it differently'. That is what Wittgenstein calls "noticing an aspect" (*PI*, p.165). If we recall from our earlier discussions, in *Tractatus* Wittgenstein says that "[t]he world of the happy man is different one from that of the unhappy man" (*TLP*, 6.43). This difference comes from the notion of 'noticing an aspect'.

"But what is different: my impression? my point of view? – Can I say? I describe the alteration like a perception; quite as if the object had altered before my eyes" (*PI*, p.167). But the perception in question here is different from pointing out another picture and saying that "Now I am seeing *this*" (*PI*, p.167). I am still looking at the same picture of the two faces, so it must be different than reporting a new perception. For Wittgenstein, it is not the change of perception, but it is the change of aspect.

Wittgenstein uses Joseph Jastrow's[242] the duck-rabbit figure to illustrate the notion of noticing an aspect. This illustration also clarifies how he makes a distinction between the change of perception and the change of aspect.

[242]Joseph Jastrow (1863-1944) was an American psychologist, who used the duck-rabbit figure to demonstrate that perception is not only a consequence of the stimulus, but also is a product of mental activity

The duck-rabbit, Figure 1, which can be seen as a duck's or rabbit's head is shown below:

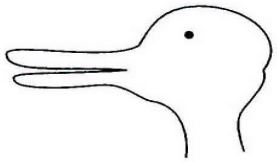

Figure 1: Duck-Rabbit[243]

If someone shows you the figure above and asks what it is, you could reply "It is a rabbit", "It is a duck" or "It is a duck-rabbit". For Wittgenstein, these answers are "the report of perception". But on the other hand, if you reply "Now it's a rabbit" your answer is not a report of perception, it is the expression of the change of aspect. While you are looking at the duck-rabbit figure you could see it as a duck and suddenly notice the other aspect and say "Now it is a rabbit". "The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception's being unchanged" (*PI*, p.167). This is how "the good and the bad exercise of the will" do not alter the facts, but do alter the world (*TLP*, 6.43). The perception of the facts does not change, but to see the world *sub specie aterni* is an expression of a new perception, an expression of a change of aspect. As mentioned before, "The will is an attitude of the subject to the world" (*NB*, p.87). So when my attitude changes I can see another aspect, my perception changes in a different sense, without the change of the visual image. So, although the world is the same, the unhappy man sees the world with another aspect than the happy man[244].

So, can we say that the unhappy man is unhappy because he cannot see the aspect that the happy man can see? Is it possible that you can never see an aspect that others could? Wittgenstein states that "there are, for example, styles of painting

[243] Source: The duck-rabbit figure used by Jastrow originally published in *Harper's Weekly* (Nov. 19, 1892, p. 1114. The figure I used is taken from mathworld.wolfram.com viewed 1 February 2008 <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/topics/Illusions.html.>

[244]Barrett, on this subject, states the following: "The altering of the world is here an act of will, not of perception. But must it not also involve a change of perception either prior or subsequent on the act of will? The person of the bad will views the world from the way the person of good will sees it. . . . To change one's attitude to the world is to see it differently"(Barrett, p.139).

which do not convey anything to me in this immediate way[245], but do to other people" (*PI*, p.172). How could this happen? What causes such a difference? For Wittgenstein, "custom and upbringing have a hand in this" (*PI*, p.172).

Wittgenstein puts this question as: "Could there be human beings lacking in the capacity to see something as *something* – and what would that be like?" (*PI*, p.182) Establishing an analogy with colour-blindness, Wittgenstein calls the incapacity 'to see something as *something'* "aspect-blindness" (*PI*, p.182). An aspect-blind person could see one or the other aspect but cannot shift from one to another, i.e., cannot notice the change of aspect. "Aspect-blindness will be akin to the lack of a 'musical ear'" (*PI*, p.182). Then, an aspect-blind person can hear the sound, but cannot recognise the tune, unable to notice the likeness of one tune to another. The analogy of 'musical ear' gives us a room to apply the aspect-blindness and 'seeing the likeness' or 'seeing as . . .' to aesthetics. A person who lacks a 'musical ear' can recognize the tunes or voice of a singer she knows in a particular song. But if you change the context, say the same singer is singing an unfamiliar song she might not recognize the singer. Thus an unhappy man could be defined as an aspect-blind man, who is unable to see the good aspects of the world, who is unable to shift his view from one aspect to another, who is unable to see the world *sub specie aeterni*.

How can a person see the things differently? Can we teach that person to see the things differently? If we take the analogy of 'colour blindness' and 'lack of a musical ear' strictly and apply it to the case of 'aspect-blindness' then the answer must be: "No". But it is not easy to accept such a view, there must be a way to show an unhappy man how to see the things differently. Otherwise, we must assume that how hard we try to show them the different aspects of things, it is not possible for them to see the 'good' aspect of things. In order to teach someone to see things differently we must change "his *way of looking at things*" (*PI*, 144). Surely, it is not easy to change someone's way of looking at things, but the difficulty of the task should not rule out the possibility of achieving it. Showing how to see another aspect of things is related to "the *possibility of getting him to understand"* (*PI*, 143). The

[245] By 'the immediate way' Wittgenstein means our immediate reaction to the picture (painting). When we are looking at a triangle in a picture, we do not say: ""It may also be something that has fallen over", but "[t]hat glass has fallen over and is lying there in fragments". This is how we react to the picture" (*PI*, p.171).

