

**NIETZSCHE AND WITTGENSTEIN: AN ANTI-METAPHYSICAL
APPROACH TO EXISTENTIAL
MEANING**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to analyze the similarity of the change in Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's approaches to the meaning of life. The main argument is that their approach to the meaning of life changed from a metaphysical perspective to an anti-metaphysical one.

Nietzsche gave a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life in the *Birth of Tragedy*. In this book Nietzsche conceived of Ancient Greek culture as the ideal culture since it was the product of the union of the two artistic deities: Apollo and Dionysus. This Primordial Unity (Ur-Eine), for Nietzsche, was the metaphysical essence of the world and the meaning of life was to be found in this unity. Nietzsche, later, with his new preface to the *Birth of Tragedy* called "An Attempt at a Self-Criticism" and *Human All Too Human*, criticized his earlier metaphysical approach to the meaning of life and shifted to an anti-metaphysical perspective.

Wittgenstein had a similar shift in his thought. The *Tractatus* was written to explore the nature of reality and the world, and explain the relationship between the world and language. The *Tractatus* gave a metaphysical explanation of the nature of reality by dividing it into two levels, the world —the lower— and the mystical —the higher. Logic, ethics, aesthetics and religion are the mystical which is the scaffolding of the world. Language, on this view, can only state the world—totality of facts— and cannot state what is higher. Ethics is about the meaning of life thus the meaning of life is higher and cannot be attained within the limits of this world. Later Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* argued against this metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life. From an anti-metaphysical point of view, Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of life can be found within the limits of this world.

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To my *dad*, for showing me the stars;
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To my *dreams*, for teaching me how to dance on the flames;
And,
To all the *dead stars*,
Whose light we still receive...

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ABBREVIATIONS

1) The following abbreviations are used to refer Nietzsche's works.

BT *The Birth of Tragedy and The case of Wagner*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967.

SC "Attempt at A Self Criticism", in 1886 edition of BT.

GS *The Gay Science*. Trans. W. Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1974

HH *Human All Too Human*. Trans. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann. Lincoln, Neb. : University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

HHI, HHII *Human All Too Human* Vol.1,2

WP *The Will to Power*. Trans. Anthony M. Ludovici. New York: Russel Russel, 1964.

WPI, WPII *The Will to Power, vol.1, 2*

2) The following abbreviations are used to refer Wittgenstein's works.

CV Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Culture and Value*. Trans. Peter Winch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

LE "Lecture on Ethics" (c. 1929-1930), in *The Philosophical Review*: 3-12, 1965

NB *Notebooks:1914-1916*, 1st Edition. Edited by G.H von Wright and G.E.M Anscombe, 1969.

OC *On Certainty*. Trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1969.

PI *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 2001.

TLP *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. D.F Pears and B.F. Mc Guinness. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993.

INTRODUCTION

(i) The meaning of life: Metaphysical and Anti-metaphysical Interpretations

The urge to understand the nature of reality and human life is the very source of philosophical thinking. Human beings' desire to *know* the structure of reality in order to be able to understand, govern, control and direct it has led to the creation of many different philosophical and scientific disciplines. Each discipline has a different way of thinking about the nature of reality and they use different tools to understand.

In the history of thought, philosophers dwelt on questions such as what is the nature of reality, are our experiences accurate *representations* of reality, how are human beings a part of reality, what is the purpose of human beings in the world, what is the *meaning of life*, is it something to be found *in* this world or is it something *beyond* what can be found in the world, what is language, what are the limits of human communication, etc. Although these questions seem like different inquiries, they are linked to each other: the answer to one question directly affects the answer to another question. The nature of reality directly determines the nature of human life and its purpose. Ontological problems of reality shape the existential problems of human life. For example, the answer to the question of “What is the nature of reality; is this world real or just an illusion?” shapes the answer to the question of “what is the meaning of life; is it in this world, or beyond this world —e.g. in heaven”. The issues related to human existence are always related to issues of the ontological structure of reality.

Each philosophical school and each individual philosopher has different interpretations of reality. In this thesis, I focus on the *existential* aspects of reality through an analysis of Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's philosophies. Both of these philosophers have an understanding of the ontological structure of reality that gives birth to their understanding of human existence. The main existential problem, according to my argument concerns the *meaning of life*, that is, the *purpose of human existence*. If philosophy is the study of human thought and human life—which cannot be separated—with all its aspects, then it should talk about the meaning of life. The meaning of life is both an aspect of individual human life and an aspect of the culture of one's society and should be one of the main subjects of philosophy.

Happiness usually is identified with a meaningful life. One is usually happy if she has a meaningful life. To a certain extent I agree with this view. I do not have a precise definition of happiness but broadly I think it is the feeling of being comfortable with oneself and one's life. Finding a meaning to life leads to happiness since a meaningful life will make an individual comfortable with her life. Thus philosophy has to question what kind of meaning can make an individual happy. It is questionable whether the individual reflectively thinks about finding the meaning of her life or not. But even if the individual does not reflectively think about the meaning of her life, it is certain that everyone is in search for some kind of comfort. A farmer waiting for the rain for his crops in a way has an existential concern. He will be happy when it rains. The meaning for him at that time is the rain. This is how I perceive the importance of finding a meaning in an individual's life, and it is an existential concern.

If it is important for everyone to find a meaning, how do we define it? Is it something of the same kind for different individuals, or does it vary even in one individual's life span? Aristotle says that "Happiness belongs to the self-sufficient"; then he says "Different men seek after happiness in

different ways and by different means, and so make for themselves different modes of life and forms of government” (Aristotle, 335 B.C., p.112). According to Russell “The happiness that is genuinely satisfying is accompanied by the fullest exercise of our faculties and the fullest realization of the world in which we live” (Russell, 1930, p.54). Nietzsche in the *Gay Science* in the “Joke, Cunning and Revenge” section of the book states that “*My Happiness...* Since I grew tired of the chase, and search, I learned to find; and since the wind blows in my face, I sail with every wind.” (GS, par.3). Wittgenstein says “The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man.” (TLP, 6.43). Elsewhere he says “In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what “being happy” *means.*”(Notebooks, 1916, p.74)

These different conceptions or definitions of happiness suggest that the understanding of and path to happiness are different for each individual, and so too is the path to finding the meaning of life. There are two certain facts about human existence: birth and death. The time between these two factual events is what we call a human being’s life. In Heideggerian terms, the individual is *thrown* into the world and has to do something with that life. What an individual should do in order to find the meaning of life is contingent upon her interpretation of the nature of her existence/throwness; e.g.. if she is a religious believer, she can find happiness in praying, if she is a non-believer she can find happiness in dancing or reading.

There are mainly two interpretations of the nature of reality and human existence which I deal with in this thesis. According to one interpretation, the individual is *thrown* into the world *from* somewhere *beyond* the world. The purpose of that individual’s existence, according to this interpretation, is to try to get in touch with that force beyond the world and her life will be meaningful once she does. The individual might have to live in a certain way, to think in a certain way, and to behave in a certain way to be able to keep in touch with that beyond-this-world reality

but in the end she will receive a reward. In this kind of interpretation, the individual is seen as a passive being. Even if she has a freedom to choose the way she lives up to a certain extent she still tries to live in conformity with the rules of the beyond-this-world reality. In other words, there is not much room left for unlimited freedom of choice. The active force is the beyond-this-world reality and it is the *reason* for everything that happens and can happen in the world. The beyond-this-world reality is at a *higher* level and the individual at a *lower* level. The individual is aware of this valuation, but her being at a *lower* level than the big beyond-this-world reality makes her feel *secure, guarded, protected, and comfortable*. The individual feels at home just by knowing she is protected by something higher and stronger. Happiness of the individual lies in this cozy feeling of *being at home*. And yet this feeling rests on a metaphysical interpretation of reality and human existence. We can call the comfort that the individual has in thinking that she is embraced by the beyond-this-world reality a *metaphysical comfort* in Nietzsche's terms.¹

This sort of interpretation is characteristic of religions, where the well-behaved individual is rewarded by eternal happiness in another world by God, as well as of the thought of some philosophers like Plato, Kant, and Schopenhauer who perceive reality differently from our daily experiences in the world. I identify the metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life with any kind of dogmatic approach to life. By *dogmatic* I mean any kind of attitude towards life that is single sided, unchanging, rigid which has an authoritarian tenor. For example, a poet who believes in the sublimity of the words and writes poems with a single style all the time and closes himself off to any other styles, or any other forms of expressions in general, and who thinks that what he is doing is the only right form of expression, makes a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life since he is dogmatic about what he is doing. He, according to my approach, is no different

1. In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche defines the unification of Apollonian and Dionysian forces as metaphysical comfort. More will be discussed in the first chapter.

from a Muslim who does nothing but prays to God at the mosque all the time and believes that his faith is the only true faith in the world.

According to the second interpretation of reality and human existence, the individual is *thrown* into the world but *not* from beyond-this-world reality.² Unlike the metaphysical account, in this interpretation the human being creates her own meaning. She is free in her actions and thus is responsible for all her deeds, no matter what the outcome is. According to the anti-metaphysical interpretation, there is no hierarchy of value: human beings are all at the same level, and there is no higher metaphysical reality. Since there is no higher force to protect the individual, or to give her the comfort she is seeking the individual has to create that meaning by herself. It is left in the individual's hands to create happiness or unhappiness. On this account the meaning of life lies in the individual's own creation. Unlike the metaphysical interpretation, in this account there is no single way to find the meaning of life. The meaning of life lies in *this* world, in the individual's freedom and creativity. Both the way to create this meaning and the meaning created is unique. Each individual follows her own path to attain her meaning. The individual chooses the way she behaves, the way she thinks, and the way she lives. There is no set of rules for her to follow. She has to decide which ways of thinking, behaving or living will make her happy with herself. This interpretation has no room for metaphysical comfort but it has, again in Nietzsche's terms, *this-worldly comfort*. The way to find this-worldly comfort is left to the individual. The individual, left without any devices which provide safety —like God, or words, or music— feels the *anguish* of life. She is left alone in this world and has to take care of herself. There is nowhere to hide or feel comfortable. Yet, if the individual builds a valuable life by engendering her own meaning, she can retain a feeling of *being at home*. Nevertheless, an anti-metaphysical interpretation of human

2. In this paragraph I use Sartre's concepts such as freedom and anguish to explain the aspects of the human existence.

existence and the meaning of life can be ‘terrifying’ since it does not guarantee a certain ground for the individual to stand on. The uncertainty can be the source of a *good* thing or a *bad* thing according to different interpretations. Contrary to a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life, an anti-metaphysical approach is not dogmatic; it is changing, dynamic, non-authoritative and unstable. This characteristic of an anti-metaphysical understanding renders it more resourceful by providing a diversity of paths to walk on.

(ii) Nietzsche and Wittgenstein

There is an interesting similarity between Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s approaches to the question of the meaning of life. In this thesis I analyze Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s earlier and later thoughts from the perspective of the above two interpretations of reality and the meaning of life: the metaphysical and the anti-metaphysical. I argue that in their earlier and later thought, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are concerned about human existence and the meaning of life even if these concerns are at different levels of explicitness.

Early Nietzsche is more concerned about the structure of his society and the European culture of the time than he is concerned with individual existential concerns, while early Wittgenstein tries to shed light on the meaning of life for an individual by analyzing the connection between language and reality, and he tries to establish an ethical framework which he envisages as constituting the meaning of life. In their earlier thoughts they both have a metaphysical interpretation of human existence and the meaning of life and in their later period, while still having existential concerns, they take an anti-metaphysical stance in their analysis of the nature of existence and the meaning of life. My claim is that the break between the first publication of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* and the second publication of the same book with the preface “Attempt at a Self-Criticism”, which is in accordance with his arguments in *Human-All-Too-*

Human, is in certain respects of the same nature as the break in Wittgenstein's philosophy between the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche criticizes European culture for worshipping either God or science. The real values of human existence are being undermined by European culture's obsession with Christianity or science. He perceives the culture of his age as being on the brink of a complete disruption. Christianity, by providing a God as a ruler of being beyond and above all existences urges people seek meaning outside this world. The individual is not free to create her own meaning; she is forced to be a passive individual who just follows the pre-established rules. This causes despair in human beings since they have the idea that there cannot be good things done in this world so everything should be left to the other world. With the ongoing wars in Europe at that time, people were more inclined to believe that the real meaning of life would be in the other world. Nietzsche comprehends this outlook as nihilistic and criticizes the culture for having such a nihilistic perspective (WP, BT).

Nihilism means "That the highest values are losing their value. There is no bourne. There is no answer to the question: to what purpose" (WP1, p.8). According to Nietzsche, Christian morality is a remedy for nihilism since it provides a meaning that lies beyond this world and since it tells us the means to attain that meaning. But this causes degradation to society since in this way of thinking, everything is put off to be dealt with in another world, and human beings are comprehended as passive beings. But it is not only Christianity that leads to the disruption of society: replacement of the *Old God* with science is also a significant danger facing European culture. Modern science is then seen as a cult providing unchangeable truths and values. In both ways of thinking—religious or scientific—there is a danger of fixation on only one aspect of life and undermining the other aspects. This dogmatic attitude is a kind of nihilism according to Nietzsche. A human being's trust of herself is lost, and human reason or science only seen as a

justification of life, as providing meaning. He states that nihilism can only be an intermediary pathological state, from which emerges a rejuvenation of ideas or total decadence of the culture (WP1, section 1). His task as a philosopher is to find ways to lead European society away from this condition.

In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche, conceives ancient Greek culture as sublime and perfect, and tries to explain the creation of this sublime culture in order to provide some remedies to the European culture's nihilistic sickness. He shows Greek art as a measure of the sublimity of Greek culture and accounts for the uniqueness of Greek art and culture. The reason for sublime Greek culture is the tension between and yet the unity of the two main forces, Apollonian and Dionysian. Apollo and Dionysus are two mythological gods who contain opposite powers. The tension between them creates art and art is the meaning of life. The unity of these opposing powers is called primordial unity —Ur-Eine— and it is the metaphysical essence of the world. Primordial unity is the source of art.

This is a metaphysical approach to the meaning of life, in other words the meaning is found in a so-called unity of abstract powers, not in this world. Nietzsche in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" preface to *The Birth of Tragedy* admits that he created an artist's metaphysics in the book. He says that he created another kind of god by placing the Ur-Eine at the center of the meaning of life. He suggests that the metaphysical approach of the book reveals hatred against "the now" and thus places the meaning of life beyond this time beyond this world (SC, p.25). Instead he now says that individuals should learn this-worldly comfort first, should start to see the everyday details and beauties of life. His new approach to the meaning of life is an anti-metaphysical approach; he grounds the meaning of this world in everyday life. Meaning can be found not only by an artist but by any individual on the street.

Wittgenstein's conception of the meaning of life changes in his later philosophy in a similar way to Nietzsche's. The *Tractatus* has a semantic account that goes hand in hand with the existential account. Wittgenstein tries to explain the relationship between language and reality. For this purpose first he makes a metaphysical explanation of reality and defines language as a means to describe the nature of this reality. He holds the picture theory of meaning, according to which the meaning of a word is the correspondent object and the meaning of a proposition is the correspondent fact in the world. In this sense, language cannot state anything other than the facts. There is a metaphysical essence of the world —the mystical— but it cannot be stated by the language. The mystical —logic, ethics, aesthetics and religion— is at a higher level whereas the world and language are at the lower level. Because of this value hierarchy language is not capable of stating metaphysical truths. His discussion of linguistic meaning is not separate from his discussion of existential meaning. I believe that linguistic meaning and existential meaning are ultimately the same thing in Wittgenstein's thought. He tries to sketch the metaphysical essence of the world clearly. He deals with problems like the individual's place in the world, happiness, and the value of life from a semantic perspective. If analyzed clearly with the help of his *Notebooks*, the existential agenda of the *Tractatus* becomes more explicit.

In his later philosophy he keeps treating the semantic problems but does not explicitly spell out his arguments on existential meaning. In *Philosophical Investigations* he argues that in the *Tractatus* he made some grave mistakes concerning the nature of language and reality and he tries to fix those grave mistakes in his later account (PI, preface, p.x). He develops a criticism of the picture theory of meaning and defines language as a part of human activity which is the main principle of human communication and life. Language in his new perspective is an aspect of human life and existence, it is not abstract. Language not only makes descriptions but enables communication. In this thesis, by referring to Wittgenstein's criticisms against the semantic

account of the *Tractatus* I give a reading of *Philosophical Investigations* that reveals its existential account. Wittgenstein, in *Philosophical Investigations*, explicitly provides arguments against the semantic aspect of the *Tractatus*, but does not spell out anything against his previous existential account —parallel to the semantic account— explicitly, but I will infer his new existential arguments by using his critique of the grave mistakes of the semantic account of the *Tractatus* as a guide.

There is an interesting similarity between the shift in Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's interpretations of the meaning of life, and this similarity is the main subject of this thesis. In their early period, they both have a metaphysical approach to the nature of reality, human existence and the meaning of life. They both have a value hierarchy. In Nietzsche the Primordial Unity is what is higher and in Wittgenstein the Mystical is what is higher. They both start to philosophize as a response to the values of their age. They both argue against scientism. In their later period, they both get rid of a value hierarchy and approach the meaning of life from an anti-metaphysical perspective.

I find this kinship interesting since Wittgenstein's early philosophy influenced the Vienna Circle and helped form the logical positivism of the 1920's and 30's. The subject of Wittgenstein's philosophy —language, logic and linguistic meaning— is the main subject of Analytic Philosophy. Thus Wittgenstein is one of the most influential philosophers of Analytic Philosophy. On the other hand Nietzsche is one of the most important figures of Continental Philosophy. The main subject of Nietzsche's philosophy is human existence, culture and the individual's place in the world. I believe that, even though these two philosophers belong to two allegedly opposite philosophical streams, the subject matter of their philosophies are similar. Both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein were concerned about similar subjects, viz., human existence, the human being's place in the world and the nature of reality. The difference is in the methods they use. Wittgenstein is more focused on

linguistic meaning explicitly, which, as I see it, he did not consider as distinct from existential meaning whereas Nietzsche explicitly developed ideas concerning human existence and existential meaning. They, in other words provide different perspectives on the same subject matter: existential meaning.

