

FROM LOGIC TO ANIMALITY OR HOW WITTGENSTEIN USED OTTO WEININGER

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I want to regard humans here as animals; as a primitive being to which we grant instinct but not reasoning. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough a primitive means of communication suffices, we do not need to be ashamed of it. Language did not emerge from a reasoning process. On Certainty § 475

It is part and parcel of the view of knowledge advanced in On Certainty that we shall not understand the nature of human knowledge until we grasp how human intelligence develops out of animal instinct. (1) To be sure, Wittgenstein does not in any sense advance a scientific "theory" of human nature such as behaviorism nor does he endorse the views of the lunatic fringe of ethology that humans are merely "naked apes". However, he does think that modern philosophers' failure to acknowledge the epistemological significance of our natural history (2) is intimately linked to a refusal to recognize the limits that nature itself imposes upon an animal that speaks. In effect, he claims that our problems in epistemology are to a certain extent moral problems inasmuch as they are rooted in a hybris that makes us unwilling to see ourselves as we really are rather than as we would like to be. (3) Indeed, the assertions that Wittgenstein makes on the basis of facts as general as they are undeniable about how humans learn are so radically different from anything we find in the tradition from Descartes to Russell that he has come to be viewed as demented or perverse by philosophers of that ilk. This lamentably widespread view of Wittgenstein takes him to be a philosophical primitive, the Douanier Rousseau of philosophy, as it were, a gifted amateur who failed to live up to the promise he exhibited to Frege and Russell in his youth, and later developed into an outright sophist of the most abominable sort. Since Wittgenstein's view of philosophy continues to scandalize traditional philosophers, his notion of philosophy still requires reconstruction despite all the attention that he has received from biographers and commentators in recent years. (4) If there is genuine philosophical insight in his concept of philosophy as "dissolving" problems on the basis of insights into the workings of language and ultimately human natural history, how did he find his way to views so unorthodox that they seem to run contrary to the whole of western philosophy? And how could it be that he could have taken them to be less than original? (5) The answers to these questions remain open and the critics of Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy unsatisfied with respect to a legitimate philosophical ancestry.

Part of the problem is that we forget at our peril that Wittgenstein was always more radical than any of us have tended to think. At no point was he ever an orthodox Russellian or Fregean -- nor did he want to be. He wanted to help

them with their problems about the foundations of logic but he already had a very different conception of how analytic philosophy should be pursued before he met them. (6) Consider Russell's astonishment at their first meeting when Wittgenstein denied that it was possible to verify the proposition "there is no hippopotamus in this room". This, like the celebrated incident when the ferociously silent, pacing Wittgenstein answered Russell's query whether he was thinking of logic or his sins by asserting "both!", has passed into the literature as amusing anecdotes and nothing more. (7)

In fact the former position is rooted in what falsely has come to be known as the "Duhem-Quine" hypothesis concerning the fluid character of the distinction between empirical propositions and criteria in scientific enterprises. Wittgenstein's knowledge of this notion stems from his acquaintance with Heinrich Hertz's philosophy of physics. Thus the first anecdote exemplifies Hertz's influence on him, whereas the second, as we shall see, illustrates the influence of Otto Weininger. Both bear upon Wittgenstein's philosophy and not merely quirks of his personality. However to appreciate the latter we must be well-acquainted with the former.

By the time he had met Russell Wittgenstein in fact had already learned from Heinrich Hertz, who anticipated Pierre Duhem (8) by some eleven years, that the role that a proposition plays in a system, i.e., whether it is construed as an axiom, a corollary or an empirical statement, is determined by how we construct our system in the first place. We come to see how we have built the respective roles of propositions into our system on the basis of comparing alternative ways of presenting the same content. Little wonder that much later in On Certainty the idea should appear: "what stands fast" (OC, 144 et passim) for us is a matter of what we have "hardened" (OC, 96) out of our experience into a criterion of experience. So the frequently-noted fact that the text of On Certainty was written at the same time that Quine wrote his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" should not be attributed to some vague Zeitgeist or philosophical "elective affinities". Wittgenstein knew about the Duhem-Quine hypothesis before Quine was born, indeed, before Duhem formulated it in 1906. (9)

Part of the price we pay for not taking Wittgenstein's statement to Drury that his basic ideas came to him early in life (10) is that we overlook such matters. In fact there is much to be said for the paradoxical view of Fann, Winch, Johannessen and others, (11) that the so-called "later" philosophy is earlier than the so-called "early" philosophy and thus for the idea that the roots of Wittgenstein's radicalism in On Certainty reach back to his philosophical beginnings, i.e., to a point before he met Russell.