possibility of the person to understand what we are showing or teaching depends on the person's capacity. If the person could not understand what we are trying to teach, even if we try various methods, then we can say that the person's "capacity to learn *may* come to an end here" (*PI*, 144). But the person's capacity coming end is not related to the limits of the language, it is about the way of looking at things, the way the person sees likenesses as well as differences, the capacity to look at things differently. Wittgenstein states the following:

> I wanted to put that picture before him, and his *acceptance* of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently; that is to compare it with *this* rather than *that* set of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking at things.* (Indian mathematician: "Look at this.")[246] (*PI*, 144)

The notion of 'way of looking at things' is important in our quest of understanding Wittgenstein's views on ethics. The happy man and the unhappy man are looking at things differently that is why their world is different. As I said, when the unhappy man fails to see things in another aspect, the only thing we can do is to provide him with further descriptions, try to give him reasons to look at the same thing in a different way. But his understanding depends on his acceptance of the new aspect in the picture we put before him. But, if whatever further descriptions we provide do not make him accept the picture the way we want him to see, then there is nothing else to do. He will remain unhappy. Moore, in "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33" reports Wittgenstein's view on reasons in aesthetics, which is in line with our discussion of changing the way of looking at things. Moore reports:

> *Reasons*, he said, in Aesthetics are "of the nature of further descriptions" . . . all that Aesthetics does is "to draw your attention to a thing," to "place things side by side." [Wittgenstein] said that if , by giving reasons of this sort, you make the person "see what you see" but it "still doesn't appeal to him," that is "an end" of the discussion; and what he, Wittgenstein, had at "the back of his mind" was "the idea that aesthetic discussions were like discussions in a court of law," where you try to "clear up the circumstances" of the action which is being tried, hoping that in the end what you say will "appeal to judge." And he said that the same

[246] In the *Zettel*, Wittgenstein states that: "I once read somewhere that a geometrical figure, with the words "Look at this", serves as a proof for certain Indian mathematicians. This looking too effects an alteration in one's way of seeing" (*Z,* 461).

> sort of "reasons" were given, not only in Ethics, but also in Philosophy.[247]

Not being able to clear up the circumstances of the action, not being able to "*command a clear view* of the use of our words" (*PI*, 122) is the main source of failure of seeing different aspects of things. A clear presentation of the action, of the picture, lets us see the 'connexions' and provide an understanding. "The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of the account we give, the way we look at things" (*PI*, 122). The way we look at things effects the way we construct our value judgements.

The way we look at things is somewhat determined by our form of life. The agreement in the language we use, the agreement in our form of life determines the agreement in our method of investigation, our descriptions of a thing and also shapes the way we look at things. Cavell says that "[y]ou cannot use words to do what we do with them until you are initiate of the forms of life which give those words the point and shape they have in our lives".[248] We see the similarities and the differences of things by looking at the family resemblances of the language-game in our form of life. If we try to apply our way of looking at things in another form of life in the same way we look at them in our own form of life, it is possible to fail to understand the 'likeness' of the thing as the natives of this form of life understand it.

To understand the effects of form of life in our way of looking, let's take the example of an anthropologist who observes a ritual in a primitive culture. The anthropologist, in order to describe and explain the ritual must understand it by comparing it with other actions that s/he has experienced and so s/he understands. "But with another comparison in mind, [s]he might understand it differently".[249] What is the object of comparison in the mind of the anthropologist? Wittgenstein states that:

> Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regimentation of language – as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-

[247] G.E. Moore. "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33." *Mind*, New Series, 64, (Jan., 1955), p.19.

[248] Cavell, p.184

[249] Edwards, p.140

> games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities (*PI*, 130).

Wittgenstein states that 'ineptness' or 'emptiness' in our assertion can be avoided by presenting the language-game "as what it is, as an object of comparison". For Wittgenstein, presenting the language-game as an object of comparison presents it as 'a measuring-rod'. This is different than presenting it as "a preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond" (*PI*, 131). Presenting the language-game as the latter, for Wittgenstein, is: "The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy" (*PI*, 131).

Wittgenstein criticises James George Frazer[250] on the grounds that he uses his own language game as 'a measuring-rod' when he looks at the ritual and applying the same measuring-rod to another language game is just presenting your language game as "a preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond"(*PI*, 131). Moore reports that one of the chief mistaken points that Wittgenstein pointed out with regard to Fraser's *Golden Bough* is "to suppose that there was only one "reason", in the sense of "motive", which led people to perform a particular action".[251] The case of the explanation of magic, say stabbing an effigy of an enemy believing that they will hurt him/her, is a mistake because they might have to stab an effigy with another motive. "Our mistake is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'photo-phenomenon'. That is, what we ought to have said: *this language-game is played"* (*PI*, 654). Here, we can say that what we need is a change in our perception, a new 'way of looking' at the ritual, looking at things with a new conception of philosophy, seeing the things through a descriptive method rather than an explanatory one.

What will happen when I have a new way of looking, when I see a new aspect of a thing? Will I be able to express my feelings in the way others understand? Wittgenstein says that, discovering a new way of looking is like having "invented a new way of painting; or, again, a new metre, a new kind of song" (*PI*, p.401).

---

[250] Wittgenstein read Sir James George Frazer's book *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* in 1930. Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* edited by Rush Rhees and were published in 1979 (Thomas de Zengotita. "On Wittgenstein's Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough" *Cultural Anthropology*, 4 (Nov., 1989), p.390).

[251] G.E. Moore. "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33," p.19.