(iii) Recent Discussions on the link between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein

Although there are very few attempts to analyze a link between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's philosophy I am not the first person to find such a connection.³ One of the works on the link between Nietzsche and Wittgenstein's thoughts is written by Eric Heller in his essay called "Nietzsche and Wittgenstein" in his book *The Importance of Nietzsche*. He first talks about the family resemblances between Wittgenstein and the main figures of Vienna Modernism like Weininger, Loos, Kraus, Musil and Schonberg in order to explain the cultural atmosphere in which Wittgenstein was raised. Heller emphasizes the similarities between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's personalities while comparing the development of their thoughts. He suggests that Wittgenstein resembles Nietzsche;

In his homelessness, his restless wanderings, his perpetual search for exactly the right conditions in which to work, his loneliness, his ascetism, his need for affection and his shyness in giving it, his intellectual extremism, which drove thought to the borders of insanity, the elasticity of his style, and...in one philosophically most important respect, like Nietzsche, he knew that philosophical opinion was not merely a matter of logically demonstrable right or wrong...it was above all a matter of authenticity (Heller, 1988, p.143-144).

Although I agree with Heller that there are striking similarities between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's personalities based on my readings of Wittgenstein's notebooks and Nietzsche's autobiography, I do not focus on these aspects since I would like to examine their similarity from a philosophical perspective. I do think that there is a strong relationship between a philosopher's

³ In their essay 'Nietzsche and Wittgenstein: Philosophers of Future', Michael Peters and James Marshall argue that the reason for the absence of the analysis of the link between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's philosophy is the late reception of Nietzsche's works in Anglo- American philosophy. It was primarily Walter Kaufmann who introduced Nietzsche to Anglo-American Philosophy in the post-war period (1950). But originally his reception was literary rather than philosophical (Marshall, Peters, 1999, p.34-36)

personality and his works. I do not, however, intend to look into the implications of the psychological aspects of their personalities for their thoughts.⁴

Heller makes a striking claim which helped me shape this thesis:

The break between *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* is of the same kind as that between Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871) and his *Human, All Too Human* (1879). In both cases it was brought about by the abnegation of metaphysics, the loss of faith in any pre-established correspondence between, on the one hand, the logic of our thought and language, and, on the other hand, the "logic" of Reality. In the course of those eight years stretching from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche came to believe that he had freed himself of this "philosophical prejudice" —which he diagnosed as the prejudice vitiating the whole history of thought— by turning (to use Wittgenstein's obviously autobiographical words from *Investigations*) his "whole examination round". It is no exaggeration to say Nietzsche could have written this (Heller, 1988, p.149).

I shaped my thesis by the influence of this claim. I also include Nietzsche's preface to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* "Attempt at a Self Criticism" while looking into his *Human, All too Human*, since both of them were published around the same time and in both of them Nietzsche criticizes his earlier thought. I analyze the break with a focus on their approach to existential meaning.

Heller believes that both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein share a similar nihilism in their later thought. This nihilism "will one day be seen as an integral part of the tragically self-destructive design of European thought" (Heller,1988, p.145). Both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, in their later thought, Heller believes, deny all categorical certainties which have been allowed to determine the body of traditional philosophy (Heller, 1988, p.150). Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's "creative distrust of all certainties", Nietzsche's announcing the death of God, and Wittgenstein's giving up the sublimation of logic still leave many questions around their notion of "existential meaning". According to both philosophers' argument, neither God, nor science, nor logic, nor the spirit of

⁴ In this context I am highly influenced by Louis Sass's essay named "Deep Disquietudes: Reflections on Wittgenstein as Antiphilosopher" in which he analyzes Wittgenstein's works by focusing on his personality. He illuminates Wittgenstein's works by looking into their existential, psychological and cultural implications, and by connecting these with his personality and cultural milieu. This essay helped me to understand Wittgenstein's philosophy in a broader respect and I found it really useful in terms of linking Wittgenstein's thought to Nietzsche's. Sass looks into his philosophy by referring to a schizoid personality disorder, which he thinks that

language can be viewed as the meaning of life (Heller, 1988, p.150). Heller is afraid that this groundless approach to life will lead to pessimism. He concludes that Wittgenstein's statement "What is the aim in philosophy? —To show the fly out of the fly-bottle" (PI 309) hides a kind of nihilism. He responds:

But who asks? Who answers? And who is the fly? It is an unholy trinity; the three are one. This way lies no way out. This way lays only fly-bottles, and more and more fly bottles. (Heller, 1988, p.157)

I agree with Heller's claim about the similarity of the break in Nietzsche's and in Wittgenstein's thought. In their earlier thought they both accepted a higher level of reality and argued that higher reality is the ground of everything. In Wittgenstein's case, this higher reality was the mystical —ethics, logic, aesthetics, religion. Logic was the common scaffolding of reality, world and language. Logic was what is sublime.⁵ There was a strong demand for perfect order and this order was logic. Later Wittgenstein denounced this theory. Instead of looking for a perfect order of logic in the analysis of the language-world relationship, he started his analysis of language by looking at human experience. He gave up the idea of a sublime logic. In a similar way, early Nietzsche defined reality with reference to two art deities, Apollo and Dionysus. Before science appeared, according to Nietzsche, those two artistic deities were forming a primordial unity, which was the main source of sublime Greek art and culture. There was a perfect order of the world through the balancing powers of these two art deities. Later Nietzsche announced that his theory was nothing but an artist's metaphysics and argued that the meaning does not lie in the harmony of the primordial unity but rather it takes place as a part of everyday reality. In a similar way to

Wittgenstein had. This essay made me think about Nietzsche's autobiography *Ecce Homo* and I found significant family resemblances between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's personalities.

⁵ The central use of the word 'sublimate' is a chemical one. The verb 'to sublime' refers to the ability of dry ice at room temperature to change directly from solid to gaseous state, without passing through the liquid state. Wittgenstein uses the word in *Philosophical Investigations* as "...tendency to sublime the logic of our language —as we might put it"(PI, par.38) to criticize his earlier notion of logic as the scaffolding of reality. Wittgenstein uses the term to mean "making something of higher value, transcending the limits of the world". Following him, I use the word sublime to refer to these notions.

Wittgenstein he gave up the sublime account of Greek culture. In this context Heller's claim of the similarity is true, however I do not agree with his conclusion. Rather I think their later thoughts are offering possible responses to nihilism. Nietzsche conceives nihilism as a pathological stage that an individual or a society goes through and he as a philosopher recommends the ways to get out of it. The solution is not fixation into one aspect of life —science or god— but rather looking for multiple truths and meanings. Wittgenstein, in a similar vein, by introducing the multiplicity of language games and forms of life introduces the multiple meanings of life. I argue that Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's later thoughts do not lead thinkers to pessimism since with these different approaches we have more paths to follow in order to find the meaning of life. Both philosophers emphasize the importance of the actual life we live everyday, and they both think that life has the resources to provide multiple meanings.

Meredith Williams in her essay "Transcendence and Return: The Overcoming of Philosophy in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein" argues against Heller. She does not agree with Heller that the break in their philosophy is similar:

Though both adopt the aphoristic style, the tone and affect of each is quite different...Though both adopt diagnosis as their distinctive way of dealing with problems, Nietzsche's method of genealogy is psychological and historical, whereas Wittgenstein's method is grammatical and conceptual. Finally, though both seek to overcome the philosophic tradition, their attitudes towards what both hold to be overcome are by no means identical...for Nietzsche, the problem is social and cultural —contemporary society is deceased, is decadent...For Wittgenstein, the problem is personal —the individual is in the grip of illness. (Williams, 1988, p.403)

I agree with Williams that they have a similar style of writing —in aphorisms— but I do not agree with her claims about the difference in the contents of their thoughts. Concerning their method, I argue, Nietzsche's is also grammatical and conceptual while Wittgenstein's interpretation of language in his later period is existential (language is a part of natural history of human existence). Also, both Wittgenstein's earlier and later thoughts have existential implications, so the problem for him was social and cultural as well. His arguments in

Philosophical Investigations have many cultural implications: he discusses language games and forms of life in that context.

In his book *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*, Christopher Janaway analyses Schopenhauer's philosophy and its influence in the history of philosophy. In the book there is a section called "Remarks on Wittgenstein and Nietzsche" where he explains the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's thought. He does not explicitly link Wittgenstein's thought to Nietzsche's thought. He says, however, that Schopenhauer's thought influenced both of them. He looks into Schopenhauer's view of the individual *sub specie aeternitatis* and its influence on the *Tractatus* and *The Birth of Tragedy*, and how Wittgenstein and Nietzsche have the same perspective on the self as Schopenhauer. I agree with Janaway that Schopenhauer is influential in their thoughts. Early Wittgenstein's solipsism and early Nietzsche's conception of the individual *sub specie aeternitatis* are very similar to each other since they were both influenced by Schopenhauer. However, I will not discuss his influence on their early philosophies even though I think it is one of the many reasons for the similarity between them.

Gordon Bearn in his book *Waking to Wonder: Wittgenstein's Existential Investigations*, discusses the similarity of the break in Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's thoughts. His starting point is Heller's claim about the similarity between the trends of their respective thoughts, but Bearn does not read them as contributing to the nihilism of contemporary culture. Rather, he interprets Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's later thoughts as providing a rest from our existential anxieties and nihilistic tendencies. Their later thoughts "wake us to the wonder of existence":

The second time round I realized that Heller and I look at this congruence of two philosophies from rather different directions. Heller finds in the later Wittgenstein the same disastrous turn from "metaphysics" that the mature Nietzsche also manifests. According to Heller if, "European thought and history continue" it will be due to some "miracle" (Heller, p.149). And he insinuates that this miracle is simply the miracle that the influence of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein would disappear....According to Heller, Wittgenstein and Nietzsche are indeed linked philosophers: they share credit for starting the dry rot of contemporary thought and culture. (Bearn, 1997, preface, p 15)

He continues:

Although I agree with Heller that Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's philosophical developments trace the same arc, I do not see these two as exacerbating the nihilism of contemporary culture. Quite the reverse, I read them as providing a rest for that nihilistic anxiety described by Schopenhauer and indicated by Cavell. They aim to ease our existential cares, waking us to the wonder of existence, the wonder of human communication, the wonder of human satisfaction. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein point the way to a precarious peace, an earthly peace. This, in any case, is where I will argue Nietzsche and Wittgenstein end up. I will also argue that it is not where they began. This book defends Heller's thesis that Wittgenstein's turn is helpfully understood in terms of Nietzsche's turn. But unlike Heller's, this defense is thorough; and unlike Heller's this defense is sympathetic to the movement of Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's writing (Bearn, 1997, preface, p.15).

In this book, Bearn presents the development of Wittgenstein's thought in a Nietzschean perspective. He interprets the later thoughts of the two philosophers as providing a respite for our nihilistic anxieties. He says that both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein aim to ease our existential concerns by "waking us to the wonder of existence, the wonder of human communication, the wonder of human satisfaction" (Bearn, 1997, preface p.15). His main focus is to show how the later thoughts of both philosophers lead to psychological peace. Both philosophers, according to Bearn, write in response to what Nietzsche calls "nihilism" and what Wittgenstein calls "the darkness of this time" (Bearn, 1997, p.36). They both speak of their goals as achieving a kind of peace. Bearn further claims that Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, showed a development from a metaphysical way to an anti-metaphysical way to peace.⁶

For what I discovered was that Nietzsche's development, his turn from the position articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) provides a fine model of Wittgenstein's development, his turn from the position articulated in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (c. 1918). Mine is a Nietzschean reading of Wittgenstein (Bearn, 1997, x)

Bearn's book highly influenced the composition of this thesis. My ideas related to the subject are shaped by my reading of Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's books from the perspective that Bearn provides. Bearn's book helped me to focus my ideas on the existential implications of

⁶ Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, talks about peace in philosophy. Logic was perceived to be the perfect order that achieves complete clarity in language. Wittgenstein, criticizing that view says that the real discovery is the one that will bring philosophy peace so that it will not be tormented by questions which are themselves questionable. However, the way to peace is not through logic, rather there are different methods, like different therapies (PI, par.133). Bearn gives an existential interpretation of this statement.

their works. I mainly focus on the change in the concept of meaning —existential meaning— in early and later Wittgenstein and Nietzsche. My notion of the meaning of life is being comfortable with one's own self and life and I perceive what Bearn calls peace as a "peace with life and one's own self". So my claims about their conceptions of the meaning of life are parallel to Bearn's claims about the peace they provide for our existential anxieties. In terms of content, my work is more a Wittgensteinian reading of Nietzsche. I approach the break between Nietzsche's early and later philosophies from the perspective of the nature of the break between the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*. For example, I use the *Tractatus*'s higher/ lower distinction between the mystical and the world in order to explain early Nietzsche's conception of the meaning of life as in the heart of the primordial unity. In a similar way, Wittgenstein's notion of form of life, which emphasizes the centrality of human experience, makes me think about later Nietzsche's admiration of the beauty of the admittedly superficial structure of the Greek society for its simplicity and arbitrariness.

Bearn makes a detailed comparison of Wittgenstein's early and later thoughts and finds one to one links between the two philosophers' early and later works. Unlike Bearn, I do not go into details of the similarity between their works. I look at the similarity of the development in their understanding of the meaning of life from a broader perspective. Nor do I go into a detailed discussion of the correspondences between the writings of the works of the two philosophers. Bearn also emphasizes the influence of Tolstoy's works on Wittgenstein's earlier thought but again, I do not include these historico-literary influences in my analysis. Even though I did not include these points into my discussion, they shed light on the construction of this thesis. I owe great thanks to Bearn's book for being the primary inspiration for my thesis.

The latest article on the Nietzsche-Wittgenstein link is by James Marshall and Michael Peters in their book *Wittgenstein: Philosophy, Postmodernism, Pedagogy*. The title of the essay

related to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein is “Nietzsche and Wittgenstein: Philosophers of The Future” and concerns the educational and pedagogical implications of Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s thoughts. In this essay, after looking at the history of the analysis of Nietzsche- Wittgenstein link, they claim that there is a historical connection between Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s works. They argue that a historico-cultural reading of Wittgenstein would enable us to see the connection between their thoughts since Wittgenstein’s work is highly influenced by Viennese Modernism, an intellectual environment that is strongly shaped by Nietzsche:

...Nietzsche’s work was, in effect, part of the shared intellectual background against which Wittgenstein crystallized his own ideas. We invoke the French concept of an *energetics* to explain a pervasive and background cultural influence of Nietzsche upon Wittgenstein. There is also clear historical evidence that Wittgenstein read Nietzsche and that he grew up in the company of intellectuals strongly influenced by Nietzsche, including the musician Gustav Mahler and the painter Gustav Klimt, both of whom were regular visitors to the Wittgenstein family mansion. In a more indirect historical sense, Wittgenstein was influenced by the Nietzschean, Oswald Spengler, and both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein (perhaps more so than any other two modern philosophers) were strongly influenced by Schopenhauer. (Marshall and Peters, 1999, p.35)

They talk further about the influence of Spengler on Wittgenstein’s thoughts on culture arguing that Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘family resemblance’ is similar to what Spengler calls an ‘ursymbol’. Wittgenstein, like Spengler —and thus Nietzsche— has a romantic view of culture according to which the individual is a cultural being and human life emerges through culture. In other words, according to this view, the individual is seen as the producer and the production of culture (Marshall and Peters, 1999, p.44).⁷

The second claim of Marshall and Peters is that Wittgenstein’s later philosophy has some family resemblances with some aspects of Nietzsche’s works. These resemblances are first the notion of *philosopher as a cultural physician* in Nietzsche’s philosophy and second the notion of the *philosopher of the future*, a phrase that Nietzsche continuously uses in his works. Between 1872 and 1875, after the first publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche starts working on *The*

*Last Philosophy, Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks, and The Philosopher as a Cultural Physician.*⁸ In these works, Nietzsche is concerned with the notion of culture in the age of science and he tries to define the cultural significance of the philosopher. Since, in the age of science, all the previously established ideals are in a process of transformation,⁹ the philosopher should act like a physician and prepare the solid ground of culture and create new values as the philosopher artist. In order to succeed, the philosopher must first turn her own life into a work of art. Nietzsche's notion of the cultural physician is the source of his concept of the philosopher of the future. The philosopher of the future should be an artist who creates new values for the culture. According to Nietzsche's argument, the philosopher of the future is responsible for the education of humanity as a whole. Referring to this they further state:

The philosopher-physician does not create cultural health by treating the sick individual, by, for instance enhancing his or her rational autonomy. The cultural malady is not primarily a cognitive disorder that, thus, can be cured by reason alone. The philosopher of the future employs all the cultural resources at his or her disposal to promote what we are capable of being, Wittgenstein ascribes to a similar romantic view of culture as a form of life; culture as an expressive and natural force, one that begins in doing (rather than thinking), and can be judged in terms of similar creation of a work of art. Wittgenstein also sees himself as a philosopher of culture and philosophy as a kind of therapy (Marshall and Peters, 1999, p.35).

Thus they argue, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein perceive philosophy as a kind of therapy, and the philosopher as the person to cure the illness. Claiming that there are different kinds of therapies to cure the illnesses of understanding, Wittgenstein, according to their claim, resembles Nietzsche's conception of the philosopher as a physician.

Although I acknowledge the possible historical connection between the thoughts of Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, I do not focus on this historical link in my thesis. I agree to some extent with Marshall and Peters's claim about the similarity between Nietzsche's notion of the

⁷ Peters and Marshall argue that the Romantic view of culture is a countermovement to the Enlightenment view according to which the essence of the individual is reason and the culture is a product of reason, rather than a production of human interaction and communication (ibid., p.44).

⁸ This time corresponds to the earlier period of Nietzsche's thought.

⁹ This refers to his criticism of European society; replacing the Old God with new science.

philosopher as a cultural physician and Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a cure for illnesses of the understanding. However I want to emphasize that Nietzsche's notion of the philosopher as a cultural physician who will create new values for the society is a thought he had in his earlier philosophy, where he was subliming art as a justification of life. The notion of an artist-philosopher is a metaphysical one since it sublimates the artist as providing the purpose of culture. In Nietzsche's words it is 'artist's metaphysics', which he came to reject in his later thought. In his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism", he criticized the artists' metaphysics he created in the first edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Even though there can be found some family resemblances between Nietzsche's notion of the philosopher as a cultural physician and Wittgenstein's conception of the philosopher in his later thought, it is important to note that Nietzsche's cultural physician embodies a metaphysical approach to the task of the philosopher almost referring to the philosopher as a God. Wittgenstein's conception of therapies is not metaphysical, in fact just the opposite since he talks about the multiplicity of therapies rather than only one kind of therapy such as art in early Nietzsche's sense. Nietzsche's conception of the philosopher as cultural physician is metaphysical, thus he is not on the same line with Wittgenstein in this sense (PI, par.133).