In fact Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy late, early and middle is a brilliant variation on the Hertzian view of philosophy of physics as presented in the Introduction to the Principles of Mechanics, which Wittgenstein already knew as a teen-ager. Indeed, it has gone unnoticed till recently that Wittgenstein's account of the nature of philosophy in Philosophical Investigations I, 89-133 is virtually a commentary on the Introduction to Hertz's Principles. The reason for this is that readers, even those who have taken Hertz to be a major influence upon Wittgenstein, have overlooked the extraordinary philosophical core of Hertz's view of physical knowledge, namely, the idea that it is possible to rid ourselves of the tormenting conceptual confusions that tempt

us to ask metaphysical questions on the basis of an alternative representation or description of the matter at hand as opposed to a prescriptive theory about "the nature of meaningful language". Pace Neurath and Carnap, the Logical Positivist view of philosophy was not the only "scientific" approach to the subject. Unfortunately, it has taken a century to realize that fact and even then we have hardly begun to do justice to Hertz's brilliance and originality as a philosopher of science.

The philosophical point of Hertz's "Bildtheorie" in his Principles of Mechanics (12) was to show on the basis of an example that it was possible to eliminate the sorts of metaphysical questions about, say, the nature of "force" which had bothered Newton's empiricist critics such as Mach entirely within physics, i.e., without recourse to a philosophical theory about physics such as Mach developed in his Analysis of Sensations. Hertz reasoned that, if a problem like the classical quandry over the nature of force arose in the language of mechanics, it ought to be possible to produce an alternative account of the "grammar" of mechanics (13) in which the problem would not arise. Wilhelm Ostwald and the so-called "Energeticists" had already offered one such alternative to Newton's presentation of mechanics which eliminated as a principle force by basing mechanics upon space and time conceived as purely mathematical quantities and mass and energy conceived as physical quantities. Hertz found the appeal to a complex first principle in this model unwieldy and sought to produce a more lucid, elegant one on the basis of an axiomatic system. We have failed to grasp Wittgenstein's debt to Hertz till now because we have considered it (if at all) in the Positivist tradition of logical reconstruction or axiomatics and not in the tradition of Pragmatist scientific hermeneutics as we should.

In fact as Hertz came to articulate the notion of a physics based upon mathematical modeling he was also developing a curious kind of transcendental philosophy (without a synthetic a-priori, of course) (14) according to which metaphysical problems within science were considered as confusions arising from the "usual" modes of scientific expression which are at once useful and at the same time a "hindrance to clear thinking" as Hertz put it. (15) Clarity could be obtained only when we came to see that formal elements, empirical elements and (for want of a better word) rhetorical elements of physical theory were not once and for all fixed as Mach, and later the Logical Positivists would insist. Indeed, Mach, unlike Hertz, failed to see any positive value to the rhetoric of science. (16) Thus Mach failed to see that one could ask with respect to the "simplicity" of a Machian model as Hertz in fact did, "simple for whom". (17) Hertz's point was that what is simple to the student and what is simple to the expert are two very different things although they will be equally "true". Alternative representations of physical theories show that what is necessary in the mode of representation bears principally upon the purpose for which we represent something, which largely has to do with the requirements of the audience for whom we create the representation. What is enlightening in one case may not be in another and vice versa. So if we want to see how a mode of representation, be it a picture, a sentence or a theory, confuses us we should compare it with another -- which is exactly what Wittgenstein did. He came to attack deep-seated prejudices in the philosophical tradition from Descartes to Russell by confronting it with examples of a kind it had not considered: for

example, by disabusing us of the idea that clarity is compatible with ambiguity he orders us to bring him the "cube" whereby he in fact expects to be given a prism which has a cubical base.

In any case, once we get Hertz straight we find a direct line from his view of philosophy in Hertz's Principles of 1894 to the Philosophical Investigations with its emphasis on the basis of a "perspicuous representation" (PI, I 122) which dissolves philosophical problems -- Charles Taylor has rightly referred to such a perspicuous representations as perspicuous contrasts. Wittgenstein's strategy for disabusing philosophers of a one-sided diet of examples involved finding or inventing intermediate cases to replace the misleading extreme cases they have traditionally favored is entirely Hertzian. Moreover, all of the scandalous, anti-enlightenment flavor of Wittgensteinian ideas about replacing explanation by description, the impossibility of advancing theses in philosophy and philosophy leaving everything as it is disappear unmysteriously against the background of Hertz's philosophy of science. Hertz gives us the historical point of departure for reconstructing Wittgenstein's philosophical development as a development of the notion of "showing" in the Principles. It too loses much of its mysterious character against this background.