Edwards points out that, here, in describing a new way of looking at things, Wittgenstein does not use any scientific terms, such as "truth or falsity, correctness or error, plausibility or implausibility" instead "he uses "aesthetic" objects of comparison".[252] The new way of looking at things, the new perception, manifests itself in our attitude. Although I cannot express my private sensations, they manifest themselves my attitude towards others. I become conscious of the new aspects of others facial expressions for example.[253] With the new way of looking things I look at the world and others and my attitude towards them changes my world. Wittgenstein states that "what is important is not the *words* you use or what you think while saying them, so much as the difference that they make at different points in your life" (*CV*, p.97). The world of a believer and the non-believer will be different in this sense. And, theology, says Wittgenstein, "gesticulates with words, as it were, because it wants to say something & does not know how to express it. *Practice* gives the words their sense" (*CV*, p.97). This is to say, what is good and bad can only manifest themselves in our practices, but still we cannot express them.

Until now we looked at the new insights of later Wittgenstein to understand how his new way of looking at philosophy affects his views on ethics in the absolute sense. We discovered refutation of the scientific method of philosophy, the change in his picture theory of language, getting rid of the sharp boundaries and introducing a new way of seeing things only allows us express the relative sense of value. The absolute sense of value still stays in the realm of what cannot be said. As the limits of language are not as sharp as in early Wittgenstein, instead of introducing ethics as transcendental, later Wittgenstein allows ethics remain in the world of a private language. As we discussed in the context of private language argument, although we could express our inner sensations, they cannot be understood by the others. So we cannot talk about a language-game that consists of private language. Hence we cannot talk about ethics the in absolute sense. Ethics, rather than being seen as transcendental, can be seen as a form of life. But when you see ethics as a

[252] Edwards, p.146.

[253] Cf. Wittgenstein's following remarks: "This aspect may suddenly change and then a new looking follows the change. One is conscious of, e.g., the facial expression one *contemplates* it" (*RPP*, 1032). "We become conscious of the aspect only when it changes. As when someone is conscious only of a change of note, but does not have absolute pitch"(*RPP*, 1034).

form of life you must always keep in your mind the public criteria, and that is to regard ethics in a relative sense. Like the 'beetle in the box', the absolute sense of ethics has no place in the language game. Consequently, we can say that Wittgenstein's conception that ethics in the absolute sense is incommunicable was maintained although most fundamental notions of his philosophy changed.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of my investigation I tried to understand what it meant that discourse on ethics is impossible. Such an idea is puzzling because we seem to be perfectly capable of having a discourse on ethics. The history of philosophy also assures us that discourse on ethics is possible. Philosophers have kept tackling Socrates' question "how should one live?" and this question is recognised as timeless.[254] Kant, although he regards ethics as belonging to supersensible reality, continues his discourse on ethics. Moore, tells us that there is a 'good in itself' although it is a non-natural and intuitively known notion. Even Wittgenstein says he 'respected deeply' the tendency to write or talk on ethics (LE, p.11). Thus, we wonder, in what sense ethics is unsayable and whether those who say that ethics is unsayable have a different conception of ethics.

As mentioned, our ontological, epistemological and metaphysical point of view is a very important determinant of how we conceive ethics and the possibility of ethical discourse. Therefore, I examined the standpoint of the idea that ethics is unsayable. To understand this standpoint of view we must look at the nature of the questions one asks regarding ethics. For example, Moore questions whether 'good' is definable, whether 'good' is deducible from natural objects, whether the propositions about 'good' are analytic or synthetic. Wittgenstein questions whether ethical value judgements correspond to facts, whether sentences that contain ethical value judgements are meaningful. These questions are related to the use of value judgements and the relationship between values and facts. Although, we can easily distinguish the difference of the use of word 'good' in sentences like 'this is a good chair' and 's/he is a good person,' it is not always easy to tell that both sentences are related to facts. If we say that a proposition is meaningful if and only if, it pictures

[254] Bernard Williams investigates this question in detail and holds that it is the timeless. That its concern is not about a particular time and particular act, reflects a philosophical issue whether it takes us into an ethical world or whether it also contains non-ethical considerations. See Bernard Williams, "Socrates' Question" in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Roudledge, 2006).

reality or it corresponds to a fact, then we start to verify the meaningfulness of every proposition accordingly. When we test this definition of 'meaningful' on a value judgement we begin to question what fact does a sentence like "you ought not to lie" correspond to. We could give examples of situations that lying results in bad consequences, so this sentence may be seen to correspond to these facts, so it may be either true or false. But experience also tells us that there are situations that we lie not to hurt a person so it is not always the case that lying results in bad consequences. Here, we encounter Wittgenstein's distinction of relative and absolute sense of value judgements.

Wittgenstein says that relative sense of value judgements are related to pre-determined standards and the sentences concerning relative sense of value judgements are propositions referring to facts, so they become meaningful. If we can determine the cases of 'right' and agree on them, then we can legitimately use the word 'right' in our sentences, and they will be meaningful. For Wittgenstein, it is not the relative sense of value judgements that ethics is concerned with, rather it is the absolute sense of value judgements. For Wittgenstein, if you talk about the absolute sense of 'good' the word 'good' expresses something important, something higher and something that everybody will necessarily agree the goodness of, regardless of their preferences and tendencies (LE, p.7). Wittgenstein asks: "Can there be any ethics if there is no living being but myself?"(*NB*, p.79) and he answers his question as: "If ethics is supposed to be something fundamental, there can" (*NB*, p.79). And the absolute sense of value judgements concern ethics as such fundamental, independent of our pre-determined standards, regardless of a community's agreement on what good is. And such an absolute sense of ethics is what cannot be expressed.