In *Culture and Value* there are two entries related to Nietzsche, which confirm that Wittgenstein read Nietzsche. In 1931, Wittgenstein says:

There are problems I never get anywhere near, which do not lie in my path or are not part of my world. Problems of the intellectual world of the West that Beethoven (and perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled and wrestled with, but which no philosopher has ever confronted (Perhaps Nietzsche passed by them). And perhaps they are lost as far as western philosophy is concerned, i.e. no one will be there capable of experiencing, and hence describing, the progress of this culture as an epic. Or more precisely, it just no longer is an epic, or is so only for someone looking at it from outside, which is perhaps what Beethoven did with prevision (as Spengler hints somewhere). It might be said that civilization can only have its epic poets in advance. Just as a man cannot report his death when it happens, but only foresee it and describe it as something lying in the future. Do, it might be said: If you want to see an epic description of a whole culture, you will have to look at the works of its greatest figures, hence at works composed when the end of this culture could only be foreseen, because later on there will be nobody left to describe it. So it's not to be wondered at that it should only be written in the obscure language of prophecy, comprehensible to very few indeed (CV, p.9)

Then in another entry in 1947 he says:

Nietzsche writes somewhere that even the best poets and thinkers have written stuff that is mediocre and bad, but have separated off the good material. But it is not quite like that. It's true that a gardener, along with his roses, keeps manure and rubbish and straw in his garden, but what distinguishes them is not just their value, but mainly their function in the garden. Something that looks like a bad sentence can be the *germ* of a good one (CV, p.59).¹⁰

It is evident that Wittgenstein read Nietzsche; it is also evident that in some of their writings they used the same expressions and similes. But I do not intend to claim that Wittgenstein was influenced by Nietzsche and produced his works accordingly, since this claim is beyond the scope of my thesis. I primarily want to look into the striking turn in their thoughts related to the meaning of life. Apart from any possible historical link between the two philosophers, this claim can be persuasively made out.

In my first chapter I analyze the break in Nietzsche's philosophy between *The Birth of Tragedy*, and the same publication of the same book with a preface called "Attempt at a Self Criticism" to show that the turn in Nietzsche's conception of meaning of life is from a metaphysical perspective of the perception of reality and human existence to an anti-metaphysical one. This chapter gives a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's metaphysics.

In my second chapter I analyze the break in Wittgenstein's philosophy between the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* with a focus on the difference of Wittgenstein's philosophy from the logical positivists. I show that, like Nietzsche's turn, Wittgenstein's thought shifted from a metaphysical interpretation of reality and human existence to an anti-metaphysical interpretation.

¹⁰ This writing that Wittgenstein is referring to is a section from *Human All Too Human*; "Belief in inspiration: Artists have an interest in the existence of a belief in the sudden occurrence of ideas, in so-called inspirations; as though the idea of a work of art, a poem, the basic proposition of a philosophy flashed down from heaven like a ray of divine grace. In reality, the imagination of a good artist or thinker is productive continually, of old, mediocre and bad things, but his power of judgment, sharpened and practiced to the highest degree, rejects, selects, knots together; as we can now see from Beethoven's notebooks how the most glorious melodies were put together gradually and as it were culled out of many beginnings. He who selects less rigorously and likes to give himself up to his imitative memory can, under the right circumstances, become a great improviser; but artistic improvisation is something very inferior in relation to the serious and carefully fashioned artistic idea. All the

In the conclusion I compare Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's interpretations of human existence and the meaning of life and show the similarities between their approaches both in their earlier and later periods of thoughts. I also emphasize the significance of the similarity of their respective approaches to the meaning of life.

great artists have been great workers, inexhaustible not only in invention but also in rejecting, sifting, transforming, ordering (HH, I, par.155).”

1. CHAPTER 1: NIETZSCHE

(i) Introductory Remarks

In 1872, Nietzsche published *The Birth of Tragedy*, with the subtitle: *Out of the Spirit of Music*. Towards the end of 1885, after he finished writing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and while working on *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche decided to publish new prefaces for his previous works (Bearn, 1997, p. 5). Thus, mostly in 1886 he published a number of prefaces for his previous works including a preface to *Birth of Tragedy* called “An Attempt at a Self-Criticism” and the book was published with a new subtitle *The Birth of Tragedy: Hellenism and Pessimism* which enunciated Nietzsche's own critical reflections on his earlier work. He considered the prefaces as a whole, reflecting his point of view at that time. Walter Kauffman in his book *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, translates a letter written by Nietzsche to Fritzsche:

Perhaps it would be equally useful to issue now, immediately, also the new edition of *The Birth* (with the Attempt at a Self-Criticism). This “Attempt” together with the Preface to *Human, All-Too Human* provides genuine enlightenment about me —the very best preparation for my audacious son, Zarathustra (Kaufmann, p.466).

Nietzsche's main focus in the *Birth of Tragedy* is the meaning of life. He tries to find an answer to the question of the purpose of human existence by aiming to establish a justification for life. In the first edition of the *Birth of Tragedy*, he has a pessimistic and a nihilistic outlook on the subject. His main argument is that the world can only be justified as an artistic phenomenon. Greek Society, he states, by finding the true way of living established a magnificent Greek Culture (BT,

p.17). Nietzsche gives a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life in the *Birth of Tragedy* by suggesting that a meaningful life would be the one that takes art as a grounding of life. The problem of European culture for Nietzsche, is its distance from this aesthetic phenomenon. However, in his later period Nietzsche changes his point of view. He approaches the meaning of life from an anti-metaphysical perspective.

Nietzsche, in his thought had three periods. In his early writings, like *The Birth of Tragedy*, he has a metaphysical approach to existential problems even though he criticizes Christianity and the worship of science in his age. In his middle period with books like *Human-All-Too-Human*, and *Joyful Wisdom* he criticizes his early metaphysical approach to the meaning of life and starts to talk about existential concerns with an anti-metaphysical tone of voice. However, in his later works like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Daybreak* he starts to create metaphysics of a higher human being—away from the individual on the street. This thesis focuses on his early and middle writings and the shift in his thinking with a comparison to Wittgenstein's. I will call his middle period “later Nietzsche” for the sake of clarity in the thesis.

In the following sections, I shall first provide a short review of Nietzsche's philosophy. Then I shall look into Nietzsche's earlier thought with an analysis of the *Birth of Tragedy*. Then I shall make an analysis of his later thought by focusing on the preface he later wrote to the *Birth of Tragedy*, which criticizes his early thought as well as some parts of *Human All Too Human*. My analyses shall be from the perspective of his approach to the meaning of life. My main argument is that his approach to the meaning of life changed from a metaphysical account to an anti-metaphysical one.

(ii) A preview of Nietzsche's thought

The following positions Nietzsche takes did not basically change during his life time. However, the alternatives he provided to what he saw as problematic changed drastically and this is what I focus on in this chapter.

The Birth of Tragedy sets forth an alternative conception to the late 18th and early 19th century understanding of Greek culture which acknowledges ancient Greece as the archetype of noble simplicity and rational serenity. Nietzsche views his own century as being on the brink of a complete disruption and dislocation and the very foundations of Western Culture to be undermined.

For two millennia God served as the creative source of all being, truth and moral value, however according to Nietzsche, with the latest developments in science, theism was no longer credible to educated Europeans. For many centuries, Christian morality, by promising a better world beyond this world, put people to sleep and encouraged them to accept whatever is the case. It did not stimulate the society to make changes. In the age of Enlightenment, and the governance of the scientific approach to life and reality, the traditional values of Christianity were no longer valid. Nietzsche announces the death of God:

The madman: Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" —As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? —Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried. "I will tell you. We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him (Nietzsche, GS, par.125).

What does the death of God mean? There are two aspects of the death of God in Nietzsche's view. First, since there is no longer a ruler of being, values or truth, human nature has been in a new state of becoming in a de-deified world which gave birth to Renaissance Humanism and Enlightenment. Human beings were then free to create a world as they wish without boundaries and without pre-determined truths and moral values. The second aspect, is the danger of the replacement of the *Old God* with *modern science* and *industrial revolution*. Modern science, the offspring of the human recognition of *reason*, is now beginning to be seen as a cult, an unchangeable and undeniable truth which also gets applied to the understanding of truth itself as well as to moral values.¹¹ Fixation on *one* perspective on life —a scientific one— is for Nietzsche a danger since this obsession brings forth single-mindedness, another type of God (Ackermann, 1990, p.18-32).

Now that God is dead, modern science is a threat since it constructs a narrow-minded approach to reality and meaning. There is a danger of science being dogmatic. Nietzsche disapproves of this tendency as well. Both religion and science, since they directed people to a dogmatic approach to life, led to the nihilism of his age and European society, in order to create a well-rooted culture, had to get rid of this nihilistic stage. The term 'nihilism' is used in different contexts in Nietzsche's works and sometimes the meaning of the term is ambiguous. I will use his definition of nihilism in his *Will to Power* since that concept of nihilism is in conformity with his critique of European culture in the *Birth of Tragedy*:

1. Nihilism as an outcome of the valuations and interpretations of existence which have prevailed heretofore.

¹¹ Nietzsche's attitude against Christianity, traditional metaphysics and science did not change throughout his philosophy. The main difference between his *Birth of Tragedy* and his middle period works is that while he creates another kind of metaphysics in the *Birth of Tragedy*, he challenges that metaphysical approach in his later works. Since his approach towards religion and science did not change I use his arguments in the *Will to Power* and *Joyful Wisdom* in order to explain his attitude even though the *Will To Power* is a later period work.

2. What does nihilism mean? —That the highest values are losing their value. There is no bourne. There is no answer to the question: “to what purpose?”
3. Thorough nihilism is the conviction that life is absurd, in the light of the highest values already discovered; it also includes the view that we have not the smallest right to assume the existence of transcendental objects or things in themselves, which would be either divine or morality incarnate. The view is the result of fully developed “truthfulness”: therefore a consequence of the belief in morality (WP1, p. 1, 2, 3).

Nihilism gives a negative response to the question of “what purpose”. In other words, it is the belief that there is no meaning in this world. Both religion and science, according to Nietzsche, answer the question of what the purpose of life is in a negative way by explaining the meaning of life either as something beyond this world, or as creating scientific dogmas in the search for truth (WP, preface). He says: “Nihilism harbors in the heart of Christian morals” (WP, preface). Religion and the Christian God, he states, were once the *raison d’être* and they led to nihilism. According to Christianity, he states, existence is regarded as punishment, and the duty of the individual is to regain the love of god in order to be able to have an eternal happy life. This causes resignation from the present world and thus causes a nihilistic attitude (WP, preface). As an alternative to religion, modern science also is a source of nihilism since it introduces an obsession with knowledge. For example, the sublime Greek culture is rooted in the instinctual, creative, affirmative and embracing metaphysical comfort of art. But modern science, by introducing rationality, reasoning and truth, sets the culture apart from this sublime artistic creation. In the "Attempt at Self-Criticism", the preface to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche states that science gets rid of the fear and it helps to escape from pessimism by means of an optimistic promise to transcend an earlier, affirmative, tragic sense of life. By means of science, life becomes explainable, justifiable, rational, and we become capable not only of truly "knowing" life but of correcting it (BT, p. 96-7). This attitude is fundamentally opposed to a more irrational, instinctual, and artistic embrace of all aspects of existence embodied in Greek tragedy. Nietzsche

concludes in the *Birth of Tragedy* that science cannot explain life, that it will always fail in its attempts to do so.

In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche remarks that science has achieved its status because of three errors: that it will reveal and help humanity understand God's goodness and wisdom, that the knowledge it generates has absolute utility, and that science is itself objective and innocent, a transparent tool (GS, par.105). But what is clear is that science and its will to truth have made it possible for these errors to become obvious. For at bottom science has a presupposition: truth is more necessary than anything else (GS, par. 13). This will to truth as above all else the will never to deceive is implicitly moral and metaphysical. Nietzsche points out that deception and simulation are integral to life. To posit truth as the highest good is also to affirm another realm that simultaneously and necessarily negates this one: truth has become divine, transcendent. Thus, science itself, while struggling against religion, creates another kind of metaphysics, "truth metaphysics".

The background to his critique of his age lies in the political structure of 19th century Europe. During the time Nietzsche wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, nation states were fighting each other for power and a resentment among classes was developing in a divided Europe. The reason for the pessimism of early Nietzsche is that structure of European Culture. In the "Attempt at a Self Criticism" and the other prefaces he wrote at that time, Nietzsche describes his writings as the history of a sickness and convalescence.¹² Later Nietzsche identifies his sickness with the political atmosphere of Europe and says that his convalescence was from this state of mind –namely the sickness of his age- through to a healthy *free spirit*¹³. The description of Nietzsche's sickness and

¹² Gordon Bearn, in *Waking to Wonder: Wittgenstein's Existential Investigations*, analyzes these prefaces in depth calling them the "Seven Prefaces". I will not focus on Nietzsche's other prefaces except the preface "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" and his preface to *Human All Too Human*.

¹³ Nietzsche defines the ideal human beings as 'free spirits' in *Human All Too Human*.

recovery appears in the first preface he wrote in 1886, the preface to the first volume of *Human All Too Human*, whose subtitle tells us it is “A Book for Free Spirits”. The anatomy of convalescence is presented as a genealogy of the free spirit in four stages: health, sickness, convalescence and the great health of free spirit (Bearn, p.4). He asks “Shall my experience –the history of an illness and recovery was what eventuated- have been my personal experience alone? And only my ‘human all too human’?(HH II, par 6)”

In the preface to *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche, referring to the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*, unravels the details of the sickness and convalescence. He sees his admiration of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics and Wagner’s music in *The Birth of Tragedy* as an incurable romanticism, and finds this attitude to be the source of his nihilistic and pessimistic approach to life in the *Birth of Tragedy*. These obsessions for Nietzsche are the outcomes of his attachment to *truthfulness* as the justification of life in the world. Truthfulness, as Christian faith once was, is another way of finding a ground for the meaning of the world. He describes this faith in truthfulness, and his great admiration of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics and Wagner’s music as a period of sickness, since all these attitudes are a form of denial of the other forms of attitudes towards the meaning of life, such as finding meaning in the details of our everyday existence instead of looking for it in a metaphysical will, like Schopenhauer, or in music like Wagner. He states:

Perhaps in this regard I might be reproached with having employed a certain amount of ‘art’, a certain amount of false-coinage: for example, that I knowingly-willfully closed my eyes before Schopenhauer’s blind will to morality at a time when I was already sufficiently clearsighted about morality; likewise that I deceived myself over Richard Wagner’s incurable romanticism, as though it were a beginning and not an end; likewise over the Greeks...Supposing, however all this were true and that I was reproached with it with good reason, what do you know, what could you know, of how much cunning in self-preservation, how much reason and higher safeguarding, is contained in such self-deception —or how much falsity I shall require if I am to continue to permit myself the luxury of truthfulness...Enough, I am still living; and life is after all not a product of morality: it wants deception (HH, preface, p.6).

Thus he comes to see where his sickness lies in the *Birth of Tragedy* and starts to have a slow convalescence from a pessimistic sickness. He states that he invented free spirits who actually do not exist —since human beings are surrounded with sickness, solitude and unfamiliar places — but will certainly one day exist. Europe will have these free spirits who will build a sublime culture (*Human all Too Human*, p.6). Convalescence from sickness through a free spirit is possible only with the *great liberation* by which the individual becomes the master of her own virtues. At the end of this convalescence individuals will become the free spirits that European society needs.

Regarding this slow liberation Nietzsche writes:

A step further in convalescence: and the free spirit again draws near to life —slowly, to be sure, almost reluctantly, almost mistrustfully. It again grows warmer around him, yellower, as it were; feeling and feeling for others acquire depth, warm breezes of all kind blow across him. It seems to him as if his eyes are only now open to what is *close at hand*. He is astonished and sits silent: where had he been? These close, closest things: how changed they seem! what bloom and magic they required! He looks back gratefully —grateful to his wandering, to his hardness and self-alienation, to his viewing of far distances and bird-like flights in cold heights. What a good thing he had not always stayed ‘at home’, stayed ‘under his own roof’ like a delicate apathetic loafer! He had been beside himself: no doubt of that. Only now does he see himself —and what surprises he experiences as he does so! What unprecedented shudders!(HH, par. 5)

His age was mistaken since it tried to get out of this pessimism through science or reason; Nietzsche views these methods as another type of God creation. The way to overcome the nihilism of the age was seen either in the form of science or religion. However, for Nietzsche the problem of life can be overcome neither by scientific explanations nor by Christian dogmas. Nietzsche holds this view against scientism and religion both in his earlier and later thought. However, in his earlier thought he perceives art as the *only* way to get out of existential problems of life and creates an artistic form of deity. Later, he criticizes this dogmatic approach to the problem of life.

In the following section I give the details of the change in Nietzsche’s conception of the meaning of life between the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy* and the second publication of the same book with a preface called “Attempt at a Self Criticism”. I explain Nietzsche’s attitude towards life, the European society of his age, and Greek culture in the first publication of the *Birth*

of Tragedy. As mentioned, in his earlier thought he speaks with the voice of metaphysics while he is trying to give an answer to the question of the purpose of human existence or the meaning of life. His standpoint, strongly influenced by Schopenhauer, was a metaphysical one.¹⁴ He argues that the true meaning of the world is beneath the surface, beyond the world we experience daily. He makes a valuation of reality with a world at a lower level, and thus the meaning of life cannot lie in it. The meaning of life is beyond the limits of this world, it lies in the artistic deity —the primordial unity of Dionysian and Apollonian artistic powers.. However in his later philosophy he denies such a metaphysical justification of the meaning of life and moves beyond metaphysics. The third section is on this movement beyond metaphysics. Later Nietzsche systematically criticizes his first edition of the *Birth of Tragedy* and I base my argument on this criticism.

(iii) Early Nietzsche

In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's main focus is "the big question mark concerning the value of existence"(SC, par1).He criticizes European society for being pessimistic by remaining under the influence of Christianity. Nietzsche examines the dynamics of Greek culture which, according to him, lead to a profound artistic development. He views the Pre-Socratic Greek society as the ideal society, and explains the reasons for its excellence. He sets up Greek society as an example to Europeans, and as a philosopher, by showing the main forces that build up the sublime Greek culture, he aims to fulfill the task of enlightening his society.