If Wittgenstein's youthful attachment to Hertzian scientific hermeneutics seems bizarre, we need simply recall that seeking alternative ways of viewing oneself, especially in the context of the family constellation, on the basis of comparing a situation with that of figures in a novel, say, Gustav Freytag's Soll und Haben (Debit and Credit) was a sort of hermeneutic parlor game in Karl Wittgenstein's house. (18) So the philosophical strategy that Wittgenstein learned from Hertz was one that he was well-prepared to receive as a teenager. Moreover, the crucial role of drawing and illustration as a mode of representing differences comparatively experimental physics and engineering played in Wittgenstein's education as an engineer at Charlottenburg has only recently come to light. (19) So it should not surprise us that "showing" on the basis of comparing alternative formulations became his strategy for coping with both his philosophical and existential problems -- and even his problems as an elementary school teacher. (20)

In the spirit of Hertz Wittgenstein set out in his Tractatus to show that the whole discussion of which axioms were in fact primary and indispensable in logic was a red herring. All you really needed was another way of representing propositions that would show their tautologous truth-functional character lucidly. Thus he invented a technique for distinguishing them from empirical truths as well as from contradictions by representing them on a single matrix (i.e, the "meta" truth table at TL-P, 5.101). Logical propositions could henceforth take care of themselves by displaying their properties incontrovertibly to all concerned. Briefly, Wittgenstein's technique should eliminate the need for theory within logic entirely. This is what he meant when he insisted that "logic must take care of itself" at the very beginning of his Notebooks in 1914 (N, 22.VIII.14, cf. TL-P 5.474). Thus Wittgenstein had already a Hertzian perspective on philosophy when he began his work on the Tractatus: there was good reason from the start why a Logical Positivist like Russell should not have understood him. Moreover, the step to On Certainty where practice must take care of itself (OC, 139) is slight indeed.

With that I finally come to my main theme: the transformation of Wittgenstein's philosophizing that occurred after the Brusilov offensive in July of 1916. (21)

At the beginning of July, seemingly out of the blue, Wittgenstein began to pose questions about "the world", which he construes in a decidedly Augustinian-Pascalian sense, God and the meaning of life, the limits of willing and the nature of happiness in his philosophical notebooks. (22) Why do these themes emerge just then? Where do they come from? These are crucial questions. A close look at what he was writing to himself about himself reveals that just at the moment that he begins to raise "big" questions about God, happiness and the meaning of life he is struggling actively to connect his struggle with the fear of death with his struggle to understand the foundations of logic: "Colossal strain in the last month. Have reflected much about everything but curiously incapable of producing the connection with my mathematical trains of thought. However, the connection will be produced! What cannot be said, cannot be said!" (GT, 6-7.VII.16).

It seems that Wittgenstein became Wittgenstein as he struggled to find a common solution to both his existential problems and his philosophical problems on the basis of what he had learned from Hertz as he applied it to few pages in Otto Weininger's Über die letzten Dinge entitled "Tierpsychologie" (Animal Psychology). (23) which intensified and encapsulated what he had learned from Schopenhauer, (24) Tolstoi (25) and James (26). In all of these thinkers but above all in the few pages of Weininger he found an alternative picture of the relation between the self and the world which was striking enough to push his thoughts in a new direction.

The "Secret Diaries" clearly indicate that Wittgenstein personally considered the War an ordeal by fire of his character. They record his efforts to lead what he took to be a philosophical life (27) in the face of death threatening him each night as an ideal target for enemy fire manning his searchlight on the Goplana. His exercise in courage was certainly inspired by his pre-war encounters with William James's Varieties of Religious Experience as well as his reading Schopenhauer and Weininger. In the early months of the War his discovery of Tolstoi's The Gospel in Brief certainly lent him strength in the face of fear by reminding him that we are weak in the body but can become strong through the spirit, i.e., by subordinating our will to the will of God. Yet, for all his efforts to pronounce the "saving word" (das erlösende Wort, GT, 21. XI.14) he found that he could not entirely subordinate his Flesh to his Spirit. It is in this context that we find what I take to be a crucial observation about himself as he remarks almost disparagingly, "From time to time I become an animal. Then I think of nothing other than eating, drinking, sleeping. Dreadful! And then I also suffer like an animal without the possibility of inner rescue" GT, 29.VII.16). I suggest that this pensée is the remote source of § 475 of On Certainty. The question is how did it get from his "private" thoughts into his philosophizing? for Wittgenstein clearly separated his personal philosophy from his public philosophy. Why did it take so long to come to the fore in his work? What is the relation between the "early" wartime Notebooks and his last work?

A complete answer to these questions would require a full-length study but it is possible to identify at least some of the crucial steps that brought Wittgenstein

from the foundations of logic to considering humans as speaking animals. I want to concentrate here upon his Hertzian employment of Weininger's account of immorality in Über die letzten Dinge as forming the second crucial step in his philosophical development.