Logical positivists accept Wittgenstein's view on the inexpressibility of ethics and construct their theory on the view that "the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification".[255] You can only verify the truth of empirical propositions. When you implement the logical positivists' method of verification on sentences that express value judgements you can only verify the value judgements if they correspond to a fact. Schlick with a naturalistic view on ethics says that if we cannot reduce 'good' to a natural object we cannot express it, i.e., such a statement is meaningless. With this approach he puts absolute sense of ethics aside and mainly

[255] Rudolf Carnap. "The Elimination of Metaphysics," p. 76.

deals with the relative sense. Schlick suggests that ethics is a branch of sociology or psychology. Here, what he is concerned with is the relative sense of ethics. On the other hand, Ayer and Stevenson state that value judgements can only express emotions. For Wittgenstein the expressibility of emotions is in question. It seems that when Ayer and Stevenson point out that the nature of disagreement in value judgements is not due to disagreement in belief but disagreement of attitude, they seem to adopt Wittgenstein's view that ethics manifests itself in our attitude towards the world. But this may not the case, because Ayer and Stevenson are still concerned with the relative sense of ethics when they mention the disagreement of attitude. For example, Stevenson gives the example of disagreement on where to dine to stress disagreement in attitudes. Here, whether the disagreement is in belief or attitude, the subject of the disagreement is about the relative sense of value judgements. The main difference between Wittgenstein's conception of ethics and both the naturalistic and the emotive theory of ethics is that Wittgenstein was always concerned with the absolute sense of ethics, whereas logical positivists developed ethical theories on the relative sense.

Wittgenstein's conception of 'attitude' seems to be different from Ayer's and Stevenson's conception of attitude when they are talking about disagreement in attitude. Wittgenstein's concern is the absolute sense. The attitude he is concerned with is in the sense that although my attitude towards the world does not alter the facts, it changes my world. He points out that a happy man's life is different from the life of an unhappy man. Rush Rhees reports that Wittgenstein refused to discuss cases like "whether Brutus' stabbing Caesar was a noble action" or "Has a man right to let himself be put to death for the truth?" by stating that in both cases we do not know the state of mind of these people and how they feel.[256] On the other hand, when Rhees suggested a discussion of the case of "a man who has come to a conclusion that he must either leave his wife or abandon his work of cancer research" (Rhees, p.22) Wittgenstein agreed to discuss "the problem facing" this man. The man struggles between his two roles, i.e., a husband and a scientist, and if he will not choose one, he will not be able to do either properly; he will be both a bad husband and a bad scientist. The man's attitude will vary according the way he looks at

[256] Rush Rhees. "Some Developments is Wittgenstein's View of Ethics" *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (Jan., 1965), p.22.

things. He might have the view that he cannot ignore the suffering of humanity so he cannot abandon his research and the wife will get over it. Or he might have a deep love to his wife and if he gives up his work he will not be a good husband anyway. On the other hand, he might think that someone else could carry on the research and choosing the wife will not be abandoning the suffering of humanity. That is what Wittgenstein calls "taking up an ethical attitude".[257] Wittgenstein says that "[w]hatever he finally does, the way things then turn out may affect his attitude".[258] This case is related to the attitude of the man towards life. Here, the problem is related to an ethical attitude whereas the concerns in the other cases are related to what these people feel, what was in their mind.

For Wittgenstein change in attitude is an important notion in understanding the way ethics manifests itself. Wittgenstein emphasizes the importance of seeing things differently. 'Noticing an aspect' is the key to seeing things differently, here noticing the difference is as crucial as noticing the likeness of the things in question. In order to see things differently we must change our "*way of looking at things*" (*PI*, 144). But to change the way of looking at things is not that easy. Wittgenstein says that there could be people who lack the capacity to see different aspects of things, he calls this "aspect-blindness" (*PI*, p.182). The notion of seeing things differently was examined to see whether this notion could give us room to have discourse on ethics. When you change your way of looking at things this change manifests itself in your attitude towards things and it is still questionable whether you could express the manifestation of your attitude. Our forms of life somewhat determine the way we look at things. If we accept the role of forms of life as a determinant of our attitude towards the world then we must presuppose the existence of others, the agreement in the language we use and the agreement of our form of life. And as mentioned, if we presuppose an agreement on the expression of value judgements in the language we use, we go back to where we started, that is the pre-determined standards that allow us to have discourse on ethics, but this is the

[257] Rhees, p.22. Wittgenstein says that if we consider Christian ethics in this case, we will see that "should he leave his wife or not? is no problem to discuss at all. The answer is clear, "he has got to stick to her come what may." (Rhees, p.23).

[258] Rhees, p.23.

relative sense of ethics. What we were searching for is the possibility of discourse on ethics in the absolute sense.

Wittgenstein's question: "Can there be any ethics if there is no living being but myself?" becomes meaningful when we introduce forms of life and language-games as the determinant of the use of language. This is questioning our presupposition that we need the existence of others to have discourse on ethics. This widely accepted commonsense presupposition deserves a separate line of investigation with concentration on the problems of other minds. But presupposing the existence of others for discourse on ethics does not make a fundamental conception of ethics possible as early Wittgenstein holds. If we cannot say that 'if ethics is a fundamental thing so there can be ethics if there is no living being but oneself,' then the discourse on ethics is limited only to the relative sense. But even if one accepts that 'there could be ethics even if there is no living thing but myself,' later Wittgenstein does not let us have discourse on ethics in the absolute sense either. In later Wittgenstein a similar question arises on the notion of 'private language'. As we cannot obey a rule privately, even if there is ethics without the existence of others, it can only be captured by my private language. Since I cannot express my private sensations, ethical discourse is still impossible. Expressing our feelings is not the issue here, rather the issue is whether others could understand us when we express our feelings.