According to Nietzsche, the main artistic product of Greek society was tragedy. Artistic development in Greek society was due to the relationship between two different attitudes arising from two Greek Gods, namely Apollo and Dionysus. He states:

¹⁴ Nietzsche was highly influenced by Schopenhauer in his earlier period, in fact his shift in his second term can be explained as a shift from a Schopenhauerian point of view. Wittgenstein was highly influenced by Schopenhauer's thought in his earlier period too. The change in both Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's conceptions of the meaning of life can be explained in terms of their turn from Schopenhauer. Although this is a very strong

We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics, once we perceive not merely by logical inference, but with the immediate certainty of vision, that the continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollonian and Dionysian duality- just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations (BT, par1).¹⁵

Apollo and Dionysus in Greek culture were the two artistic deities, through the influence of which, according to Nietzsche, Greeks created an inspiring culture. Apollo was the god of sculpture and Dionysius was the god of music. Apollo, in the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*, stands for *order, measure, form, clarity*, and *individuality* of an artistic creation as well as uniqueness and singularity. Nietzsche thinks epic poetry and plastic arts like painting and sculpture are mainly the products of the Apollonian artistic attitude in Greek society. The three main aspects of Apollonian artistic creation are captured by the concepts of *restraint*, of *balance* and of *limitation*. These are the qualities that require the contribution of human reflection and rationality to the proper creation of the art work. Thus, in his *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche identified the Apollonian attitude of Greek culture with individuality, limitation, as well as visual and dreamlike experience (BT, p.67-106).

For Nietzsche, the dream world is a necessity to all artistic productions; he states that dreams are the prerequisite of all plastic art, and poetry (BT, p.34). In the dreams of an artist there is an immediate understanding of figures and forms, and there is nothing unimportant or superfluous. All dream experience is immediate and thus feels real. Nietzsche argues that in spite of this immediate experience of the figures as if they are real, the dreamer senses them as a mere appearance (BT, p.34). The dream world, for Nietzsche is the illusion that is necessary for artistic production. Nietzsche identifies this dream world with Apollo. He is the “shining one”¹⁶ and is the

argument in supporting my thesis, I will not focus on the details of the discussion of Schopenhauer’s influence in their respective thoughts.

¹⁵ Here Nietzsche implicitly criticizes the scientific approach to the problem of life, and sees the spontaneity of Greek art as the true way of getting out of pessimism. Art, unlike science does not make logical inferences, but it provides a better explanation of the problem of life.

¹⁶ The ‘shining one’ is the Etymology of the word ‘Apollo’.

ruler over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy (BT, p.35). Nietzsche calls Apollo the “soothsaying faculty” since Apollo represents the healing power of dreams and sleep, and the beauty of arts in general. The source of the beauty of all arts is Apollo, which makes life possible and worth living (p.35). Nietzsche applies to Apollo the words of Schopenhauer when he spoke of the man wrapped in the *maya*.¹⁷

Just as in a stormy sea that, unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves, howling, a sailor sits in a boat and trusts in his frail bark: so in the midst of a world of torments the individual being sits quietly, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuationis* (Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation I*, p.416).

Apollo stands for individuality in Nietzsche’s interpretation, and he is the divine and sublime image of the *principium individuationis*¹⁸, and is the wisdom of illusion and beauty. He is the individual who resists the tremendous terror of Dionysian ecstasy. Apollo, god of all plastic energies, according to Nietzsche, is at the same time the god of words and language. Words, in Nietzsche’s understanding, correspond to dreamlike experiences, through which we can see reality, but which is not reality itself. Words reveal to us the apparent world; they make us face illusion, not the reality beyond that illusion. Thus, according to Nietzsche’s conception, language is capable of expressing the illusory meaning of the world but it is not sufficient to express the real meaning that is beyond the limits of this world.¹⁹

In the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*, Dionysus stands for the instinctual elements in human expression such as violent drives of *intense emotion, sensuality, intoxication*, and

¹⁷ “Illusion” in Sanskrit

¹⁸ ‘Principle of individuation’ symbolizes the individual's separation from the chaos of life when she is under the protective influence of Apollo. Apollo supports the unshaken faith in this principle of the individual. Nietzsche contrasts this with the Dionysian immersion in the world will, in order to show how opposite those two art-deities really are. According to the principle of individuation there are boundaries that separate the individual from the world and from each other. These boundaries are necessary in order to ensure the healthy functioning of society. When these boundaries begin to break down, we can be sure that Dionysus is near.

¹⁹ In this context, Nietzsche’s earlier understanding of language, as not being capable of expressing the true meaning of the world resembles Wittgenstein’s earlier conception of language. Wittgenstein makes a valuation between the higher and the lower levels of reality and language takes place at the lower, thus it cannot explain

sometimes *frenzy* and *madness*.²⁰ Nietzsche associates the Dionysian attitude towards art with lyric and dithyrambic poetry and also with music and drama performed at public spectacles both of which often required the active participation of the audience. Dionysus stands for the *unity*, *wholeness*, and *indivisibility* of Greek culture according to Nietzsche. Dionysus, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, refers to the explosive powers of Greek society, the luxuriance of vegetation, the harvest of drunkenness, and an awesome, joyful, and occasionally fear-inspiring experience of energy and eroticism, which transgresses the general rules, norms, and codes of both individual and social existence.

The Dionysian aspect of Greek culture is the opposite of the Apollonian aspect. Unlike Apollo, in Nietzsche's perspective, Dionysus was inspiring collective displays of ecstatic celebration, wherein the individual loses possession of himself and becomes a part of a larger whole through music, wine, recitation, and orgiastic displays of mystical and sexual frenzy. The principle of *principium individuationis* that Nietzsche identifies with the Apollonian attitude is no longer valid for the Dionysian attitude; rather the individual is in the world, as a part of it in Dionysian ecstasy. The Apollonian vision stands as a dream world to waking life, whereas the Dionysian attitude appears as the most extreme intensification of life. Nietzsche explains Dionysus by analogy with intoxication, within which there is no longer any concern with individual goals and specific aims. Apollo represents the individual who desires to exist by means of a dream vision of beauty, order, and measure. The Apollonian attitude of Greek society is the individual's means of reflecting her beauty, her balance, and her creativity. On the contrary, the Dionysian state does

what is higher —the meaning of life. Even though it is not as explicit, Nietzsche, by limiting language just to the expression of illusion puts Apollonian language at a lower level than the realm where the meaning lies.

²⁰ Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian in the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy* differs from his later conception of the Dionysian including in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism". He originally introduces the term 'Dionysian' to symbolize the general attitude in the Dionysian festivals in Greek culture which are full of ecstasy, frenzy and orgiastic tendencies and contrasts it with the Apollonian attitude. In his later thought the Dionysian

not consider the individual as distinct from the society. The Dionysian attitude is a whole, undivided, unindividuated attitude. The world is one and a whole, and independent of any singular or distinctive creation. In the Dionysian state of intense excitement and ecstasy, an individual is dispossessed of her individuality, her character, personality, tastes, fears, reflections, and values. By contrast, the Apollonian tendency consists in the specific ordering, selection, and elevation of certain dispositions, with the idealization of particular values and judgments. The Apollonian inclination unifies these selected elements of individuals and casts them forth as exemplary images for the purpose of defining and preserving the individual as unique, whereas the Dionysian attitude consists in the effective removal of these individuating features. Ultimately, if the Apollonian dream state corresponds to the idealized elements of an individual which both constitutes the individual as an individual and preserves her as such within a society, then the Dionysian state corresponds to a disintegration of these elements, a suspension of individual and socially sanctioned codes. With the Dionysian state of intoxication we witness the loss of personal identity (Ackermann, 1990, p.23-52).

According to Nietzsche, the magnificence of classical Greek culture was due to the recognition and acceptance of both attitudes. They are necessary for the highest state of Classical Greek art and tragic drama. Classical tragedy achieved a balance of the Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes that mirrors the complexities of human existence. There is a unity formed with individual action and social performance in Greek tragedy. Nietzsche calls this collaboration of two contrasting attitudes *primordial unity (Ur-Eine)*. This primordial unity is brought about through the Dionysian power but it still reveals the Apollonian beauty of the art work. For Nietzsche under the Dionysian attitude the union between the separate individuals in society is reaffirmed. At the same

stands for the creative employment of passions and the affirmation of life in spite of suffering. He contrasted the Dionysian with the Christian negation of life and extirpation of the passions (Kaufmann, 1963, p.20 n.).

time, nature, which had become hostile and alienated, celebrated her reunion with her lost son, by whom Nietzsche means human society and culture (BT, p.37).

In distinguishing the Apollonian attitude from the Dionysian attitude, Nietzsche makes a valuation of the levels of reality. Apollo stands for the illusory world, in other words, the world we encounter everyday. The world we experience everyday does not provide the meaning that we are looking for. The Apollonian world lies at the lower level, the meaning of life is at the higher level; this world, as it is, does not include any values. Dionysus stands for the unindividuated wholeness of the world. As mentioned before Dionysus combines the Dionysian ecstasy and the Apollonian illusion in the form of primordial unity. The Dionysian in this context is at a higher level than the Apollonian. However, primordial unity, as the primary condition of art, is the highest level of reality and that is where the meaning of life lies. So there are three levels of reality in terms of their value: the Apollonian at the lowest, the Dionysian at the middle and the Primordial unity at the highest level. Apollo, the God of illusion and dreams is the source of artistic beauty and the characteristic style of the individual artist. The measure, order and design of the art work are due to Apollo's existence. These properties of the Apollonian attitude are the properties that are related to the appearance of the art work.

In Greek tragedy, for example, Apollo corresponds to the individual actors' performance on the stage — their voice, the words they say and the costumes they wear. However the other crucial component of Greek tragedy is the *chorus*, which reveals the unity and single voice of the performance and thus is the Dionysian component of tragedy according to Nietzsche. It is the unification of the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects of society that lead to the sublime cheerfulness of Greek art and Greek culture. There is a tension between these two opposite gods and this continuous tension shows itself in Greek art. Nietzsche saw Greek art as the truly *metaphysical activity* of the union between the Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes. This

metaphysical activity gives us a metaphysical comfort; in this metaphysical comfort we can attain the meaning of life. The primordial unity, Nietzsche argues, is the metaphysical comfort of sublime Greek culture. Tragedy is the production of this unity:

The metaphysical comfort —with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us— that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable, this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and of the history of nations (BT., p.59).

The everyday life and world are parts of the world of appearances according to Nietzsche, and this is Apollonian reality. Dionysian reality is identified with the world beyond the individual that makes the individual disappear. No matter what happens in the apparent world, reality is beyond that and stays the same through time. The Dionysian encompasses the Apollonian and constitutes the highest level of reality: the *primordial unity*. It is the unique ground of life which gives a meaning to human existence. The things in the apparent world are transitory, temporary and superficial whereas in the real world everything is profound, meaningful and the individual is united with the sublime totality. Nietzsche suggests that the Dionysian state is more natural. This can be understood only in the sense that nature as a whole is more comprehensive than the individuating and possessive dream image would have us believe. But only the Dionysian, without the apparent beauty of the Apollonian is not sufficient to construct the sublime Greek art. The Dionysian state of intoxication is more primal than the Apollonian vision, since it is essentially polymorphous, undirected and nonspecific. It has to do with that undiminished state of existence upon which forms are enacted, codes imposed, and specific goals written. The opposition between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces forms a primordial unity in the form of art —tragedy in Greek culture— which is the metaphysical comfort that individuals are seeking. The individual, who was living in an illusory world before, now loses herself in the whole unity of the Dionysian reality and finds an answer to the big question concerning human existence. The answer is the

ground that human life is standing on, the world of reality. The task of the individual is to go beyond the apparent world and lose herself in the unity of nature. The answer for Nietzsche was, as happened in Greek culture, to become a part of the whole Dionysian reality and lose all the individualistic dreamlike illusions of everyday life. Regarding metaphysical comfort, Nietzsche states:

The contrast between the real truth of nature and the lie of culture that poses as if it were the only reality is similar to that between the eternal core of things, the thing-in-itself, and the whole world of appearances: just as tragedy, with its metaphysical comfort points to the eternal life of this core of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances, the symbolism of the satyr chorus proclaims this primordial relationship between the thing-in-itself and appearance (BT, p 62).²¹

Dionysus, in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* is perceived as the primary god of art, in other words he is seen as the art deifier. Although it is the tension between Apollonian and Dionysian attitudes that produces the primordial unity, metaphysical comfort solely lies on Dionysian unity and intoxication. Art, in this sense, is seen as the true metaphysical activity of human beings. The individual artist, through Dionysian ecstasy, gets released from her individual will and becomes the medium through which the one truly existent subject celebrates its existence. This truly existent subject is the Dionysian artist who was released from her individuality and discreteness. Art becomes the expression of the Dionysian metaphysical comfort where all the individuals are intoxicated from their individualities. Thus, the world is justified as an aesthetic phenomenon. The meaning of life is reduced to artistic meaning. Behind all events, under the veil of *maya*, there is an artistic meaning lying in the form of a Dionysian God. Nietzsche, by defining the meaning of life as an artistic phenomenon makes a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life in the sense that the meaning lies beyond the limits of this world, in the bosom of the *primordial unity*.

²¹ Here, Nietzsche is highly influenced [through Schopenhauer] by Kant's distinction between the thing-in-itself and appearance.

According to Nietzsche sculpture, painting and poetry are the artifacts of the Apollonian attitude, whereas music was that of the Dionysian. Poetry, painting and sculpture are dependent on the rational and intellectual attitude of the artist. Order, measure, and light —namely the Apollonian properties— gain priority in the creation of these forms of art. The individual artist is at the centre, creating these art forms, whereas, in music the individual notes lose their meaning in the continuation of the music just as one loses one's individuality in the Dionysian festivals through intoxication. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche defines music as continuous, whole, primordial and sublime. In Greek tragedy, the two forms of artistic deities are present: The chorus and the individual performers. Greek tragedy is a union of the two artistic deities and thus is the sublime art for Nietzsche. He states:

In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward flying into the air, dancing....He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: in these paroxysms of intoxication the artistic power of all nature reveals itself to the highest gratification of the primordial unity (BT, p.37).

Music is Dionysian, and language is Apollonian; thus language takes place at a lower level than music.²² The primordial unity finds its ultimate expression in music; language is only a tool to depict this true world to our ears. Nietzsche states:

First of all, however we must conceive the folk song as the musical mirror of the world, as the original melody, now seeking for itself a parallel dream phenomenon and expressing it in poetry. Melody is therefore primary and universal, and so may admit of several objectifications in several texts...Melody generates the poem out of itself, ever again: that is what the strophic form of the folk song signifies. (BT, p.53)

As seen, the musical is the true nature of the world and language is only there to imitate music (BT, p.53), in other words imitate the true world and depict it to us in the form of poetry or a song with lyrics. The relationship between the word and music, according to Nietzsche, is “....the only possible relation between poetry and music, between word and tone: the word, the image, the

²² Language is lower than the mystical —the essence of reality— according to the *Tractatus* as well. More in the second chapter.

concept here seeks an expression analogous to music and now feels in itself the power of music (BT, p.54)".

A question arises at this point; how can poetry imitate music in its images and concepts? How can the structure and the expressions of language reveal the musical melody? Nietzsche answers this question from a Schopenhauerian point of view:

If therefore, we may regard lyric poetry as the imitative fulguration of music in images and concepts, we should now ask: "As what does music appear in the mirror of images and concepts?" It appears as will, taking the term in Schopenhauer's sense, i.e. as the opposite of the aesthetic, purely contemplative and passive frame of mind (BT, p.55).

The passion and motivation of the artist poet is Dionysian or musical and it is the basic inspiration for her to express herself through the mediacy of the words. With her Apollonian intellect, the artist conceives of all nature and of herself as a part of it. She regards herself, as a part of nature, as willing, desiring, creating and longing for unity. Her Apollonian contemplation is not satisfied with words, though she keeps trying to express herself through words. This is the musical inspiration of the poet; it is the background of all her artistic creation. (BT, p.55)

The distinction between language and music is very important in Nietzsche's early period. He regards music as the sublime and divine form of art and argues that language can never reflect the music:

Our whole discussion insists that lyric poetry is dependent on the spirit of music just as music itself in its absolute sovereignty does not need the image and the concept, but merely endures them as accompaniments. The poems of the lyricist can express nothing that did not already lie hidden in that vast universality and absoluteness in the music that compelled him to figurative speech. Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primordial unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena. Rather all phenomena, compared with it, are merely symbols: hence language, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any means disclose the innermost heart of music; language, in its attempt to imitate it, can only be in superficial contact with music; while all the eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring the deepest significance of the latter one step nearer to us (BT, p.55-56).

According to Nietzsche, Greek culture collapses after the introduction of science and rationality into art and culture, which he regards as having started with Socrates. Nietzsche

interprets the obsessive rationality of the Europeans that started with Socrates as the reason for the failure of contemporary European society. For him, tragedy died because of “the Socratism of morality, the dialectics, frugality, and cheerfulness of the theoretical man —how now? Might not this very Socratism be a sign of decline, of weariness, of infection, of the anarchical dissolution of the instincts?”(SC, p.18)

According to Nietzsche, scientism, which starts with Socrates, is a kind of response to pessimism; i.e, the negative attitude towards life in the idea that everything in society can only get worse (SC, p.18). European culture tries to run away from the pessimistic stage of the age through explaining everything scientifically, but for Nietzsche the right way to get out of such a nihilistic and pessimistic state is art:

And science itself, our science —indeed, what is the significance of all science, viewed as a symptom of life? For what —worse yet, whence—all science? How now? Is the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps a kind of fear of, an escape from, pessimism? A subtle last resort against —truth. And, morally speaking, a sort of cowardice and falseness? Amorally speaking, a ruse? O Socrates, Socrates, was that perhaps your secret? O enigmatic ironist, was that perhaps your —irony (SC., p.19)

The true meaning of life is art, which can be found in the Primordial Unity. Primordial unity is metaphysical; it is grounded on an artistic deity and it is not within the limits of this world. It lies at a higher level; it is what holds the world together. The sublimity of Greek culture is due to the scaffolding of the Primordial Unity. The task of the individual, in order to find meaning, is to go beyond the limits of this world and find the metaphysical comfort of the Ur-Eine. It is of great value. On Nietzsche’s view, contemporary European culture is falling apart due to the lack of an interest in the primordial unity. European culture can get out of its nihilistic stage by going back to the roots of Greek art and culture. In other words, European society has to remember what was once of great value before a Christian God and science came.

The explanation of the grounds for the sublime Greek culture —primordial unity— gives a certainty to the individual who is trying to find the meaning of life. The individual, now, at least

knows what she should do in order to attain meaning — create artistic work with the unity of Apollonian and Dionysian powers. In early Nietzsche's view meaning can be found by containing both Apollonian and Dionysian powers in oneself, and expressing this in the form of art. This is a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life; since the meaning lies somewhere beyond the limits of the world, the individual knows that a certain kind of meaning exists and there is a certain way to get there.