David Pears has produced an insightful, account of how the confrontation with solipsism as the limit of language forms an axis around which all of Wittgenstein's thinking revolves. (28) Beginning from his encounter with Russell's views about solipsism in 1913 where Russell observes that my experience of a given object is somehow more than that object Wittgenstein became increasingly fascinated by the way in which the self is a correlative of the world. However, in the course of the War there was a radical transformation in Wittgenstein's attitude to this problem. Indeed, Russell's way of conceiving the problem of the relation between the Self and the world could hardly inspire the sort of "obsession with limits" (29) that we find in his Notebooks which would characterize all of his future philosophizing. Pears ascribes that transformation to the influence Schopenhauer who transformed Wittgenstein's thinking about the matter as well as the intensity with which he pursued the issue. In this context Schopenhauer, upon whom Weininger explicitly builds, gave Wittgenstein:

- 1) the idea of a "Self" that was at once the seat of representation and thinking but
- 2) at the same time, a nebulous set of pre-rational urges that I am, the Will, and
- 3) suggestions about the metaphysical significance of art as a release from willing and a way of contemplating the world as a whole.

His encounter with Weininger would, intensify their significance for him. (30) Both the testimony of his colleagues and intertextual evidence point to the centrality of Weininger at this crucial stage in his development. (31) It seems that in his description of The Criminal Weininger gave him something philosophically intense that he could ruminate about with his entire personal intensity. Of course the "influences" of Schopenhauer and Weininger would compliment each other with Schopenhauer having already contributed much to Wittgenstein's development ten years earlier.

How, then, did Weininger help Wittgenstein in that effort? The answer is not that he provided him with a solution to his problems but that he gave him a Hertzian striking alternative picture of the relationship between the Self and the world, the Will and the facts to the one which we are accustomed. Moreover, it was less the "truth" of Weininger's ideas but their power to grip him intellectually that was crucial. (32) How does that picture look? How did Wittgenstein use it?

To begin with we must grasp that Weininger is not concerned with making an empirical generalization about the mentality of actual people, rather, he is producing an "ideal type" or model of what it is to be immoral in itself. The point of producing this proto-phenomenological description is to press his reader to

reflect upon happiness and the good life by giving us the negative example of a life in which guilt and the idea of human limitation play no role whatsoever. For Weininger the criminal is the person who knowingly does evil and as such knowingly continues to commit original sin. Weininger in fact describes the polar opposite of Kant's autonomous human being. However, his explicit reference to (Protestant) Christian values should not go unnoticed. The criminal's sin, like original sin, is nothing other than egoism, the will to self-assertion, the pursuit of happiness at any cost, the refusal to acknowledge any authority outside of one's self. Ultimately immorality or criminality for Weininger is successful egoism or what is vulgarly considered to be "happiness", i.e., considering the goal of human life to be possession of wonderful things. To this end he will try to manipulate everything that he can get his hands on. Indeed, he views everything as an extension of himself, subject to his Will and existing for his pleasure. In this Hollywood version of human life there is no room for guilt whatsoever. The Criminal is in fact the "unhappiest man" having encapsulated himself in his "earthly" existence by virtue of his very successes.

Viewed philosophically, ethics is swallowed up into an effeminate aesthetics. However, just as the Criminal World is psychologically egoistic and morally nihilistic it is ontologically accidental. It has no principle of inner unity. The reality of things is a function of the criminal's ego. It is only a world as long as the criminal is successful, in failure everything falls apart as it does in Dallas or Dynasty or some other Hollywood travesty of tragedy. In any and all situations he is either master or slave, possessor or covetous. What he cannot possess he would kill -- or be killed by. There is a certain flip-flop in his character, whereby he is a fatalist with respect what he cannot have or has lost. Thus he goes to the gallows with neither guilt nor remorse but, nevertheless, convinced that it all had to be that way. Being dominated is entirely consistent with the desire to possess, it is simply its obverse: being possessed by Fate.

The Criminal World is a world in which fear and hope reign supreme, since the principle of reality is the fulfillment of the Criminal's wishes. As such the past and the present are uninteresting to him: only the prospect of future gain interests him. He is essentially anti-social because he is incapable of recognizing the intrinsic worth of another person, who would as such be a limit upon his will. He can never be a friend or comrade, for he always wants something out of every relationship he enters. Thus the sexual exploitation that Don Juan embodies is a paradigm case of criminality inasmuch as he can never relate to the other as an "I" to a "Thou". (33) The Criminal is compulsively talkative, (34) always chattering to somebody, even when he is alone, but his words are always lies, for they too are simply a function of his wishes. Like the alcoholic who hates drunks, he experiences fear and nausea when confronted with his own self-image, which is not surprising in a creature that entirely lacks self-knowledge. For that reason he never wants to be alone. He has no real life of his own and thus no respect for the lives of others. Since he is already inwardly dead it makes no difference if he kills the other. Even as a seeker of knowledge, "his drive to know is never pure, hopeful, needy, longing, never directed against insanity, never an inner need for self preservation, rather he wants to force things and also to know. The idea that something should be impossible for him contradicts his absolute functionalist mentality that will join itself to everything and everything to itself. Therefore, he finds the idea of

bounds or limits, even of knowledge, intolerable". (35) Unlimited and all-powerful he would be God himself.