We have seen that refutation of the scientific method of philosophy, the change in Wittgenstein's picture theory of language, getting rid of the sharp boundaries and introducing a new way of seeing things only allows us express the relative sense of value. The absolute sense of value still stays in the realm of what cannot be said. Ethics in the absolute sense needs to be seen as fundamental, it is higher and it does not necessitate the agreement of a group of people, or even the existence of others. Statements of ethics in absolute sense must be universally true. As mentioned, experience can only provide us a generalization of certain causal connections but cannot provide a warrant that it will happen next time. Thus statements of ethics must be like propositions of logic. But when we examine actual statements of ethics, it is hard to assume that they are universally true.

On the other hand, it is safe to assume that our attitudes, ethical conduct and ethical utterances find their meaning within a community and what is seen as

universal are the rules that are approved and accepted by a group of people. But this assumption, as discussed, regards ethics in the relative sense. However, it may not be necessary to regard discourse on 'higher' values to be referring to the absolute sense of ethics. If we consider religious discourse, which seems to be a discourse on absolute sense of value, is actually a discourse on pre-determined standards of our form of life. For example, believers accept that certain behaviour is 'good' and agree to behave according to the rules of the language-game of religion. What makes 'good' seem to be higher is that everyone in this language-game of religion shares a form of life and uses the word 'good' as agreed. Later Wittgenstein with his conception of language-game and forms of life creates room for such a religious or ethical discourse. Although obeying a rule in a language-game of ethics is seemingly a discourse on ethics in the absolute sense, obviously it is still a discourse in the relative sense of ethics. But, if we are satisfied with the discourse on ethics that our form of life allows us to consider that there could be various language games that let us have discourse on various value judgements, then since we are able to have an ethical discourse the difference between relative and absolute sense of ethics will become insignificant. Later Wittgenstein's conception of a language-game provides us the possibility of having discourse on ethics without a need for reference to facts. For Wittgenstein, praying is a language-game; if I can pray to God in a language-game, it does not matter whether God is defined by the community of believers or God is really a supreme being as long as we are able to talk about God. Thus, our urge to have discourse on ethics forces us to search every possibility of having such a discourse and regarding it meaningful. Later Wittgenstein still regards ethics as unsayable in the absolute sense, but allows the possibility of discourse on ethics in a language-game. Here the meaning of the word is not related to whether the word represents reality, but just to the use of the 'word' in a language-game. Whether in relative or absolute sense, we could use words like 'good' and 'God' in a language-game and these words will not be meaningless.

I believe that later Wittgenstein's views on ethics (in the absolute sense) remain the same as those of the early Wittgenstein, but later Wittgenstein's conception of language with arbitrary boundaries allows us to talk about ethics even though this discourse could be limited with a particular language-game and form of life. I believe that what is higher could change from one society to another, therefore

I think that the conception of a language-game reflects well how we have a discourse on ethics in its absolute sense for us. This is not true for Wittgenstein, because for Later Wittgenstein ethics is still as fundamental as it was for early Wittgenstein. It must be higher and there must be ethics even if there exists no one else but me. I think it does not seem to be necessarily the case for the possibility of a fruitful discourse on ethics. There might not be a universal definition of ethics, but still this does not stop us speaking on ethics. Language-games do not have to occur within a very restricted group of people. If we recall the game analogy of Wittgenstein, the Olympic Games are well played by many people that come from different countries, different societies, who all share one thing common, that is, the same practice in their form of life; they all practice the same sports with the same rules. Thus this even gives us the possibility of having discourse on ethics in a universal arena as long as we share common features in our form of life and are able to agree on the language we will use. I believe that this possibility allows us to talk of a kind of Wittgensteinian language of ethics.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ard, J. David. "Knowing a Name." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 43 (Mar., 1983), pp. 377-388.

Ayer, A.J. (ed.). *Logical Positivism* (New York: The Free Press, 1959).

Ayer, A.J. *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 2001).

Baldwin, Thomas. "Moore, G.E." in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge.

Baker, G.P., & Hacker, P.M.S. *Language, Sense and Nonsense* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

Baker, G.P., & Hacker, P.M.S. *Wittgenstein Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (New York: Blackwell, 1988).

Baldwin, Thomas. "Editor's Introduction" in *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. ix-xxxvii).

Barrett, Cyril. *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

Biehler, F.Robert & Snowman, Jack. *Psychology Applied to Teaching* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986).

Carnap, Rudolf. "The Old and the New Logic" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, A.J (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.133-146); first published in the first issue of *Erkenntnis* (1930-31).

Carnap, Rudolf. "The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, A.J (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.60-81); first published in *Erkenntnis,* II (1932).

Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
Crisp, Roger. "Fact /Value Distinction" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge.

de Zengotita, Thomas. "On Wittgenstein's Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough." *Cultural Anthropology*, 4 (Nov., 1989), p.390-398.
Edwards, C. James. *Ethics without Philosophy Wittgenstein and the Moral Life* (Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1982).