(iv) Later Nietzsche

Now, I would like to discuss the change in Nietzsche's ideas in the later period of his thought. In the preface to the 1886 edition of the *Birth of Tragedy*, namely "Attempt at a Self-Criticism", and in his *Human All Too Human* he criticizes his earlier thoughts and explains what kind of mistakes he made in his earlier period.

In the "Attempt at a Self-Criticism", he explains the sociopolitical circumstances of his age and the psychological state he was in during that time. He states that he wrote the *Birth of Tragedy* during the time of the Franco-Prussian war. He unfolds the circumstances of the war and the stressful atmosphere the society was in. He defines himself as an author trying to find the roots of the "alleged" Greek cheerfulness in order to provide a constructive solution to the depressive state of his society during the war. He identifies his psychological mood with the ups and downs of the war. At the end of the war, when the peace treaty is signed between the parties, he states, *he* also attained peace with himself and slowly convalesced "from an illness contracted at the front" (SC, p.17). Then he completed the final draft of the *Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* with a critique of the earlier version.

He now sees the *Birth of Tragedy* as a pessimistic book regarding its approach to "the big question mark concerning the value of existence". He finds it an "impossible book" that resulted from a "task so uncongenial to youth" (SC, p.18). First of all, he criticizes the style of the book

and finds it very complicated, inconsistent and not easy to read. Regarding the style, and the content of the *Birth of Tragedy*, he says:

I consider it badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image confused, sentimental, in places saccharine to the point of effeminacy, uneven in tempo, without the will to logical cleanliness, very convinced and therefore disdainful of proof, mistrustful even of the propriety of proof, a book for initiates, 'music' for those dedicated to music, those who are closely related to begin with on the basis of common and rare aesthetic experiences, "music" meant as a sign of recognition for close relatives *in artibus* —an arrogant and rhapsodic book that sought to exclude right from the beginning the *profanum vulgus* of "the educated" even more than "the mass" or "the folk" (SC, p.19).

He believes that the task of the book was to enlighten Europeans about the collapse of their culture and to motivate them to go back to the origin of Greek culture and implement the Greek attitude to modern society to attain a higher culture. Although the book tries to present the diverse structure of Greek society and complains about the monopoly of science in contemporary culture, with that complicated and uneven style, the author —Nietzsche himself— dictates what is true and what is not true. Thus, hypocritically, the style of the book does not even let people understand what the real intention of the author is and develop the ideas he is trying to put forward. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he accuses science of being too assertive and dogmatic and of having a monopoly power over culture. However Nietzsche now admits that he himself used the same kind of language with respect to *art* in the *Birth of Tragedy*. He criticizes the *Birth of Tragedy* for being full of aesthetic images that can only be understood by artists, especially musicians. Although the book is written for the whole society, his style gives the impression that only artists can understand the book and further it dictates that only artists can save European society:

Constructed from a lot of immature, overgreen personal experiences, all of them close to the limits of communication, presented in the context of art—for the problem of science cannot be recognized in the context of science—a book perhaps for artists who also have an analytic and retrospective penchant (in other words, an exceptional type of artist for whom one might have to look far and wide and really would not care to look); a book full of psychological innovations and artists' secrets, with an artists' metaphysics in the background; a youthful work full of the intrepid mood of youth, the moodiness of youth, independent, defiantly self-reliant even where it seems to bow before an authority and personal reverence; in sum, a first book, also in every bad sense of that label (SC, p.18).

He admits that he created a metaphysics of art while he was attacking the metaphysics of religion and even science. He comes to a point where he denies all kinds of metaphysics even if it is the metaphysics of art. The strong belief in the primordial unity of Apollonian and Dionysian attitudes, the main component of art, providing a metaphysical comfort for society, is no longer accepted. Human beings do not need a unique ground to lean on to make their life worth living such as the metaphysical comfort —*primordial unity*— that Greek culture leans on. Instead of seeking metaphysical comfort, which can be in the form of a strong faith in religion, or strong faith in science, Nietzsche calls on society to wake up to see the reality of this world — the only world to live in. His metaphysical approach to the world, which revealed itself as an identification of the Apollonian with the apparent world and the Dionysian with the real world, is no longer acceptable to the later Nietzsche.

He no longer accepts a distinction between the higher level of reality —*primordial unity*— and the lower level of reality —Apollonian world—; rather he sees this distinction as a problem arising from the philosopher's failure to create his own language. He states that he did not find his own vocabulary and used the terms that were used by both Schopenhauer or Kant, referring to the distinction between the *phenomena* and *noumena*:

How I regret now that in those days I still lacked the courage (or immodesty) to permit myself in every way an individual language of my own for such individual views and hazards –and that instead I tried laboriously to express by means of Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas strange and new valuations which were basically at odds with Kant's and Schopenhauer's spirit and taste (SC, p.24).

In addition to his critique of his use of Schopenhauerian and Kantian explanations of the world with a distinction between the real and the apparent, he criticizes Schopenhauer's pessimistic approach and states that he was far removed from what Schopenhauer thinks:

...What after all, did Schopenhauer think of tragedy? "That which bestows on everything tragic its peculiar elevating force" –he says in *The World as Will and Representation*, volume II, p.495 –"is the discovery that the world, that life, can never give real satisfaction and hence is not worthy of our affection: this constitutes the tragic spirit –it leads to resignation." How differently Dionysus spoke to me? How far I was removed from resignationism! (SC p.24)

He now considers his positioning of the meaning of life at the heart of the primordial unity as resignationism and as pessimism. His conception of primordial unity as the meaning of life signifies that people cannot find the meaning of life in this world, and further they are hopeless about their future that they do not even expect good things. By thinking that there is a higher level of reality which contains the meaning of life and is just and full of promises of happiness, they avoid the reality of the *now* and hold their hopes for that other world. Thus people's lives become a kind of burden on themselves where they do not create anything new or develop a sublime culture.

Nietzsche also makes a profound criticism regarding the message the book is trying to give. Nietzsche during his life time retained some of the ideas from the first publication of the *Birth of Tragedy* and never changed his mind regarding the message the book tries to give, however he totally changed his mind about the means to fulfill the task of enlightening European society to produce a higher culture. He redefined the means to free European culture from its pre-established values.

As mentioned before, the Europeans, as Nietzsche interprets them, wanted a Christian God who will supply another world, the true world for them. The question concerning the value of human existence —what is the meaning of life, what is the purpose of human existence— was solved by a God according to Christianity. In the *Birth of Tragedy* he explains how *wrong* this need for Christian faith is. Such faith is one of the reasons for the decline of Greek culture as well and is also responsible for the pessimistic atmosphere of his age. Pessimism in Nietzsche's conception refers to the acceptance of the world as meaningless, purposeless and hopeless since no one is able to change anything. It is the belief that everything will keep getting worse in this world but in the next life the Christian God will give human kind what they actually deserve. In a religious faith, there is something to look forward to, there is something to expect even though it is

in another world; it is the real world and individuals look forward to the day when they will start living in the real world. So the meaning of the world lies beyond this world, in the *other* world. Nietzsche was against this approach and found it a form of resignation, pessimism and decline, and introduced Apollonian and Dionysian features of Greek society to explain why they had a higher culture and what contemporary Europeans should do to attain that level. To hold hopes for another world, to expect something from God —not from one's own self— is a sign of resignation and pessimism; it shows that a person is not responsible for her life anymore since she does not try to create a meaning by herself.

Nietzsche, in his later period, keeps defending this thesis. However, in the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” he criticizes his earlier account of Greek culture because he had approached Dionysus as the Christians approach God. He criticizes himself for creating another form of God, this time an amoral and artistic God. He defined Dionysus as an art-deifier. He states in SC:

Already in the preface addressed to Richard Wagner, art, and not morality, is presented as the truly metaphysical activity of man. In the book itself the suggestive sentence is repeated several times, that the existence of the world is justified only as an artistic phenomenon. Indeed, the whole book knows only an artistic meaning and crypto-meaning behind all events –a “god”. If you please but certainly only an entirely reckless and amoral artist-god who wants to experience, whether he is building or destroying, in the good and in the bad, his own joy and glory –one who, creating worlds, frees himself from the distress of fullness and overfullness and from the affliction of the contradictions compressed in his soul. The world –at every moment the attained salvation of God, as the eternally changing, eternally new vision of the most deeply afflicted, discordant and contradictory being who can find salvation only in appearance; you can call this whole artist's metaphysical, arbitrary, idle, fantastic; what matters is that it betrays a spirit who will one day fight at any risk whatever the moral interpretation and significance of existence (SC, p.22).

He finds it intolerably wrong to seek the meaning of life beyond this world; thus he argues against the metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life. In Christianity it was the other world or a moral god that was giving the world its meaning. This time, in early Nietzsche's case, it is the Dionysian art and music that created the meaning. Art, especially music was considered as sublime. Even though the god in the *Birth of Tragedy* was an immoral and artistic god, it cannot eliminate the fact that there is a metaphysical attitude in that approach. Art was still considered as

sublime and beyond this world just like the Christian god. Nietzsche considers his earlier explanation of Dionysian Apollonian unity –primordial unity in other words- an explanation of an artists' metaphysics.

As I stated in the first section, Nietzsche identified the Dionysian attitude in Greek culture with music. Likewise, Wagner was the epitome of German music through whom the Europeans would reach enlightenment. Nietzsche, earlier in the first publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, stated that music reveals the metaphysical essence of the world. Language or words which are identified with the Apollonian attitude are not sufficient to do that. A metaphysical world cannot be expressed through language; we can only understand it through music. Even though music still cannot reveal the essence of the metaphysical world, it still allows us access to the essence of life through intoxication and ecstasy. Now, later Nietzsche criticizes this approach, finding it as a one sided explanation of life, which perceives Dionysus as a 'still unknown God':

What found expression here was anyway —this was admitted with as much curiosity as antipathy— a *strange* voice, the disciple of a still “unknown God”, one who concealed himself for the time being under the scholar's hood, under the gravity and dialectical ill humor of the German, even under bad manners of the Wagnerian. Here was a spirit with strange, still nameless needs, a memory bursting with questions, experiences, concealed things after which the name of Dionysus was added as one more question mark. What spoke here —as was admitted, not without suspicion— was something like a mystical, almost monadic soul that stammered with difficulty, a feat of the will, as in a strange tongue, almost undecided whether it should communicate or conceal itself. It should have sung —and not spoken (SC, p.19-20).

He criticizes himself for simply replacing one metaphysical thought —the Christian God and Christian morality that he found as the reason for the collapse of the European culture —with another metaphysical thought — the perception of the Greek god Dionysus as another god and art as a faith. Just as morality was reflected as the essence of the Christian society, Dionysian culture is presented as the morality of the Greek culture. Nietzsche claims that he was opposed to Christian morality because of this dogma but he himself replaced it with the same thing in his *Birth of Tragedy*. He found his admiration for primordial unity as a metaphysical comfort totally false and unreasonable. Music is not the only way of communicating with the real world; the real world is

right here and it can be communicated through different points of views or language games in Wittgenstein's sense.

His approach to the Dionysian attitude as a reality behind the *maya* is abolished. He abandons his metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life. Instead he starts to appreciate the actuality of the world – the Now. Meaning does not lie in the metaphysical comfort of either religion, or science, or art. The meaning of life is within the limits of this world, in the actuality of the day. The individual has to create the meaning as she goes along; but pursuing one kind of dogmatic approach is not the right way to find meaning. This is what Nietzsche is criticizing: the dogmatic approach to meaning. He thus stated in the last section of “An Attempt at a Self-Criticism”:

But my dear sir, what in the world is romantic if your book isn't? Can deep hatred against “the Now,” against “reality” and “modern ideas” be pushed further than you pushed it in your artists' metaphysics? Believing sooner in the Nothing, sooner in the devil than in “the Now”? Is it not a deep bass of wrath and the lust for destruction that we hear humming underneath all of your contrapuntal vocal art and seduction of the ear, a furious resolve against everything that is “now”, a will that is not too far removed from practical nihilism and seems to say: “sooner let nothing be true than you should be right, than that your truth should be proved right!” (SC, p.25)

So he suggests staying in the now rather than relying on a reality behind a veil. Human beings should get rid of their search for metaphysical comfort and rely on the now. Dionysus is no longer an art deifier. Nietzsche does not regard the metaphysical comfort of the union of Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes as the grounding of life. Instead he presents a new solution to the problem of the meaning of life:

...would it not be necessary for the tragic man of such a culture, in view of his self-education for seriousness and terror to desire a new art, the art of metaphysical comfort, to desire tragedy as his own proper Helen, and to exclaim with Faust:
Should not my longing overlap the distance?
And draw the fairest form into existence?
“Would it not be necessary? –No, thrice no! O you young romantics: it would not be necessary! But it is highly probable that it will end that way, that you end that way- namely “comforted,” as it is written, in spite of all self-education for seriousness and terror “comforted metaphysically “-in sum, as romantics end, as Christians.
No! You ought to learn the art of this-worldly comfort first; you ought to learn to laugh, my young friends, if you are hell-bent on remaining pessimists. Then perhaps, as laughers, you may some day dispatch all metaphysical comforts to the devil –metaphysics in front (SC, p.26).

Laughing is a basic existential act; laughing requires seeing what is going on in this world and responding. Instead of searching for meaning in an abstract place and in an abstract way one should see this world and laugh at it. In the *Gay Science* Nietzsche says:

Finally, one comes back out of such abysses, out of such severe sickness, and out of the sickness of strong suspicion —new-born, with the skin cast; more sensitive, more wicked, with a finer taste for joy, with a more delicate tongue for all good things, with a merrier disposition, with a second and more innocence in joy; more childish at the same time, and a hundred times more refined than ever before (GS, par.8)

He comprehends the metaphysical approach to meaning as sickness and isolation from the closest values. The reason for metaphysics is the viewpoint that this life offers nothing to hold on to thus we should seek for an alternative ground. He denies this metaphysical approach. The meaning of life, in his anti-metaphysical interpretation is not beyond the limits of this world, but it lies within it. It is everyday life, with its good or bad aspects, that contains the meaning. The individual, free from any dogmatic approach to God, religion, science or art, should create meaning for herself within the limits of the world. We have to learn this worldly comfort first instead of trying to create metaphysical comfort in the form of dogmatic obsession. The way to overcome the nihilistic and pessimistic struggle of everyday life is not to try to get away from this world, and walk in some romantic other-worldly dreams, but to accept life and the world as they are and try to establish a meaning of one's own. Instead of looking for meaning at a higher place we should now see what is closest.

....Oh those Greeks! They knew how to live: for that purpose it is necessary to keep bravely to the service, the fold and the skin; to worship appearance, to believe in forms, tones, and words, in the whole Olympus of appearance! These Greeks were superficial —from profundity! And are we not coming back precisely to this point, we dare-devils of the spirit, who have scaled the highest and most dangerous peak of contemporary thought, and have looked around us from it, have looked down on from it? (GS, p.10)

The Greeks were superficial in the sense that they dealt with surface things; they found meaning in the closest things, not in an abstract unity. Later Nietzsche finds meaning in this world.

Its groundlessness does not mean its meaninglessness. He makes room for the multiplicity of meanings:

Confidence in life is gone: life itself has become a problem.....Even love of life is still possible —only one loves differently (GS, p.7)

Love is still possible, it is just that one can love differently. Meaning can be different for different people.

2. CHAPTER 2: WITTGENSTEIN

(i) Introductory Remarks

There is an often-told story about the change in Wittgenstein's understanding of linguistic meaning and his views on language. In this thesis, I focus on the existentialist characteristics of this often-told story, which, I think, has been neglected in most of the Wittgenstein literature. Wittgenstein is known first and foremost as a philosopher of linguistic meaning, i.e. meaning in the semantic sense. However, I argue that Wittgenstein's existential concerns precede his semantic concerns in both his earlier and later thought. There is an internal connection between his conceptions of linguistic meaning and existential meaning: these concepts are not accidentally connected. In the *Tractatus*, he explains how language works, how linguistic meaning is possible and how language represents reality. At the same time he makes an analysis of the nature of reality and the world. He clearly states that world and life are one (TLP, par. 5.621) and his arguments on the nature of the world and language reveal his views on the nature and meaning of life. He tries to find a common ground for both language and life.

The discussions of existential meaning and linguistic meaning are equally explicit in the early *Tractatus* however the discussion of existential meaning is only implicit in the later *Philosophical Investigations*. We can infer Wittgenstein's views on existential meaning in reading *Philosophical Investigations* as a book that is written to criticize the main semantic arguments — grave mistakes, as Wittgenstein calls later (PI, Preface, p.x)— of the *Tractatus*. *Philosophical*

Investigations directly responds to the *Tractatus*'s arguments on linguistic meaning. Since existential and linguistic meanings are internally connected in both the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, I uncover the existential aspect of the *Philosophical Investigations* by examining his later account of semantic meaning.

(ii) Wittgenstein's Existential Concerns

It is not hard to see Wittgenstein's existential concerns if one makes a careful reading of his *Notebooks*, several letters he wrote to his friends, some memoirs told about him, and his *Lecture on Ethics*. These indirect resources help us understand Wittgenstein's arguments on semantic meaning more clearly while providing the existential background of his philosophical/linguistic concerns.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein makes a valuation between different levels of reality and argues that the mystical is what is higher while the world and language take place at the lower level. The mystical, according to his argument, encompasses logic, ethics, aesthetics and religion. And the mystical is the background of reality. Logic and ethics are the main themes of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's arguments on the structure of the world, language and reality are based upon his conception of logic and ethics. The semantic agenda —the logical agenda— is in conformity with the existential agenda —ethics. In 1916, Wittgenstein writes about his *Tractatus*; “My work has extended from the foundations of logic to the nature of the world” (NB, p.79). I shall explain the details of the metaphysical structure of reality in the following section but for now I want to clarify what he means by “ethics”.

Wittgenstein, in his “*Lecture on Ethics*”, in 1930, referring to Moore's *Principia Ethica*, states that he uses the term “ethics” in a wider sense than merely the general enquiry into what is good:

Now instead of saying "Ethics is the enquiry into what is good" I could have said Ethics is the enquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or I could have said Ethics is the enquiry into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living. I believe if you look at all these phrases you will get a rough idea as to what it is that Ethics is concerned with (LE, p.3).

Clearly, he states that ethics is concerned with the meaning of life, what makes life worth living. Thus, when he talks about ethics, he actually refers to the meaning of life. Thus, the *Tractatus*'s dual agenda on logic and ethics shows us that Wittgenstein's concerns were linguistic as well as existential. Using this explicit dual agenda as a reference point, I shall state *Philosophical Investigations*'s existential agenda explicitly.