The crucial element in this picture is ultimately inspired by Ibsen's Peer Gynt (Weininger's fragment is a commentary on the lengthy essay he wrote in March of 1903 in honor of Ibsen's 75th birthday). Like Peer, the Criminal does not notice that he is actually the unhappiest of men despite his outwardly happy, hedonistic life and, like Peer seeking the center of the onion by peeling off its layers, he in fact destroys himself in rejecting both logic and ethics in his superficial search for self-fulfillment. However, Weininger recasts Ibsen's contrast between human and the sub-human trolls in Peer Gynt as a contrast between the Kantian autonomous rational agent and the fully heteronomous, self-willed, instinct-driven animal, which is only human in appearance. (36) Whereas among humans the ideal is "Man be to yourself true", "troll, to yourself be -- enough" (37) is the their self-centered rallying cry. In the contrast between integrity and selfishness both "ideals" consider each human being as a microcosm, i.e., as having within themselves a relationship to everything that exists, however that relation can either be ethical or unethical depending upon whether it is selfish or selfless. However, the question how we relate to the world morally turns out ultimately to be a question about how one relates to one's self, i.e., as unreflectively seeking self-gratification or circumspectly acknowledging that there must be limits to human conduct. (38) Trolls lose themselves by being entirely self-serving, humans attain selfhood by overcoming selfishness.

This is a very different kettle of fish from Russell's reflections in "On the Nature of Acquaintance" which are entirely epistemological. However, Wittgenstein seems to have sought and found a connection between them in the acknowledgement that the Self is mysteriously linked to the limits of language: "It is true: Man is the microcosm. I am my world" (N, 12.X.16). Precisely this notion of man as microcosm seemed to provide him with a key to both his philosophical and his existential problems.

The notion of the microcosm would seem to be exactly Wittgenstein's "mystical" point of departure in the discussion that appears so abruptly in the notebooks of 1916 about God and the meaning of life. His remarks proceed from the notion that despite its independence of the world my will penetrates the world without being able to change any of the facts -- a view which is clearly continuous with Weininger's concerns in "Animal Psychology". In fact, Wittgenstein's emphasis that my Will is independent of the facts is the exact obverse of the Weiningerian criminal who wallows in his own causality as it were. All of Wittgenstein's questions and remarks in the 1916 notebook can profitably be read against the background of Weininger's view of the "functionalist" Criminal who refuses to recognize any ethical or logical limits to his action.

Logic and ethics are both "transcendental" precisely because the will or the self at once penetrates the world (as good or evil, happy or unhappy) and constitutes the facts that are its substance in the application of logic.

Just as logic must take care of itself, the problems of life must be solved in the living and not in a set of beliefs about it or expectations from it (i.e., what philosophers conventionally term "ethics"). In both instances the problems must

disappear (N, 6.VII.16). Happiness is a matter of learning that I can only master the world (the facts) by making myself independent of them, Wittgenstein claims in a Spinozistic turn. That independence is a matter of taking a position with respect to the world ("eine Stellungnahme zur Welt" (39)). At this juncture (N, 2.IX.16) Wittgenstein insists with Weininger that "I must judge the world, measure things" -- this is neither Schopenhauer nor Russell nor even Tolstoi but it is Weininger: "judging is a phenomenon of the will; the Criminal does not judge [things]". (40) To will is not merely to wish but to act, to live without fear and hope. Fear and hope, it should be noted, presuppose that I identify myself with what I possess or what I want to possess -- in the most extreme case with life itself considered as something which I have as opposed to something which I am. Fear and hope presuppose loss and gain as well as a past and a future in which said loss or gain can transpire. When I abandon the idea that life is a possession to be hoarded the problem of life disappears. I have nothing more to fear. Thus it would seem that an evil life would be one in which I expected to be rewarded for my actions. In the end the happy life is a life in which our actions are by their nature rewarding because they are "harmonious". Thus Spinoza passes over into Aristotle at this point as ethics and aesthetics become one in a profound sense. Such a happy life is one dedicated to work in the form of the pursuit of knowledge, i.e., exactly what those "Secret Diaries" show him striving for.

Yet, it is certainly not accidental that one of the only propositions from the Tractatus to be found in the "Secret Diaries" is proposition six which states that simultaneous negation is the general form of the proposition (GT, 21:VIII.14) -- nor is it accidental that that proposition should also be reflected upon in the 1916 notebook (N, 13.VII,.16) in the middle of his reflections on God and the world.