Feiser, James. "Is Hume a Moral Sceptic?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 50 (Sep., 1989), pp.89-105.

Friedman, Micheal. "Logical Positivism" in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London: Routledge.

Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum Publishing Group, 2004).

Gottlieb, Gidon. *The Logic of Choice* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1968).

Hare, R.M. *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* ed. J.B. Schneewind (Indianapolis: Hackett publishing Company,1983).

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Kant, Imanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kempt Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965).

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Kant, Immanuel, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Kripke, Saul A. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 1982).
MacIntyre, Alasdair. *A Short History of Ethics* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002).

Malcolm, Norman. *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Malcolm, Norman. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

McGuinness, Brain., & Von Wright, Georg Henrik (ed.). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Cambridge Letters* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

Mill. J.S. *Utilitarianism,* ed. George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2001).

Monk, Ray. *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991).
Moore, G.E. *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Moore, G.E. "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33." *Mind*, New Series, 64, (Jan., 1955), pp.1-27.

Munitz, Milton K. *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy* (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981).

Neurath, Otto. "Protocol Sentences" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp. 199-208; first published in *Erkenntnis* , III (1932/33).

Neurath, Otto. "Sociology and Physicalism" in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.282-320); first published in *Erkenntnis,* II (1931/2).

Putnam, Hilary. *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Putnam, Hilary. *Ethics without Ontology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

Quine ,Willard Van Orman. “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
Quine, Willard Van Orman, “On What There is” in *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Rhees, Rush. “Some Developments is Wittgenstein’s View of Ethics.” *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (Jan., 1965), pp. 17-26.

Schlick, Moritz. “What is the Aim of Ethics?” in *Logical Positivism*, ed. Ayer, A.J (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.247-265).

Schlick, Moritz. “The Foundation of Knowledge” in *Logical Positivism,* ed. A.J. Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.209-227).

Stevenson, Charles L. *Facts and Values* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963).

Turan, Halil. “The Existence of Other Egos and the Philosophy of Moral Sentiments.” *Analecta Husserliana* LXXXIV, 2005, pp.177-191.

Von Wright, G. H. “Bibliographical Sketch” in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a Memoir*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.3-20.

Waismann, Friedrich. “How I See Philosophy,” in *Logical Positivism,* ed. A.J Ayer (New York: The Free Press, 1959, pp.345-380).

Wellman, Carl. *The Language of Ethics* (Cambridge: Harward University Press, 1961).

Williams, Bernard. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2006).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. “A Lecture on Ethics.” *The Philosophical Review*, 74 (1965), pp.3-12.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routlege Classics, 2005).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Notebooks 1914-1916*, trans. and ed. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, trans. and ed. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. I, trans. and ed. G.E.M. Anscombe & ed. G.H. von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Culture and Value*, ed. G.H. von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees & trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

Wolcher, Louis E. *Beyond Transcendence in Law and Philosophy* (London: Birkbeck Law Press, 2005).

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Oktar, Sibel
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: 15 July 1967, Ankara
Marital Status: Single
Phone: +90 212 366 06 89
Fax: +90 212 366 06 53
email: sibel.oktar@ozyegin.edu.tr

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Philosophy	1993
BS	METU Psychology	1989
High School	Kdz.Ereğli Anadolu High School, Kdz. Ereğli	1985

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2007- Present	Özyeğin University	Human Resources Director
1997-2007	Aviva Hayat ve Emeklilik	Human Resources Group Manager
1996-1997	Aksigorta	Training Assistant Manager
1991-1996	The Banks Association of Turkey	Training Centre Manager

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

HOBBIES

Travelling, Movies, Swimming

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Turkish Summary

Bu çalışmada etiği söylem dışında bırakan bakış açısı incelenmiştir. Etiğin dile getirilemez olduğunu açıkça ilk kez söyleyen felsefeci Ludwig Wittgenstein olduğu için Wittgenstein'in etik hakkındaki düşünceleri üzerinde yoğunlaşılmıştır. Analitik etik, doğru edimin ne olduğu ile değil dile getirilen etik ifadelerin anlamları ile ilgilenir. Etik edim ve etik ifadelerin anlamına ilişkin soruların farklılığı ile değer yargılarının ve "iyi" teriminin tanımına ilişkin soruşturmanın öneminin vurgulanmasının G.E.Moore'un *Principia Ethica*'sı ile başladığı genel olarak kabul görmüştür. Bu nedenle, Moore bu çalışmanın kapsamına dahil edilmiştir. Wittgenstein'ın etik ve metafizik ifadelerin dile getirilemezliğine ilişkin görüşü Mantıkçı Olguculari etkilemiştir. Dolayısıyla Mantıkçı Olgucuların etiğin dile getirilemezliği üzerine olan iki kuramı, Doğalcı Etik ve Duygucu Etik Kuramları da araştırmanın kapsamındadır. Wittgenstein'ın sonraki dönem felsefesinin dil oyunları aracılığıyla etik söyleme olanak tanıdığı düşüncesi ile Wittgenstein'ın önceki dönem ve sonraki dönem felsefeleri ayrı ayrı incelenmiştir. Dil oyunu kavramının etik söylem biçimimizi yansıttığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Moore, *Ahlak Felsefesinin İlkeleri*'nde "iyi" teriminin tanımlanıp tanımlanamadığını, doğal bir özelliğe indirgenip indirgenemeyeceğini ve "iyi" terimini içeren terimlerin analitik mi sentetik mi olduğunu inceler. Ve "iyi" teriminin tanımlanamaz, analiz edilemez ve her hangi bir şeye indirgenemez yalın bir terim olduğu sonucuna varır. Değer ifade eden terimlerin olgulara indirgenemezliği savı bizi Moore'un doğalcılık yanılgısına götürür. Moore'a göre, hemen hemen her ahlak felsefecisi özellikle de doğalcı etik savunucuları, olgu değil bir değer olan "iyi" yi doğal bir özellikle özleştirme yanılgısı olan doğalcılık yanılgısına düşmüşlerdir. Ancak Moore'a göre doğalcılık yanılgısı sadece doğalcı etikle sınırlı değildir. Metafizik etik de "iyi"yi doğa dışı bir özellikle özdeştirerek aynı yanılgıya düşmüştür. Moore'a gore metafizik etikçilerin yahatası doğada ve zamanda var olmayan bir nesnenin doğadışı bir gerçeklikte var olduğunu düşünmektir. Ancak,