Wittgenstein's existential concerns are explicit also in his *Notebooks*. The *Notebooks* were written during the First World War while he was working on the *Tractatus*. In that psychological mood he was questioning the main existential concerns of the individual while pursuing the main philosophical problems. If we carefully look at the notebook entries, we see that his analysis of philosophical and linguistic problems goes hand in hand with his existential concerns. His reflections on the meaning of life are parallel to his reflections on linguistic meaning:

To believe in a God means to understand the question about the meaning of life. To believe in a God means to see the facts of the world are not the end of the matter. To believe in a God means to see that life has a meaning. The world is given me, i.e. my will enters into the world completely from outside into something that is already there (as for my will I don't know yet) that is why we have the feeling of being dependent on an alien will. However this may be, at any rate we are in a certain sense dependent on what we can call God. In this sense God would simply be fate, or, what is the same thing: The world—which is independent of our will. I can make myself independent of fate. There are two god heads: the world and my independent I. I am either happy or unhappy, that is all. It can be said: good or evil do not exist. A man who is happy must have no fear. Not even in face of death. Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy. For life in the present there is no death. Death is not an event in life. It is not a fact of the world (TLP 6.43). If by eternity is understood not infinite temporal duration but non-temporality, then it can be said that a man lives eternally if he lives in the present (see 6.4311) In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what "being happy" means. I am then, so to speak in agreement with that alien will on which I appear dependent. That is to say: 'I am doing the will of God'. Fear in face of death is the best sign of a false, i.e. a bad life. When my conscience upsets my equilibrium, then I am not in agreement with Something. But what is this? Is it the world? Certainly it is correct to say : Conscience is the voice of God. For example: it makes me unhappy to think that I have offended such and such a man. Is that my conscience? Can one say: "act according to your conscience whatever it may be"? Live happily! (NB, p. 74-75)

In the introduction, when giving the definition of the meaning of life, I stated that the existence of death is the reason for our search of the meaning of our life. In this *Notebook* entry

Wittgenstein’s existential concerns revolve around death, and happiness in this world. He states that the world is given to him by a God, in other words he is thrown into the world by an alien God. It is that God who gives the world a meaning. In the face of death, we can see ourselves as a part of God, and the fear of death evaporates. A happy life is the one that is in conformity with the world. Referring to the claim of the *Tractatus*, according to which the world is the totality of facts and language can only state the facts, Wittgenstein argues that the individual has to live in conformity with the world to be happy. From the *Tractatus*, we know that the facts of the world are held together by the laws of logic. We also know that both ethics and logic are parts of the mystical. If the world is governed by the logical laws and if a happy life is one that is lived in conformity with the world, we can infer that for Wittgenstein, a happy life is one that is in conformity with ethical rules. The following table (Table 2.1), read both vertically and horizontally, might be helpful for the reader in seeing how things hang together:

Table 2.1

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Reality | Linguistic Meaning | Existential meaning |
| Mystical/Higher?Nonsense | Logical Form | Ethics/Religion/Aesthetics |
| World/Lower/Sense | Language | Life |

The happy life is also the one that is lived by acting according to conscience, which is the voice of God. A happy life, for Wittgenstein, is also the one that has a deep faith in God.²³ From these statements, we clearly see that Wittgenstein has a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life, by stating that our life is in the hands of God. God is the reason for existence. In other words, the individual is in the world by God’s will, she does not have an independent existence.

²³ In the section (iii) I will be giving an analysis of the metaphysical account of the *Tractatus* and its existential arguments. This claim will further be discussed in that section. Please refer to p. 68 for more detail.

The individual would not exist if God did not will it. This metaphysical interpretation is even more clear in the following entry which he writes few days later:

What do I know about God and the purpose of life? I know that this world exists. That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field. That something about it is problematic. That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it (TLP 6.41). That life is world. That my will is good or evil. Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world. The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God. And connect with the comparison of God to a father. To pray is to think about the meaning of life. I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless. I can only make myself independent of the world —and so in a certain sense master it— by renouncing any influence on happenings (NB, p.73).

To be placed in the world like an eye in the visual field means that the individual is not part of the world; she does not have control over events. The meaning of her life is not something she creates. It is outside the world, it is in the hands of God. By praying, the individual is connected to the higher power —God. Referring to my happiness definition in the *Introduction*, praying is what makes the individual comfortable with herself. Wittgenstein clearly states that the individual is powerless in the face of life; the meaning of her life is not under her control. This approach is a metaphysical approach to the meaning of life. These paragraphs show clearly that Wittgenstein, in his early thought, gives a metaphysical account of the meaning of life while at the same time analyzing the structure of language and reality.

As mentioned before, Wittgenstein wrote the *Tractatus* during the time he was a soldier in the First World War and he, like Nietzsche, was highly seriously affected. Louis Sass explains the psychological state Wittgenstein was in:

During the World War 1, Wittgenstein was often scared, hungry, and uncomfortable, but what seems to have particularly galled and appalled him at this time was finding himself reduced to his creaturely nature, at the mercy of all the demands or trepidations of the flesh: “From time to time I become an animal, “he wrote in his diary “...eating, drinking and sleeping...at the mercy of my appetites and aversions. Then an authentic life is unthinkable” (Monk, 146). In August 1916, while serving in dangerous circumstances as a soldier at the front, he was inclined to see “the life of knowledge” as offering the only hope for happiness and for warding off the misery off the world” (NB 81). During the war, Wittgenstein repeatedly returned to the idea that the body belonged to the external world and that its welfare should therefore be a matter of indifference to him. He would repeat the following litany: “Don’t be dependent on the external world and then you have no fear of what happens in it (Monk, 116, also 51-53).” (Sass, 2001, p. 112-113)

Having God or the mystical as a grounding of the world and life, gives meaning to one's existence. Wittgenstein eases his existential anxiety during the war by placing the meaning of life in the hands of a greater power — God. This is the reason for his metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life. This-worldly needs, for him, are lower and he places the metaphysical essence of the world at a higher level. The external world is full of discomfort and struggle while the metaphysical essence of the world is comforting. He suggests that our language is not capable of talking about this essence. The meaning is outside this world. However, in the *Philosophical Investigations* he changes his approach to the meaning of life by talking about the grave mistakes he made in the *Tractatus*, as we shall see in section (iv).

There is another anecdote that shows that Wittgenstein did not see philosophical problems as distinct from existential problems. He was in Bertrand Russell's room once, pacing. Russell asks him "What are you thinking about? Logic or your sins?" Wittgenstein answers "Both". He does not see the problems of philosophy as distinct from the problems of life. Again in a letter to Russell he says "How can I be a logician before being a human?" (Monk, p.123)

Philosophy, therefore, for Wittgenstein is not only a discipline that deals with the structure of reality, and the relationship between language and reality, but also a way to ease our existential concerns. In a letter to Norman Malcolm, in November 1944, during the development of his later thought, Wittgenstein says:

What is the use of philosophy if all that it does for you is to enable you talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc., and if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life (N. Malcolm, 1984, p.93).

Thus it is clear that for both early and later Wittgenstein, existential problems were as important as the problems of philosophy. All of his work, explicitly or implicitly, has an existentialist agenda. In the following sections, I shall show how the existential agenda goes hand in hand with the semantic agenda.

(iii) Early Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is a turning point in the history of the philosophy of language and analytic philosophy. In the twentieth century, philosophy went through a self-questioning and self-analyzing process. The task, use and methods of philosophy were reassessed and the main arguments of traditional philosophy were questioned. A new understanding of philosophy was put forward by changing the conception of the task and use of philosophy and by prescribing a new method for philosophy. This radical turn in the history of philosophy was pioneered by Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore and Gottlob Frege. Their thought originated as a reaction to nineteenth-century idealism. They aimed to refute idealism, according to which objects of knowledge do not exist independent from the subject of knowledge. They aimed to prove that our knowledge of objects is a result of *empirical* investigation. The objects have independent existence from our minds. P.M.S Hacker tells us in Wittgenstein's Place in 20th Century Philosophy that,

The main goal of these philosophers was to establish *firm foundations* for knowledge. They believed that the individual sciences are the source of all knowledge. Philosophy, according to Russell, just like science, aims to achieve knowledge of reality—a theoretical understanding of the world.²⁴ He conceived of philosophy as one of the special sciences, like physics or psychology. The significance of philosophical arguments is no different than the significance of physics. In order for philosophy to establish firm grounds for knowledge, it should have a well structured *method*. This method, for Russell was logic: "Every philosophical problem, when it is subjected to the necessary analysis and purification, is found to be not really philosophical at all, or else to be, in the sense in which we are using the word, logical (Russell, 1914)" (Hacker, p.7).

The difference of logic from the natural sciences lies in its *generality* and *apriority*. The theorems of logic are a priori, self evident and necessary truths. The laws of logic are general truths about the ultimate logical forms of reality. Things in reality behave in accordance with these logical laws. When we think according to these laws we think *truly* since these logical laws mirror the relationship between facts of the world and thoughts. The relationship between the entities can be explained by functions; logic is the science of the relations of these entities (Hacker, p.18).

²⁴ Both early and later Wittgenstein was against this conception of philosophy; philosophy does not aim to search for knowledge, it aims at a clarification of ideas via clarification of the language.

Unlike absolute idealists, Russell, Moore and Frege did not conceive of philosophy as a source of wisdom and insight that other sciences do not have. The task of philosophy, according to their conception was to ensure, by analysis and logical construction, that our knowledge of reality is genuine and that there is no room for doubt. This task can be fulfilled only by using logic as a method.

Natural language, Russell thought, is an instrument for the communication of our thoughts and is useful for everyday life. But it is not a good *tool* for philosophy since it does not explicitly reflect the structure of thoughts or structure of facts as logic does. Natural languages are logically defective since they contain vague terms that fail to represent the truths of logic. Thus natural language should be replaced by a logically perfect language such as Russell devises for P.M.S. Hacker.

Until this time, logic had been described by Aristotle with his account of predicate logic. Gottlob Frege, in the late nineteenth hundreds introduced a new way of dividing up the propositions. Frege aimed to reduce mathematics to logic. He devised a system of representation and wrote some strict guidelines for this system, and thereby invented symbolic logic²⁵ (Frege, 1972). Frege believed that there was a logical order hidden underneath natural language. He argued that natural language is often ambiguous, and thus it is difficult to be accurate because some words have more than one meaning (Frege,1972). In a letter to Husserl Frege says:

It cannot be the task of logic to investigate language and determine what is contained in a linguistic expression. Someone who wants to learn logic from language is like an adult who wants to learn how to think from a child. When men created language, they were at a stage of childish pictorial thinking. Languages are not made to match logic's ruler (Frege, 1906).²⁶

²⁵ The influence of these guidelines Frege introduced in his *Begriffsschrift* can be seen in Wittgenstein's *Notebooks*.

²⁶ Though Wittgenstein would have had no knowledge of this letter, in *On Certainty* he wrote an entry which reads as if he were replying to this statement of Frege: "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough

Thus the traditional philosophy, so far, could not provide real knowledge since it was misled by everyday language. The meaning of words is ambiguous in ordinary language and they cannot explain the nature of reality because of this ambiguity. Logic will clarify the language and make it ready for empirical verifications establishing true knowledge.

Wittgenstein's first acquaintance with philosophers was with Frege and Russell.²⁷ Wittgenstein's early thought, together with Frege, Russell and Moore, led to the development of logical positivism —also known as the Vienna Circle— in the 1920s and 1930s. Nevertheless, the logical positivists' reception of the *Tractatus* was in the form of a misinterpretation, thus logical positivism was constructed on a misunderstanding. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein considers the nature of reality and its representation via language to be the true basis for doing philosophy, and according for it to be the purpose of philosophy. His *Tractatus* is constructed as a response to Frege's and Russell's arguments on the nature of reality and language. Wittgenstein does not agree with their claims on natural language and he treats logic from a different perspective. Also, he does not agree with Russell and Frege on the conception of philosophy as a science. He criticizes traditional metaphysics, like Frege and Russell do, but his solutions to the problem of metaphysics are drastically different from theirs. The anti-metaphysicalism of the logical positivists is in the form of science worship, which both early and later Wittgenstein finds mistaken. The *Tractatus* itself creates another kind of metaphysics which is ignored by the logical positivists. The aim of the *Tractatus* is to find the limits of the thinkable and the unthinkable and thus to draw a limit to the expression of thoughts. If philosophy manages to draw this limit between the thinkable and the

for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination (OC, 475)".

²⁷The first philosopher Wittgenstein read and was highly influenced by was Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's influence is obvious in his early thought. However, his first acquaintance with academic philosophy was through Russell and Frege.

unthinkable, all the philosophical problems would be solved (TLP, par. 3). Propositions of metaphysics, which are in the realm of the unthinkable, are non-sense and thus we should be silent about them. Being silent about metaphysics, which is the only way to express the *mystical*²⁸ in Wittgenstein's terms, does not mean that the metaphysical structure of reality does not exist; however it does mean that metaphysical truths are not expressible through natural language. Rather, metaphysical truths can *only* show themselves.

The *Tractatus* has a dual agenda. The first one —the arguments related to the nature of language, logic and the picture theory of meaning— is accepted by the Vienna Circle and guided them in their further construction of logical positivism. But the second agenda —the metaphysical-existential one— was ignored and thus led to the misinterpretation of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein's *Notebooks, 1914-1916* reflects this metaphysical-existential agenda as well as the semantic agenda, and serves as a good resource for understanding the *Tractatus*.

In the preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein states that the book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows that the main source of the problems of philosophy is the misunderstanding of the logic of language (TLP, par.3). The main argument of the book, he states, is “what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence” (TLP, par.3). Wittgenstein lays out the metaphysical structure of reality. According to the *Tractatus*, the world has a *substance*, viz. ‘objects’, which are simple and not composite. They thus form the unalterable structure of the world (TLP, par. 2.021, 2.023, 2.024. 2.027). They form the *fixed* structure of the world that cannot be changed. Objects contain all possible combinations in themselves (TLP, par. 2.0271). The different configurations of objects construct states of affairs (TLP, par.2.0272). In a state of affairs, objects stand in a *determinate* relationship to one another

²⁸ The *mystical* includes logic, ethics and aesthetics. I have a detailed discussion of the mystical in the following paragraphs.

(TLP, par. 2.031). All objects encompass all possible states of affairs as a potentiality; so all the relationships between objects in states of affairs are pre-determined. Objects make up the substance of the world; the existence of their actual configurations makes up the facts. The world has a fixed structure since the objects are its substance and all possible states of affairs are encoded into their structure (NB, p.62). If all the objects are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs are given. Objects contain the possibility of all states of affairs (TLP, par.2.014). Regarding the determinate relationship between objects, Wittgenstein states: “Things are independent in so far as they can occur in all possible situations, but this form of independence is a form of connexion with states of affairs, a form of dependence. (It is impossible for words to appear in two different roles: by themselves, and in propositions)” (TLP, par.2.0122).

There is a pre-determined and fixed relationship among objects even if it is there only as a possibility, not actuality. Both the existence and non-existence of states of affairs make up reality (TLP, par.2.06). The existence of states of affairs determines the facts since a fact is the existence of states of affairs (TLP, par.2). The world is the totality of facts —the existence of states of affairs (TLP, par.1, 1.1). Wittgenstein clearly states in the *Tractatus* that things/ objects are not *the* world but the possible constituents of states of affairs (TLP, par. 2.011) and the existence of all the states of affairs —facts— is the world. This structure of reality is a logical structure; having a logical structure is the essence of reality. Logic is the grounding of the world.

The totality of existing state of affairs makes up the world (TLP, par.2.04). The existence and non-existence of state of affairs make up the reality, and the existence of states of affairs is a positive fact and their non-existence is a negative fact (TLP, par.2.06). And the sum total of reality —the existence of states of affairs— makes up reality (TLP, par.2,063). The mystical, on the other hand can not be regarded as the existence of states of affairs, since it does not make up the facts. But it makes itself manifest (TLP, par.6.522). Thus, from these propositions of the *Tractatus* we

can infer that reality has two components: the world —the totality of facts— and the mystical. Logic, ethics, aesthetics, religion are parts of the *mystical* and they are the background of the world; they are what the world relies on. They have a greater value than the world or the totality of facts. Reality has a logical structure on which the world depends. The mystical is the metaphysical grounding of the world. The *mystical* is the paradigm of what is ‘inexpressible’ and *shows* itself. He says, “Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is” (TLP, par. 6.44). The mystical is the metaphysical grounding of the world and it takes place outside the world. Though this realm of the mystical, in which ethics takes place, is inexpressible, it can be manifested: “There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical” (TLP, par. 6.522).

Logic, one of the components of the mystical, pervades reality as such: the relationship between objects in the shape of states of affairs, the existence of which makes up the facts and thus the world, is a logical relationship. States of affairs are tied to each other with a logical bond; the facts take place in ‘logical space’ (TLP, par.1.13). Logical space is beyond the world, it serves as the background of the world, and the facts —the existence of states of affairs— are the world. Logical space encompasses all the objects which are the substance of the world. Thus we can say, logical space — a part of the mystical— is the metaphysical grounding of the world.

Logic, because of this determinate and unchanging structure, gives a certainty to the world; i.e. states of affairs have a determinate inner structure. Just like logical rules, we can say, ethics also is present as a background in the structure of the world.²⁹ Wittgenstein, by distinguishing the world from the mystical, makes a valuation of the different aspects of reality. The mystical is what is higher and the world is what is lower. This valuation is exhibited in his saying/showing

²⁹ See the figure 2.1 on page 53.

distinction which is Wittgenstein's argument that the facts of the world can be put into words whereas the mystical can not be stated by the language but can only be shown. What can be shown—the mystical—is the condition of what can be said.

According to Wittgenstein, the totality of propositions forms language (TLP, par.4). Wittgenstein shares Augustine's picture theory of language (PI, par.1). According to the picture theory, the main use of language is to make a description of the world—the totality of the facts. The main use of words is *naming* and the task of propositions is *describing* facts. The meaning of a word is the object it corresponds to in the world, and the meaning of a proposition is the fact it describes. Language can only state the facts of the world; its main use is to make descriptions. Language is the means to express the facts of the world. The non-factual part of reality—the mystical—cannot be *stated with* language but *shows itself in* language as the logical form of a proposition. As mentioned before, the facts have a logical structure; states of affairs are connected to each other in a fixed and determinate way. They have a logical structure that ties them together. Language has a logical structure—grammar—that mirrors the logical structure of the facts. Language and world have *logical form* in common. Logic is the common scaffolding of both language and the world. Without logic—the mystical—the world would not exist. But this common structure of reality and language cannot be stated:

Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it—logical form. In order to be able to represent logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world (TLP, par. 4.12).

Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them. What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses itself in language, we cannot express by means of language. Propositions show the logical form of reality. They display it (TLP, par. 4.121).

What can be shown cannot be said (TLP, par. 4.1212).

The existence of an internal relation between possible situations expresses itself in language by means of an internal relation between the propositions representing them (TLP, par. 4.125).

According to the picture theory of meaning, the essential logical form of language is identical with the essential metaphysical form of reality. The connection between the objects in the

form of states of affairs reveals itself as the connection between the names and the propositions in the language. The grammatical structure of the language corresponds to the logical structure of the world. Logic is the essence of reality as well as the essence of a proposition (TLP, par. 5.4). Logic embraces the world; it is the world's metaphysical essence: "How can logic —all-embracing logic, which mirrors the world— use such peculiar crotchets and contrivances? Only because they are all connected with one another in an infinitely fine network, the great mirror" (TLP, par. 5.511).

Logic has an a priori structure, it is beyond this world:

The 'experience' that we need in order to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something is : that, however, is not an experience. Logic is prior to every experience--that something is so. It is prior to the question 'How?' not prior to the question 'What?' (TLP, par. 5.552).

A proposition is a statement of a fact as well as a display of the logical form. Thus, language mirrors reality by *stating and describing* the totality of facts —the world— and *showing* the logical form of the reality. We can thus say that the picture theory of meaning divides reality into two —the world and the mystical— by distinguishing what can be said and what can be shown. Wittgenstein, via the saying/showing distinction, makes a valuation between the world and the mystical. The world is what is lower, and language can state it. However the mystical is higher, so it can not be stated by the lower —language is, as it were, a device for saying.³⁰ But it can be shown just by the presence of language. This hierarchy in the structure of reality has existential meaning implications. Ethics, which is a part of the mystical, is higher. Ethics as I shall discuss in what follows is conceived as something pertaining the meaning of life (LE., p. 5). In so far as ethics is what is higher, we can infer that Wittgenstein sees the meaning of life at a higher level of reality than our everyday life. Thus he implies that the meaning of life cannot be attained within the limits of this world.

³⁰ Wittgenstein's ascribing different values to the world and the mystical, and his claim that what can be shown is higher than what can be said, and that language —a lower level of reality— can not state the higher, shows the influence of Russell's theory of types in Wittgenstein's thought (Sass, p.99).

Wittgenstein's understanding of natural language differs from Frege's and Russell's. Frege and Russell were claiming that natural language is logically defective since it contains vague terms and fails to represent the truths of logic. So, for them, all philosophical statements should be replaced by a logically perfect language. Contrary to Frege and Russell, Wittgenstein argues that "all the propositions of everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order" (TLP, par. 5.5563). By this he means that the propositions of our ordinary language are not in any way logically less correct or less exact or more confused than the propositions written down. Only it is easier for us to gather their logical form when they are expressed in an appropriate symbolism. Natural sciences, he argued, are only defective in appearance. The task of philosophy is to clear up the language by distinguishing what is said from what is shown.

We can understand a proposition as long as it pictures a possible state of affairs. Expressions of metaphysics are meaningless since they do not depict a possible fact. The propositions of the natural sciences can be expressed since they correspond to facts in the world (TLP, par. 4.11). Only the propositions of natural sciences can be stated in language, they are meaningful since they may correspond to a fact in the world. However philosophy is not a natural science. It has a place above or below natural sciences and cannot be put in the same category as the natural sciences (TLP, par. 4.111) Philosophy, by clarifying the language, by distinguishing the expressible from the inexpressible, sets a limit to the natural sciences and eases their work (TLP, par. 4.113). It sets limits to what can be thought and what cannot be thought:

Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. Philosophy does not result in 'philosophical propositions', but rather in the clarification of propositions. Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries (TLP, par. 4.112).

Russell's view of philosophy was simply "retrogression from the method of physics" (NB, p.44), Wittgenstein said, criticizing Russell's conception of "scientific method in philosophy". It is

the task of physics to construct theories about reality. The task of philosophy is elucidation of propositions by analysis. It is inconceivable for Wittgenstein that philosophy should share the methods of natural sciences. There is a sharp distinction between philosophy and science, both in terms of their method and their products. The task of philosophy is not to describe the most general truths about the universe, which is the task of natural sciences like physics. The task of philosophy is not describing the workings of the mind either, that is the task of psychology. Nor does philosophy properly investigate the metaphysical nature of things. The goal of traditional metaphysics was to uncover necessary truths about reality, and to disclose the essence of the world. But this is not possible since natural language can only state the empirical discoveries of the natural sciences. But the metaphysical structure of reality cannot be expressed via language since it is at a higher level. According to the *Tractatus*, *there are indeed metaphysical truths*, but any attempt to state them, including that of *Tractatus*, transgresses the bounds of sense since language is not adequate to reveal them. The only thing philosophy should do in terms of the metaphysical truths is to be silent (TLP, par. 7).

This led Wittgenstein to characterize his own theory of language in the *Tractatus* as nonsense, for to say that language pictures facts is to try to give a picture of the pictorial relation which holds between statement and fact, which is absurd since this pictorial relation can only show itself, and what shows itself cannot be said. He called his metaphysics important *nonsense* which helps one to recognize it as nonsense, and thought that philosophers tend to talk nonsense because of the untidy character of ordinary language. Once the *Tractatus* is understood there will be no more concern for philosophy, which is neither empirical like science nor tautological like mathematics. The traditional problems of philosophy ask for answers to questions that are nonsensical. The things that traditional metaphysics tries to say are shown in the structure of the language itself, its logical form. Thus the correct method in philosophy (TLP par. 6.53) is not the

method the *Tractatus* used. Its method is to be discarded like a ladder which is to be thrown away after one has climbed up it (TLP, par. 6.54). Philosophy should construct no theories, propound no doctrines, and attain no new knowledge of facts. Rather it will be an activity of logical clarification (TLP par. 4.112) Philosophy, unlike science, is not a cognitive discipline.³¹ It does not contribute to human knowledge, but by means of logical clarification, it contributes to human understanding. “All philosophy is a critique of language” Wittgenstein stated (TLP par. 4.0031). Its task is to eliminate misunderstandings, resolve unclarities, and dissolve philosophical problems that arise out of confusing features of the surface grammar or natural language (TLP, par. 4.003, 4.0031). Regarding the task of philosophy, he ends the *Tractatus* with these paragraphs:

The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science--i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy -- and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. 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, par. 6.53)

What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence (TLP, par.7)

The *Tractatus* was misinterpreted by the Vienna Circle. They developed a new understanding of philosophy based on Russell’s, Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s. They defined their view in the manifesto of the Circle:

The scientific world-conception knows no unsolvable riddle. Clarification of the traditional philosophical problems leads us partly to unmask them as pseudo-problems, and partly to transform them into empirical problems and thereby to subject them to the judgment of experimental science. The task of philosophical work lies in this clarification of problems and assertions, not in the propounding of special “philosophical pronouncements (Manifesto, p.8)” (cited in Hacker, p.24)

The method of the new philosophy, thus, was the logical analysis of science through the logical analysis of language. The attitude towards the problems of philosophy should be scientific (Hacker, p.44). The goal of the new philosophy was ‘unified science’. The Vienna Circle announced the demolition of metaphysics altogether. The “Scientific-Worldview” represents their conception of science free from metaphysics (Manifesto, p.7). (cited in Hacker, p.25)

³¹ Here Wittgenstein is against logical positivism.

They argued that a statement is meaningful if and only if it can be proved true or false by means of experience. This is the verification principle. The meaning of a statement is its method of verification. Metaphysical statements do not fulfill the requirement of verification, thus they are meaningless. The only role of philosophy is the clarification of the meaning of statements. The Vienna Circle demolished metaphysics and started worshipping science. Wittgenstein *did not* share the arguments of the logical positivists. The *Tractatus* stated that there are indeed metaphysical truths about the essential nature of the world. The Vienna circle disregarded this part of the *Tractatus*. For Wittgenstein, the metaphysical truths about the essential nature of the reality are ineffable; they are shown in the deep structure of any possible language. Language is superficial, the metaphysical truths about the essence of the world—in the realm of mystical—are in the deep structure of reality; they can only be shown.

To sum up, for Wittgenstein, the essence of language is its function and structure. He did not change his understanding of the essence of language in his later thought although he changed his idea of the function and structure of language. The function of language is to represent the world and its structure is logical form. Logical form can only be shown; it cannot be said. Logical form guarantees a connection between the language and world. Propositions in language have a logical form, and they describe the facts of the world. The function of language, for early Wittgenstein, is making descriptions of the world. The metaphysical approach of the *Tractatus* aims to explain the connection between the world and language. He assigns the world an a priori structure by claiming that logic pervades reality. Ordinary language, for Wittgenstein is already perfect because of its perfect logical structure. Language is a spatio-temporal phenomenon but it has a non-spatio-temporal structure. Language can describe the facts of reality since this non-spatio-temporal essence is also the structure of reality. Later Wittgenstein abandons this conception of language having a hidden ideal structure tries to convey the actual role of language in human

culture. His understanding of language having a sublime structure is reflected in his understanding of the meaning of life having a sublime structure.

(iv)The Existential-metaphysical Dimension of the *Tractatus*

Now I shall explain the part of the *Tractatus* disregarded by the logical positivists which is about what Wittgenstein calls “the mystical”. As I have already mentioned *the mystical* comprises logic, ethics, aesthetics and religion. It represents *the metaphysical structure of the essence of reality*. Wittgenstein distinguishes the mystical from the world and puts it at a higher level. Language and the world are on the same level, thus language can make statements —say something— about the world. But the mystical is ineffable and cannot be expressed through a lower state of reality. Ethics, logic, aesthetics, religion, and the metaphysical essence of reality are all different species of the same thing; they are different facets of the diamond of the mystical.

He sees the problem of life as different from any empirical problems. Science can respond to the empirical questions of reality but the problem of life is not a scientific fact (TLP, par. 6.52).In 1915, in his Notebooks he writes;

The urge towards the mystical comes from the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science. We *feel* that even if all *possible* scientific questions are answered *our problem is still not touched at all*. Of course in that case there are no questions any more, and that is the answer (NB, p.27).

The problem of the meaning of life is not a scientific question; that is why philosophy cannot be one of the sciences. And the *Tractatus*'s emphasis on the mystical is the result of our dissatisfaction with science.

Wittgenstein conceives the problem of the meaning of life as a *riddle*. The riddle of life is about the individual's place in the world, and her relationship with the eternal reality. Wittgenstein's understanding of the riddle of life includes the temporality of the soul, the

individual's *will*³² in the world, the relationship between life and death, the possible life after death and happiness (TLP par. 6.43 6.431, 6.4311, 6.4312). The riddle Wittgenstein is announcing is in fact an existential riddle; the problems of the riddle are the existential concerns of the individual.

He says:

Not only is there no guarantee of the temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say of its eternal survival after death; but, in any case, this assumption completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always been intended. Or is some riddle solved by my surviving for ever? Is not this eternal life itself as much of a riddle as our present life? The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside the space and time (TLP, par. 6.4312).

The problems of life and the answers to our existential concerns, viz. the meaning of life, lie outside this world, at the higher level of reality, in the mystical. The problem of ethics is the problem of life —the existential riddle— according to Wittgenstein. Ethics, like logic, is transcendental and not talk-aboutable. It is a higher level of reality. Thus the answers to the problems of life cannot be stated from the lower level of reality, in language. If the question of the problem of life cannot be stated with words, the question cannot be asked either. Thus Wittgenstein states that the riddle of existence does not exist³³:

When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. The *riddle* does not exist. If a question can be framed at all, it is also *possible* to answer it (TLP, par. 6.5)

Then he continues:

The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem. (Is not this the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?) (TLP, 6.521)

The reason for the disappearance of the problem of life is the impossibility of stating it via language. It is meaningless to talk about ethics or the meaning of life because propositions can only express mere facts (LE, p.3). When there is a proposition it is a mere statement of a fact. We can not have an ethical truth in the description that the proposition makes. “Certainly the reading of

³² Wittgenstein was highly influenced by Schopenhauer in his early thought. In this context he used Schopenhauerian concept of “will”.

description might cause us pain or rage or any other emotion, or we might read about the pain or rage caused by this murder in other people when they have heard of it, but there will simply be facts, facts, and facts but no Ethics” (LE, p.3).³⁴ All the facts in the world are as they are; in them there is no value, the value lies outside the world, outside the facts. There is a value of life but it is not within the limits of the world or life, since world and life are identical in the *Tractatus* (par. 5.621). What we do while we are making value judgments is seeing or experiencing the facts and making judgments about them, but it is meaningless because language cannot express anything other than the facts. The ethical is not a fact of the world but it is a characteristic of the world.

Wittgenstein, while talking about the mystical, does not make a clear differentiation of logic from ethics. They are both what is higher. In this respect, I believe that Wittgenstein’s conception of logic and its relation with the grammar of language implies a relationship between ethics and life. Ethics is a condition of life, like logic is the condition of the world. He argues that the world is held together by logical laws. He clearly says that “The world and life are one. (TLP, par. 5.621)”. As quoted earlier, in the notebook entry about God and the meaning of life, he clearly states that a happy life is the one that is lived in conformity with the world (NB, p.74-75). Thus, we can infer that a meaningful life is the one that is held together by the ethical laws. That is why acting according to one’s conscience, which is the voice of god, will make the individual happy (Notebooks, p.74-75). It will be in conformity with the metaphysical essence of the world, the mystical, which can be ethics, aesthetics, religion or logic. This is a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life. Propositions of language make sense as long as they have a logical form, and life is meaningful as long as ethical laws rule it. Let’s look at our diagram again:

³³ Here Wittgenstein criticizes skepticism for asking questions that cannot be answered at all (ibid. 6.51). Gordon Bearn analyzes both Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s thoughts in the context of scepticism.

³⁴ In the “Lecture on Ethics”, Wittgenstein makes a distinction between the absolute judgment of value and relative judgment of value in order to explain why we cannot make ethical propositions.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Reality | Linguistic Meaning | Existential meaning |
| Mystical/Higher?Nonsense | Logical Form | Ethics/Religion/Aesthetics |
| World/Lower/Sense | Language | Life |

Wittgenstein conceives reality as a determined whole. Logic pervades the world; logic is one of the main structures of reality. Logic shows itself in the pure grammar of language, and ethics shows itself in the existence of life. Ethics, like logic, is a condition of reality. All the possible relationships between the objects in the world are encoded into their structure, and their configurations produce the states of affairs. Everything is determinate via laws of logic. We can also say that the value of the states of affairs is also determinate in the structure of life but it cannot be put into words such as logical laws. Logic shows itself in the structure of the language, and ethics shows itself in the structure of life. In order to understand the logical form one must see language as a whole, and in order to understand ethics, one must see the world as a whole. The very existence of the world is what is mystical; the value shows itself it cannot be stated. They are what the mystical is (TLP, par. 6.522). "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence (TLP, par. 7)"; that is all we can do.

This is how Wittgenstein sees the problem of life in general, but now we should ask Wittgenstein what does it mean for a single individual who is concerned with her existential problems? What kind of answer is the *Tractatus* giving except saying that we can't talk about it?

The individual is not a part of the world but she is the limit of the world (TLP par. 5.632).

Wittgenstein views the individual *sub specie aeternitatis*. The individual is not in the world, but at the boundary of it. Wittgenstein is a solipsist in the *Tractatus*.³⁵ Solipsism is generally the view that

³⁵Wittgenstein, by the influence of Schopenhauer, views the individual *sub specie aeternitatis*. Wittgenstein's mysticism is very similar to Schopenhauer's. Ethics, for Schopenhauer is taking the right stance to the world as a whole, of viewing the correct relation between the self and the world. The self should be receiving the world without imposing judgmental categories on it and she should be aware of her own indivisibility from the whole reality.

I (the self) alone (*solus ipse*) exist(s). This means that the self can only appear as conceived by solipsism as a condition of the possibility of the world. Wittgenstein says:

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world (TLP, par.5.6).

This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism. For what the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest. The world is my world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world. (TLP, par.5.62)

I am my world. (The microcosm). (TLP, par.5.63)

The world is *my* world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world. (TLP, par.5.62)

Wittgenstein's discussion of solipsism in these paragraphs marks the intersection of the logical and the mystical parts of the *Tractatus*. I believe that the source of his solipsistic attitude is his notion of language. In the construction of language the self does not need the others, language is a description of the world not a communication tool. The world is the totality of facts, it is self-evident, everything is as it is. The essence of language is the logical form and logical form is the common structure of language and the world. Language reflects the world and thus it is singular. For Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, every one envisages the world only in so far as he or she is a speaker of language, in which the world can be described. There is only one language since it describes the world. The self has a relationship with the world as a whole, and this relationship is through language, the limits of an individual's world are the limits of her language. Thus the self does not need others to have a world —life— or language.

This solipsistic view throws the individual outside the world. He says: "The subject does not belong to the world, but is rather a limit of the world" (TLP, par. 5.632). In the *Notebooks*, glossing the remark that '*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*', on page 49, dated 23 May 1915, Wittgenstein immediately says this: "There really is only one world soul, *Weltseele*, which I

for preference call *my* soul and as which alone I conceive what I call the souls of others'. Then he goes on: 'The above remark gives the key for deciding the way in which solipsism is a truth'.

The individual is detached from the world; she is outside the world but she is a part of reality. The individual sees the facts of the world from outside, but the meaning of her life does not lie in the world. The individual observes and experiences the world, but not the meaning of her life. The meaning of one's life lies in the mystical, thus it is sublime; it is not within the limits of the world. The meaning of one's life is not attainable in this world:

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, par. 6.45)
The world is independent of my will (TLP, par. 6.373).

The world has already a fixed structure; the individual's existence does not change it. Values and the meaning of life lie outside the world, since in the world everything is as it is or everything happens as it does happen (TLP, par. 6.41). He continues:

...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).

Thus, we can say, Wittgenstein says to the individual who is in search of the meaning of her life that the meaning does not belong to the world since in it everything is the case. Value/meaning lies outside the world. This kind of approach is a metaphysical approach. The individual is not responsible for her life. According to this approach, it is almost as if no matter how hard the individual tries, she cannot create the meaning of her life. Rather, the meaning of life is already given, living in conformity with the mystical rules—ethics, religion, etc. What these rules are we cannot state. Language can only express the facts, thus it can only express what is in the world, not what is outside, so language cannot express what is higher; it cannot express ethics (TLP par. 6.42): "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same) (TLP, par. 6.421)."