Similarly, there cannot be a world which is neither happy nor unhappy. Logic exists only in its application, which determines a state of affairs in the world. Ethics is a matter of recognizing how the self or the will is a limit of the world and how the world is a limit of the self. The "I" (the Self or the Will) is a limit of the world: the facts, neither happy nor unhappy, limit what I am. The world is a limit of the self: the "Will" (Self, "I") cannot cause states of affairs to come into existence. It seems as though the application of the Sheffer function, simultaneous negation somehow provided Wittgenstein with the key to understanding both logic and ethics. On the one hand, When simultaneous negation is given truth and falsity and therefore the condition of the possibility as it were of all other truth functions is also given, i.e., all possible propositions are given. On the other, the vain attempt to deny that the world is neither a happy or unhappy world produces insight into the fact that the world is always my world because its substance always has a "mood", as Heidegger puts it. (41) Double negation "shows" both the general form of the proposition, i.e., as truth function, and also that unarticulable relationship between the Self and the world that Heidegger attempts to capture with the phrase the "Jemeinigkeit der Welt" (42). Indeed, this seems to be the difference between the mere facts and "the world" for Wittgenstein. Everything that bears upon the world as my world and the form of the world as such must take care of itself. Problems with both logic and ethics must be solved in action, i.e. in application. The application of logic shows us the nature of the world as it confers form upon it. Furthermore,

the act of applying logic shows us an aspect of reality which we know with certainty without being able to describe in propositions, namely, the self that we are.

But what does all of this have to do with the emphasis on knowledge as something animal in On Certainty? If the view presented here is right, Wittgenstein learned from Hertz how to "dissolve" philosophical metaphysical problems on the basis alternative representations, whose comparison delivers insight into the "grammar" of concepts. Weininger (and later Spengler) gave him a powerful alternative picture of the relation of the self and the world to Russell's and at the same time to the egocentric one that we tend to be attached to. Weininger gave him a striking counterexample to standard assumptions which he then used as a basis for reflecting upon our "absolute presuppositions" about the nature of logic and the nature of ethics (and ultimately and about the very nature of our civilization). Weininger's ethical rigorism at once appealed to him and at the same time ran counter to his own instincts in those crucial situations in which he simply "became an animal". Consider, for example, the following remark from the Koder Notebook of 1937: "I think all the time about eating. Since my thoughts have come to a dead end, they return again and again to eating as a way to kill time" (K 1.III.37, my translation). In the end Weininger's negative picture of the odious troll in human form only living for pleasure collided with his intransigent, but somehow "integral" animality. This collision in turn provoked him to profound reflection upon himself and ultimately upon the nature of the alleged antithesis between reason and nature which culminated in the realization of something that was at once obvious and hidden from traditional epistemological speculation, namely, that mind develops out of Nature, that human knowledge as rooted in the natural history of an animal that speaks, that thinking emerges from instinct. Weininger is by no means the only source for his comparison between the training that goes into human concept formation, which is described as with an expression normally used to refer to animals, dressage (Abrichtung, PI, I, 5-6), but he is a remote source that we dare not overlook. Thus it is the "animal" character of our way of constituting meaning (43) by weaving together words and actions that leads Wittgenstein ultimately to suggest that logic is indescribable (OC, 501). It was not the truth of Weininger's picture but its usefulness in posing radical questions about his and our "absolute presuppositions" that was so important to Wittgenstein. Weininger's image of handsome hedonistic trolls, too, was a ladder to discard after it had been climbed.

NOTES

(1) On Wittgenstein's view of the development of knowledge from instinct see Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein: the Relation of language to Instinctive Behavior", Philosophical Investigations, Vol. 5, no 13-22.

(2) For a penetrating discussion of the role of natural history in Wittgenstein's later philosophy see Lars Hertzberg "Language, Philosophy and Natural History", The Limits of Experience (Acta Philosophica Fennica Vol. 56; Helsinki: Societas Philosophia Fennica, 1994), 63-95.

(3) In this he resembles Freud. See Brian McGuinness "Freud and Wittgenstein", Wittgenstein and His Times, ed. B.F. McGuinness (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 27-43.

(4) It is important to emphasize that the point of this reconstruction is not to diminish Wittgenstein's originality but to illustrate his gift of concentration which often enabled him to extract important kernels of insight where others had only seen banality. Historical reconstruction should demonstrate at once Wittgenstein's intellectual sources and the extraordinary use he made of them.

(5) Ludwig Wittgenstein, Culture and Value trans. Peter Winch (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980), 19. I refer to Wittgenstein's works as follows: PI = Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958) referred to parenthetically in the text with paragraph number: other works by Wittgenstein will also be referred to in the text parenthetically with page; date, or section number as is appropriate as follows: C&V with page number = Culture and Value, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980); GT with date = Geheime Tagebücher, ed. W. Baum (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 1992); N with page number = Notebooks 1914-16, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961); OC with paragraph number = On Certainty, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe & Denis Paul (New York: Harper's; 1969); TL-P with proposition number = Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961); RKM = Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore, ed. G.H. von Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) cited by initial, letter number and date; K = Gedanken in Bewegung [the Koder Notebook] ed. Ilse Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon, 1996) cited by date of entry.