Moore "iyi"nin doğal olmadığını ve özel bir sezgi ile bilinebileceğini söyleyerek bir anlamda "aşkın nesne" ve doğadışı bir gerçeklik kavramını çağrıştırmaktadır.

Doğadışı bir gerçeklikten bahsetmek söylenemez olanı söylemek ve dilin sınırlarının ötesine geçmek olduğu için analitik felsefe tarafından eleştirilir. *Tractatus* düşüncenin dile getirilişine yani neyin söylenebilir neyin söylenemez olduğuna dair sınır çizmeye çalışır. Wittgenstein'ın önermelerin gerçekliğin tasarımı olduğuna ilişikin görüşü söylenebilir olanın belirleyicisidir. Bu görüşe göre bir önermenin doğruluğu o önermenin gerçekliğin tasarımı olup olmadığına bağlıdır. Wittgenstein'a göre doğru önermeler sadece doğabilminin önermeleridir dolayısı ile sadece doğabilimlerin önermeleri söylenebilir. Böylece dilin sınırlarının bir tarafında doğabilminin önermeleri yani söylenebilir olan, diğer tarafında ise metafizik ve etik ifadeler yani söylenemez olan vardır. Böylece etik önermelerden bahsetmek mümkün değildir dolayısıyla etik dilegetirilemez.

Wittgenstein "Etik Üzerine Bir Ders"te değer yargılarını saltık ve göreli olarak ikiye ayırır. Göreli değer yargıları gerçekliğin tasarımı oldukları için söylenebilir olandır, önceden belirlenmiş standartlara dayanır ve olguları ifade ederler. Öteki taraftan saltık değer yargıları söylenemez olandır, dilin sınırlarının dışında olduğu için olguları ifade edemezler. Wittgenstein etiğin sadece değer yargıları ile ilgili olduğunu söyler. Böylece etik değer yargıları dilegetirilemez. Etik dilin sınırları dışındadır dolayısıyla "aşkındır". Etik söylenemez olmakla birlikte gösterilebilir. Etik dünyaya karşı tutumumuzda kendini gösterir.

Wittgenstein'a göre "iyi" ve "kötü" olanın dünya ile bir bağlantısı yoktur. Dünyada sadece olgular vardır, değerler yoktur. İyi ve kötü istenç olguları değiştiremez ancak tutumumuzu değiştirdiği ölçüde dünyanın sınırlarını değiştirilebilir ve söylenebilir olanı etkilemez. Olaylara iyi ve kötü özelliklerini yükleyen sadece benim onlara olan tutumumdur. Wittgenstein'a göre iyi yaşam, mutlu yaşam ve doğru yaşamanın yolu öncesizlik-sonrasızlık kavramı ile bağlantılıdır. Wittgentein "güzel yaşam ezeli-ebedi bir bakışla görünen dünyadır"der. Wittgentein öncesizlik-sonrasızlıkdan zamansızlığı anlar.

Tractatus'ün önermelerin gerçekliğin tasarımı olduğu savı mantıkçı olgucuların doğrulanabilirlik ilkesinin temelini oluşturmuştur. Mantıkçı olgucular Wittgenstein'ı izleyerek etiğin dile getirilemez olduğunu kabul etmiş ve bu düşünceyi önermelerin anlamının doğrulama yöntemi ile belirleneceği savlarına

bağlamışlardır. Bu düşünceye göre bir önerme sadece deney ve gözlem yolu ile doğrulanabilir. Metafizik ifadelerin deney ve gözlem yoluyla doğrulanamadığını ileri sürerek de metafiziği reddetmişlerdir. Etik ifadelerde metafizik ifadeler gibi doğrulama yönteminin gereklerini yerine getiremedikleri için söylem dışında bırakılmıştır.

Mantıkçı olgucular, değer ve olguyu birbirinden kesin çizgilerle ayırdıkları için, ya doğalcı etiğin yaptığı gibi, etik değer yargılarının hiçbirşey ifade etmediğini dolayısıyla anlamsız olduğunu ya da duygucu etiğin yaptığı gibi etik değer yargılarının sadece duyguları ifade ettiğini söyleyebilirler.