(6) Stephen Toulmin was convinced of this when we first met in 1967. I am not aware how he had come to that view.

(7) Brian McGuinness, Young Ludwig (London: Duckworth, 1989), 89, 156.

(8) Pierre Duhem, La Théorie physique: son objet et sa structure (Paris, Michel Rivère, 1906).

(9) I base this conjecture on von Wright's assumption, "Wittgenstein in Relation to His Time" Wittgenstein and His Time, ed. B.F. McGuinness (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 116 that Wittgenstein's list of people that "influenced" him: so Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa, is chronological, C&V, loc. cit. Since we know from Miss Anscombe, An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1959), 11-2 that he had read Schopenhauer when he was sixteen (1905), it is reasonable to assume that he first encounter Hertz in or around 1904 in the course of his study of physics and other technical subjects at the Linz Realschule.

(10) Maurice O'Connor Drury, The Danger of Words (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1973), ix.

(11) K.T. Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 42-3.

(12) Heinrich Hertz, Die Prinzipien der Mechanik in neuem Zusammenhange dargestellt

(Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1894). I have presented the views summarized here about the relationship between Wittgenstein and Hertz at length "How Did Hertz Influence Wittgenstein's Philosophical Development", Grazer Philosophische Studien, Vol. 49 (1994/5), 19-47.

(13) My phrase AJ.

(14) The chief characteristics of this transcendental perspective are that it 1) conceives the mind as active, i.e., as constructing knowledge rather than discovering it 2) takes philosophical problems to be immanent in the very language which employ we construct knowledge and 3) only solvable in the sense that they are "dissolved" into insights into how we have constructed our representation of reality 4) won on the basis constructing alternatives to our usual modes or expression, 5) which alternatives thus show us the limits of specific modes of representation in the sense of how they can mislead us. This is very close to the view that Stephen Toulmin and I presented in Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1973). The question that must be posed to commentators like Haller & Röd who would deny that Wittgenstein is a Kantian or transcendental philosopher is "transcendental as opposed to what?" We have to ask what hangs on the question: Most of the original claims of this sort were intended to drive a wedge between Wittgenstein and Hume by comparing him with Kant. Nobody to my knowledge ever claimed that Wittgenstein was Kant as Haller and Röd seem to think, only that his work bore significant similarities with a Kantian as opposed to a Humean (or Leibnizian) approach to philosophy, for example, in its emphasis upon the scientist as an inventor rather than a discoverer: Rudolf Haller, "War Wittgenstein ein Neu-Kantianer", Fragen zu Wittgenstein ("Studien zur österreichischen Philosophie, Vol. 10; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986), 155-69; Wolfgang Röd, "Enthält Wittgensteins Tractatus transcendentalphilosophische Ansätze?", Wittgenstein -- Aesthetics and Transcendental Philosophy, eds. Kjell S. Johannessen & Tore Nordenstam (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky 1981), 43-53 (Haller's article is also reprinted in that volume). It is significant that those who deny that Wittgenstein is a transcendental philosopher do not consider the arguments in favor of that view advanced by, say, Erik Stenius, Wittgenstein's Tractatus (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 214-226.

(15) Hertz, op. cit., 6.

(16) Thomas Kuhn later would point to its importance in his classic The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

(17) Hertz, ibid., xxv. The point would seem to be similar to that of C.S. Peirce on who insisted that we only know a sign's meaning when we know not simply what it represents but for whom it represents what it does. "A sign or representamen is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity" C. S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs", Philosophical Writings of Peirce, ed. J. Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 99.

(18) Brian McGuinness, Young Ludwig, 4.

(19) I have profited from conversations with the historians of physics Kelley Hamilton and Prof. Gerd Graßhoff on this subject. Prof. Graßhoff is preparing a full-length study of the importance of Wittgenstein's scientific education for the interpretation of the Tractatus.

(20) See my "How Did Hertz Influence Wittgenstein's Philosophical Development", 42 (n.12 above).

(21) McGuinness, op. cit., 241ff.

(22) It is standard procedure in literary studies to distinguish sharply between texts which are in principle designed for a "public" and those which are in principle private. Wittgenstein was clearly fastidious in such matters. So it should be taken to be highly significant that he would "go public" with thoughts which had previously been "private". I am grateful for Walter Methlagl for helping to clarify my thinking on these matters on the basis of analogies with the "public" and "private" dairies of the Austrian religious philosopher, Ferdinand Ebner, who bears some similarity to Wittgenstein in this respect.