Doğalcı etik genel olarak etik terimleri doğaya özgü özelliklerle temenlendirme girişimi olarak tanımlanabilir. Dolayısı ile etik kavramları doğa bilminin kavramları ile açıklama çabasıdır. Moritz Schlick, eğer "iyi" doğal nesneye indirgenemez ise "iyi"nin dilegetirilemez olduğunu söyler. Schlick'e göre "iyi"nin doğru tanımını yapmak etiğin işi değildir. Schlick etiğin normatif (düzgükoyucu) bir bilim olmadığını ileri sürer ancak iyinin anlamını "sabitleştirmek" için "norm" ya da standartlara başvurur. Bu da bize göreceli değer yargılarını çağrıştırır. Schlick, bilmin sadece "açıklama" özelliği olduğunu ve "norm koyucu" olamayacağını ileri sürerek etiğin normatif bir bilim olamayacağını vurgular. Schlick'e göre normlar etiğe ilişkin açıklamanın sadece başlangıcını oluşturabilir sonucunu değil. Schlick, bir insanın değerlerinin, neyi onayladığının ve isteklerinin onun davranışlarından çıkarsanabileceği düşücesiyle etik açıklamayı davranışa indirger. Böylece Schlick değer yargılarının anlamlı bir şekilde ifade edilebilmesinin tek yolu olarak etiğin psikolojinin bir dalı olması gerektiği sonucuna varır.

Mantıkçı olguculuğun olanak tanıdığı diğer metaetik kuram da duygucu etik kuramıdır. Bu kuram, ağırlıklı olarak A.J. Ayer ve C.L. Stevenson'ın görüşlerine dayanarak incelenmiştir. Duygucu etik kuramı etiğe ilişkin cümlelerimizin bilişsel bir anlamı olmadığını söyler ancak bu cümlelerin yine de bir işlevi vardır. Bu işlev, duyguları ifade etmek yoluyla karşımızdaki kişinin tutumunu etkilemektir. Burada tutum ve inanç arasındaki fark önemlidir.

Ayer ve Stevenson değer yargılarıyla ilgili anlaşmazlıkların inanca değil tutuma ilişkin olduğunu söylerler. İnanca ilişkin anlaşmazlıklar olgulara başvurularak çözülebilirken tutuma ilişkin anlaşmazlıklar olgular aracılığıyla çözülemezler. Ayer ve Stevenson'a göre bu ayrım etik değer yargılarının ussal bir tartışma konusu olup

alamayacağının belirleyicisidir. Duygucu etik kuramı, tutumlarla ilgili anlaşmazlıkların olgularla çözülemeyeceğinden hareketle etik konusunda ussal bir tartışma yapılamayacağını söyler. Böylece etik bir kez daha söylem dışına çıkartılmış olur. Ek olarak, etik ifadelerin inanca ilişkin olmaması etiği bir bilim dalı olarak görmemizi de engeller. Ancak, duygucu etik kuramı geleneksel yaklaşımdan farklı olarak etiğin bilişsel ve betimleyici olmadığını ileri sürerek bize farklı bir bakış açısı sağlarlar.

Wittgenstein'ın sonraki dönem felsefesinde felsefeye bakışındaki değişiklik etik konusundaki düşüncelerinde de bir değişikliğe neden olup olmadığını anlamak için incelenmiştir. Sonraki dönem Wittgenstein, felsefenin bilimsel bir metod olduğu düşüncesini bırakırken Tractatus'te çizdiği kesin sınırları da benimsemez. Bu dönemde iyinin anlamı dil oyunları aracılığıyla belirlenir. Wittgenstein'a göre iyinin ne anlam ifade ettiğini görebilmek için "iyi" teriminin kullanıldığı dil oyunlarına bakmak gerekir. Wittgenstein, bir sözcüğün ne anlama geldiğini belli bağlamlarda bilebileceğimizi söyler. Artık dilin katı sınırları olmadığı için etik "aşkın" değildir ancak Wittgenstein bu seferde etiği bir anlamda "özel bir dil" olarak görür. Wittgenstein "özel dili" tek bir kişinin özel duygularını hislerini ifade etmek için tasarlanmış bir dil olarak sunar dolayısı ile bu dili başka bir insanın anlaması mümkün değildir. Nasıl bir kurala tek başımıza izleyemezsek bu özel dili de ifade edemeyiz. Etiği özel dil olarak görürsek bu durumda etik yine söylenemez olanın sınırları içinde kalır. Wittgenstein'a göre tek nesnel dayanak noktamız kullanacağımız dil üzerindeki anlaşmamızdır. Wittgenstein için etiğin kendini nasıl gösterdiğini anlamamız için Wittgenstein'ın tutum değişikliği kavramını anlamamız gerekir. Wittgenstein şeyleri farklı görebilmenin önemini vurgular. Şeyleri farklı görebilmek için bakış şeklimizi değiştirmemiz gerekir. Bakış şeklimizdeki değişiklik kendini şeylere karşı olan tutumumuzda gösterir. Şeylere bakış şeklimiz bir anlamda yaşam biçimimiz ile belirlenir. Kullanacağımız dil konusundaki anlaşmamız ve yaşam biçimimiz neyin söylenebilir olduğunun belirleyicisidir. Bu çerçevede etik "aşkın" olarak değil "yaşam biçimi" olarak tanımlanabilir. Sonuç olarak, Wittgenstein'ın saltık anlamda etiğe yaklaşımı yani etiğin dile getirilemezliğine ilişkin savı sonraki dönemde de korunduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Ancak, sonraki dönemde dilin işlevinin gerçekliği tanımlama ile sınırlı olmaması, Wittgensteincı bir

yaklaşımın etik söyleme dil oyunları ve yaşam biçimlerimizle sınırlı olsa da olanak tanıdığını düşünüyorum.