(23) Otto Weininger, Über die letzten Dinge (Vienna: Braumüller, 1904), 115-21. Prof. G.H. von Wright called my attention to Wittgenstein's profound interest in this text during our first meeting in 1966. It is only now that we understand Wittgenstein's relation to Hertz that we can appreciate the full importance of Weininger's work for his development. Intertextual evidence that the breakthrough of July 1916 was connected to reading Weininger can be found in the following passages: what is it to be happy? to live without fear and hope (14.VII.16); the subject is a limit of the world (2.VIII.16; 2.IX.16); man is the microcosm (12.X.16); the spirit of animals is your spirit 14.X.16); I have to judge the world (2.IX.16).

(24) I have drawn the parallels between them in my "Schopenhauer and the Early Wittgenstein", Philosophical Studies XV (Maynooth, 1966), 76-95.

(25) GT, passim

(26) The role of James as a background figure to Wittgenstein's philosophizing has been highly neglected. The influence of The Varieties of Religious Experience is clear from Wittgenstein's letter to Russell of (R 2, 22.VI.12) where he claims to be reading James to improve himself morally. His sister Hermine's letter of 15.IV.16 (unpublished, Brenner Archives, Innsbruck) in which she implores Ludwig to accept the opportunity of becoming an officer and put off his project to be a "James Mench" until after the War seems to indicate that his resolve to go to War as an ordeal by fire for his character had something to do with James. Russell was, of course, also preoccupied with other aspects of James's thought, namely, his so-called "neutral monism" as is clear from his article "On the Nature of Acquaintance" Logic and Knowledge; Essays 1901-1950, ed. R.C. Marsh (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984) 125-4.

(27) Cf. his question about the kind of "philosophy" that would help his brother, Paul, after losing his profession with the loss of his right arm GT 28.10.14.

(28) David Pears, The False Prison (2 Vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

(29) I owe this apposite phrase to Kjell S. Johannessen.

(30) Among other things the influence of Schopenhauer, if we are to take the list in C&V seriously, came much earlier, whereas Weininger fits perfectly between Loos, whom Wittgenstein met in 1914 and Spengeler whose Untergang des Abendlandes only appeared after the War.

(31) Ibid., 5 et passim. As we know from his later discussions with Drury Wittgenstein would later find Schopenhauer "shallow", "Notes on Some Conversations", Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections ed. Rush Rhees (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), 95, whereas he never lost his fascination with Weininger as Prof. von Wright attested in our first meeting in 1966. Moreover there are any number of points in Wittgenstein's text that allude to Weininger especially in the crucial months of July and August. References to Schopenhauer and Dostoiivski suggest that those writers confirm what he is thinking more than they are the source of it. Later in the year there are more references to Schopenhauer that are indicative of intense reflection.

(32) This is why he could agree with Moore that Weininger was "fantastic" but nevertheless "great and fantastic" RKM, M. 17 (23.VIII.31). Brian McGuinness emphasized this in the course of a discussion of Freud and Wittgenstein in Chantilly, France in 1986. McGuinness takes the view that Weininger's influence coincided with a personal crisis in 1919. This view fails to take the intertextual evidence in the 1916 notebook into account.

(33) Weininger does not use the expressions "I" and "Thou" in Über die letzten Dinge but they do figure centrally in his major work Geschlecht und Charakter (Vienna: Braumüller, 1903; reprinted Stuttgart: Matthes und Seitz, 1980), 233 in precisely this context. So there is no reason for not using them here.

(34) This text. certainly bears examination in the light of Wittgenstein's injunction to silence at the end of the Tractatus and vice versa.

(35) Weininger, op. cit., 119.

(36) Weininger, "Über Henrik Ibsen und seine Dichtung 'Peer Gynt'", Über die letzten Dinge, 18-9.

(37) "Mann vær deg selv....Troll vær deg selv -- nok", Henrik Ibsen, Peer Gynt Samlede Werker, (2 Vols.; Oslo: Glyndendal, 1993), 1, Act 2, 299-303.

(38) Peter Winch's essay "Can A Good Man Be Harmed", Ethics and Action (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul 1972), 193-209, raises the same Platonic point.

(39) At this point as well as several other Miss Anscombe's translation is misleading: "Stellungnahme" refers to a position, taking a stand, making a commitment. "Attitude" only catches part of the words sense. Similarly, "das erlösende Wort" is more than merely "the key word", "the redeeming word" or the "saving word" would be closer.

(40) Weininger, "Tierpsychologie", 116.

(41) Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), § 29., 134-40 et passim . Wittgenstein's similarities with Heidegger and Nietzsche stem largely from Weininger and through him from the so-called South-West German School of Neo-Kantianism. On the South-West German School in general see Lucien Goldmann, Lukács et Heidegger (Paris: Denöel, 1973).

(42) Ibid., § 9, 42-3 passim.

(43) For an elegant account of the "constitution" of concepts through action see Kjell S. Johannessen "Art and Aesthetic Practice" Contemporary Aesthetics in Scandinavia, eds. Lars Aagaard-Mogensen and Goran Hermerén (Lund: Doxa, 1980), 81-98.