This abstract notion of the meaning of life does not concern individual's daily existential concerns. It rather pushes the individual to look for that indefinite, unknown meaning. The individual, while looking for this abstract out of this world meaning, does not recognize the hidden meanings of everyday life. In this context, this abstract notion of the meaning of life might give a solid grounding to the individual by providing something to look for. Nevertheless, in the short run, when the individual faces the problem of having to live this day, this abstract conception of the meaning of life does not help. It might cause a resignation in the individual that she might not even want to live anymore since she does not exactly know what she is looking for, and anything she might find meaningful can lose its value because of not fitting the ideal picture of the meaning of life. In a way this conception of the meaning of life leaves the individual in a nihilistic state in Nietzsche's terms.

To sum up, for early Wittgenstein, reality has two components at two different value levels; the world and the mystical. There is a hierarchy of values. The world and language are at the lower level, whereas the mystical and the meaning of life is at the higher level. The higher is what is certain, determined and fixed. It is there as the metaphysical grounding of the world. He makes a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life; the meaning is beyond the limits of this world, it is at the higher level. The idea that there is a meaning beyond this world in a realm which is greater than human existence gives a sense of security and safety. This metaphysical reality is hidden from us by a veil, but we know it is there. For the individual who has existential concerns, believing there is a higher realm of value in which everything has a place makes her feel secure and safe. Even if we cannot say what that meaning is, we know it is there because it shows itself to us by the existence of the world and existence of human life. The individual does not have a control over the structure of the world. Everything happens as it happens. This takes the responsibility of one's own life away from one, thus the individual does not have to struggle with the everyday existential

concerns. There is a higher that takes care of all these concerns.³⁶ Thus the individual can isolate herself from the rest of the world, stop struggling with the existential concerns and live a life that she thinks in accordance with the higher realm of reality. The *Tractatus*'s conclusion, in terms of the search for the meaning of life, pushes one to a kind of resignation, where the individual is encouraged to be passive, since her will cannot enter into the world, and just look at the life as it is. The real comfort, the *Tractatus* promises, is the *metaphysical comfort* of the mystical. It sublimates the meaning of life from this world to another dimension of the reality.

(v) Later Wittgenstein

In the preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein states that he wrote the *Philosophical Investigations* to fix the grave mistakes he made in the *Tractatus*. He says; “For since the beginning to occupy myself with philosophy again, sixteen years ago, I have been forced to recognize grave mistakes in what I wrote in that first book (PI, preface, x)”.

His response to the grave mistakes of the *Tractatus* displays his notion of existential meaning in *Philosophical Investigations*. He directly addresses these grave mistakes in his understanding of the relationship between language and world, and the structure of language and reality. Wittgenstein, in *Philosophical Investigations*, turns away from his metaphysical approach to the nature of language and the world, and the meaning of life, to an anti-metaphysical approach through which he deals with the everyday use of language, and thereby, everyday life. In writing *Philosophical Investigations*, he aims to give an anti-metaphysical explanation of the language:

When philosophers use a word —“knowledge”, “being”, “object”. “I”, “proposition”, “name”—and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home? — What we do here is to bring words back from their metaphysical use to everyday use (PI, par.116).

³⁶Sass, in his article “Deep Disquietudes” links early Wittgenstein’s concerns about the certain grounding and meaning of life —the mystical— to his personal psychology at the time. Sass states that Wittgenstein seems to have had a recurrent need for withdrawal, a yearning for solitude and distant places where he might somehow find peace as well as escape from the possibility of theatricality or inauthenticity in social life but he again could not stand the isolation and being alone (Sass, p.112)

The grave mistakes he made in the *Tractatus* are related to the sublimation of the logic of language (PI, par. 38) which he latterly thinks of as the Augustinian picture of language (PI, par.1). Early Wittgenstein, following Augustine, conceives of language as primarily a means to describe the world. According to the Augustinian picture of language, the meaning of a word is the object it corresponds to and the meaning of a proposition is a fact. Propositions are pictures of the world. These grave mistakes of the *Tractatus*, as he came to regard them, are remedied by *Philosophical Investigations*' anti-metaphysical approach to the nature of language.

Wittgenstein starts *Philosophical Investigations* with a quotation from Augustine that sets out the picture theory of language:

"When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shown 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 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."

These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects--sentences are combinations of such names.--In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. The meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.

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', 'bread', 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....That philosophical concept of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way language functions. But one can also say that it is the idea of a language more primitive than ours (PI, par.1)

The essential function of language according to the picture theory is naming and describing; the world and language are linked to each other as corresponding images. We can only state the totality of facts—the world— via language, we cannot state anything beyond facts. Language does not enable us to *say* things about the non-factual part of the reality, i.e. metaphysical truths about the nature of reality, ethics, logic; we can only *show* them. Thus, the function of language is naming and describing and its structure is the logical form. In

Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein alters this conception of language. The essence of language is still its function and structure however he redefines what they are (PI, par.109). He presents language as primarily a means of communication and understanding, rather than as a means of describing reality. A builder and her assistant understand each other when they just say the names of the tools they are requesting even without necessarily requiring explanation (PI, par. 2). Wittgenstein regards the Augustinian conception of language as one of the primitive kinds of applications of language, such as showing an object to a child and giving its name. This kind of primitive application of language is only one aspect of language where it is used as a way of training the child, not necessarily communicating (PI, par. 5):

In the practice of the use of language (2), one party calls out the words, the other acts on them. In instruction in the language the following process will occur: the learner names the objects; that is, he utters the word when the teacher points to the stone.---And there will be this still simpler exercise: the pupil repeats the words after the teacher----both of these being processes resembling language. We can also think of the whole process of using words in (2) as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games “language games” and will sometimes speak of a primitive language as a language-game. And the process of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language-games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses. I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, a “language game” (PI, par. 7).

He uses the game analogy in order to explain the structure of language. For example the whole process of using words to teach children their native language is a kind of language- game; or the language which the assistant and the builder use to communicate is a language game. The different applications of language in different contexts are language games. A language game consists of the language and the context of language —the people involved, the subject, the culture, and the environment. The focus in language is communicating and understanding, not explaining. The words used in the language do not necessarily correspond to objects in the world. The functions of the words in a language game, Wittgenstein says, are as diverse as the functions of tools in a toolbox (PI, par.11). The meaning of words and propositions lies in their use in the

language; the context of the language creates the meaning of the word. A language game is surrounded by a form of life:

It is easy to imagine a language consisting only of orders and reports in battle. —Or a language consisting only of questions and expressions for answering yes and no. And innumerable others. —And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life (PI, par. 19).

The structure of language, according to the Tractatus was logical form, now it is the form of life. Logical form was single while there are various kinds of language games and forms of life. What Wittgenstein means by a form of life is the shared context of communication. Stanley Cavell gives a good explanation of what Wittgenstein means by a form of life as such:

We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation —all the whirl organism Wittgenstein calls “forms of life”. Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying. We begin to feel, or ought to, terrified that maybe language (and understanding, and knowledge) rests upon very shaky foundations —a thin net over an abyss (Cavell, 1969, p.52).

Wittgenstein sees language as a part of natural history. It is based on the need for communication. Agreement in form of life is the basis of mutual understanding. The reason for Cavell’s existential terror is that we are not sure whether what we want to share via language will be understood by the other individual or not. We are not sure if there is a mutual agreement in the language game. Since a form of life includes more than one individual, thus more than one perspective, the dynamics of the relationship are shaky. There are lots of risks that these shakable foundations of human communication carry. Creating a language requires a context of activity and

interpersonal agreement; it requires imagining the form of life of the individuals. This characteristic of language prevents us from assigning one single structure for the language, like logical form.

This unstable nature of human communication and language raises the question of whether a unique definition of the meaning of life, that is valid for all forms of life, can be made.³⁷ The danger of losing certitude and predictability in life and human relationships are a terrifying experience that human existence faces. Different forms of life contain different dynamics; thus different forms of life contain different meanings which can be totally distinct from each other.

As mentioned in the previous section, logical form is what holds language together, and ethical laws hold life together. Now, Wittgenstein, by introducing the concept of form of life abandons his conception of logical form, thus in a way abandons the idea that life is held together by unique set of rules. In the *Tractatus*, the foundations of language were provided by ‘unanalysable’ objects, whose essences — combinational possibilities— are supposed to determine, in an ineffable way, the logical space of possible situations, and thereby set unalterable limits to what it makes sense to say. In the *Tractatus*, meaning was certain even though it was sublime and ineffable, it exists and it is one thing. But in *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein holds that in so far as language has foundations, they are provided not by metaphysical atoms (PI, par. 72), but by shifting patterns of communal activity. Thus meaning can be created in different life patterns. Wittgenstein continues:

But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command?--- There are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get

³⁷ Gordon Bearn uses this passage from Cavell in the preface of his book *Waking to Wonder: Wittgenstein's Existential Investigations*. He says: “The terror that Cavell points to is the terror attendant on a complete loss of confidence whether anything means what we think it means, whether there is any meaning at all in the world or in language” (p.13) In the same book Bearn argues that later thoughts of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein allows us to create meaning in different senses.

a rough picture of this from the changes in mathematics.) Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a life-form.

Review the multiplicity of language games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders and obeying them—

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements—

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—

Reporting an event—

Speculating about the event—

Forming and testing a hypothesis—

Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—

Making up a story; and reading it—

Play-acting—

Singing catches—

Guessing riddles—

Making a joke; telling it—

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic—

Translating from one language into another—

Requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.

It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) (PI, par. 23).

Language is primarily an activity rather than a way to describe reality. Speaking a language is a part of our natural history like eating, drinking, walking and playing (PI, par. 25). The things that human beings engage in make up their form of life. Let's take for example, a classroom. The teacher makes a joke referring to one of the previous classes and all the students laugh. They have a shared experience of the previous class, when the teacher says something the students know what he is referring to and they laugh. Language is the tool that enables this community have a shared experience. We perform different language games in a form of life. We engage in linguistic activities instinctively. We try to sustain a mutual understanding of what is said. That is why we sometimes explain things in different ways in order to make ourselves understood, use different tools, like changing our tone of voice etc.

Wittgenstein's notion of logical form in the *Tractatus* was imposing a pre-established or ideal structure on language, whereas with the notion of form of life Wittgenstein tries to understand how everyday language actually works. The notion of logical form was dealing with an ideal component of language whereas the notion of form of life deals with the actual language. In

this context, according to the picture theory, the meaning of a word was its correspondent object in the world and the meaning of a proposition was its correspondent fact in the world. They had logical form in common. But now, Wittgenstein argues that the meaning of a word is determined by its use in the language, “For a large class of cases-though not for all-in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. And the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer (PI, 32).” So, it is the shared form of life that determines the meaning of a proposition. In some cases, we explain the meaning of a word by simply pointing to an object, as in the picture theory, but in other cases we explain it in another way. The way we use language depends on the form of life. But our main goal is to communicate.

Hence, we can say, the *first* grave mistake of the *Tractatus* is its conception of language, according to which the use of language is naming and describing things. According to later Wittgenstein, the idea that language is a means of naming the objects or facts is a “queer conception [which] springs from a tendency to sublime the logic of our language” (PI, par. 38). Conceiving of language as essentially a means of describing reality sublimates the logic of our language. We can then say that sublimating the logic of language is the *second* grave mistake of the *Tractatus*. In the *Tractatus* he argues that the words in propositions are tied to each other with a determinate relationship just as the objects are tied to each other in the form of states of affairs in the world. Logic was the scaffolding of this structure. The world thus has a fixed structure, and logic does not include any surprises. In the *Tractatus*, he argues that the logical form of language is a mirror image of the logical form of reality. Logical form is hidden beneath the structure of language. Now, Wittgenstein criticizes the sublimating of logic as the Platonic structure of language. He had thought that logic, if followed carefully, can lead us to a more accurate understanding. But in the *Investigations* he says:

These considerations bring us up to the problem: In what sense is the logic something sublime? For there seemed to pertain to logic a peculiar depth—a universal significance. Logic lay, it seemed, at the bottom of all sciences. —For logical investigation explore the nature of all things. It seeks to see the bottom of things and is not meant to concern itself whether what actually happens is this or that. —It takes its rise, not from an interest in the facts of nature, nor from a need to grasp causal connexions: but from an urge to understand the basis, or essence, of everything empirical. Not however, as if to this end we had to hunt out new facts; it is, rather, of the essence of our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything new by it. We want to understand something that is already in plain view. For this is what we seem in some sense not to understand (PI, par. 89).³⁸

This glorification of logic emerges, not from our need to grasp particular connections, (such as what specifically causes what), but a desire to find a key that will open up the secrets of the world for us, make it all make sense. In the Tractarian account, logic was in a way apart from this world, it was how the structures of the world and language should be. So actually it never served our everyday need, it never helped us understand the nature of language. However, the quest is not to uncover some new detail, but to understand something that is already before us, but confuses us because its mysteries are somehow veiled. What we want to understand, the use of language, is already before us. He continues in the *Investigations*:

We feel as if we had to penetrate phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena. We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the kind of statement that we make about phenomena. Thus Augustine recalls to mind the different statements that are made about the duration, past present or future, of events. (These are, of course, not philosophical statements about time, the past, the present and the future.) Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language. Some of them [misunderstandings] can be removed by substituting one form of expression for another; this may be called an "analysis" of our forms of expression, for the process is sometimes like one of taking a thing apart. (PI, par. 90)

When we think that logic is superior, we feel as if we should break through the mysteries of what is before us with the power of logic, but we do not actually look at what is already in front of us. So our investigation is not based on observations of new data. Instead, it is a study of the things we say or have said about this subject. Our purpose is to clear away certain misunderstandings that seem to block clarity about whatever interests us. This means that our

³⁸ Later Wittgenstein also criticizes the science worship of the Logical Positivists, and this passage is written as

study is a grammatical one in the sense that we might think over the meaning of certain terms, or the connection between different terms, and remind ourselves of the criteria for different application of these terms. In order to ease our communication, in order make ourselves understood, we need to play around language, we do not need to try to fit into an abstract notion of logical form. The desire to fit language in an abstract logical form was the idea that logic will clarify our misunderstandings. Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* sees this as such:

But now it may come to look as if there were something like a final analysis of our forms of language, and so a single completely resolved form of every expression. That is, as if our usual forms of expression were, essentially unanalyzed; as if there were something hidden in them that had to be brought to light. When this is done the expression is completely clarified and our problem solved. It may also be put like this: we eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact; but now it may look as if we were moving towards a particular state, a state of complete exactness; and as if this were the real goal of our investigation (PI, par. 91).

With a continuous search for exactness we cannot really get anywhere since all explanations come to an end at some point. There is not a certain picture of logical form we can get at. We use language to communicate and once we understand what another person says or once we are understood, we stop. He continues:

This finds expression in questions as to the essence of language, of propositions, of thought.—For if we too in these investigations are trying to understand the essence of language —its function, its structure, —yet this is not what those questions have in view. For they see in the essence, not something that already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement, but something lies beneath the surface. Something that lies within, which we see when we look into the thing, and which analysis digs out. ‘The essence is hidden from us’: this is the form our problem now assumes. We ask: “What is language”, “What is proposition?” And the answer to these questions is to be given once for all; and independently of any future experience (PI, par. 92)

Our obsession with exactness shows itself when philosophers ask about the essence of language in that they often strive for more exactness. They are seeking something deeper that will be unveiled as the mysterious structure of language, but Wittgenstein in the *Investigations* seeks something that might be clear to us by a certain rearrangement of the details. If we ask questions about the essence of things, we look for answers that can be given now and for all time, regardless

response to their misunderstanding of what Wittgenstein means by logic.

of what happens in the future. And according to this, the *essence* of language cannot change. If language has an essence it exists everywhere and whenever language exists. But Wittgenstein does not agree with this notion of a non-changing essence of language. He says that we should look at changeable aspects of language that happen to create patterns in our cultural experience. Thus the structure of language in Wittgenstein's new conception is not something beneath and which analysis digs out. He is now against the idea that the structure of language—logic— is hidden from us. Rather, it is in front of our eyes; we use it to understand something. The Tractarian account of logic as abstract, transcendent and unattainable is now abandoned. *Philosophical Investigations* says that logic cannot be abstract or outside the language and world; rather it is used in the language. It is not outside the language.

He comes to argue that the function and the structure of the language—its essence— lies on the surface, it is hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. We do not have to look for something sublime and deep in order to understand the structure of our language. Its essence is hidden on the surface of its everyday use. He says:

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something —because it is always before one's eyes.) The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him. — And this means: we fail to be struck by, what once seen, is most striking and most powerful (PI, par. 129)

These arguments make up the semantic aspect of *Philosophical Investigations*. How do these statements have existential implications? Logic is considered to be sublime in the *Tractatus* since it lies at the bottom of everything, viz. all the factual states of the world and nonfactual states of the mystical. The mystical is also about ethics; viz. the meaning of life (LE, p.5-7). Logic lies at the bottom of the meaning of life as well (also world and life are one according to the *Tractatus* (TLP, par. 5.621). A meaningful sentence is the one that is made according to the rules of logic and we already inferred that this is saying that a meaningful life is one that is lived according to the

ethical laws.³⁹ According to the *Tractatus*, as mentioned before, understanding the essence/structure of language means also understanding the essence/structure of life since logic is the pure intermediary between language and life. According to the *Tractatus*, the essence of language lies beneath the surface of phenomena and analysis digs it out (PI, par. 92). However in *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein, by replacing the abstract notion of logical form with the notion of form of life, also abandoned the idea that a meaningful life is the one that is lived in conformity with the ethical rules. The abstract notion of logical form implies that the meaning of life lies outside this world. The notion of logical form puts the emphasis outside human experience while the notion of form of life is inherent in human existence. The focus is back on human life. But with the notion of form of life, the meaning of life is included as an aspect of everyday life. There is a parallel between language game and life. Living contains different experiences. Each of these experiences has its own culture. These experiences have their own inner structure which is not exactly the same as the other one. Wittgenstein, in his metaphysical approach to the meaning of life regarded the meaning of life as outside this world, at a higher level, thus unattainable. World—life— and language were at the lower level and thus they couldn't contain the meaning. Now, with his conception of form of life, he puts the meaning of life back into the everyday details of life. The meaning of life is still special and important but it is not something abstract and hidden behind the veil. Rather it is to be found in the form of life amongst other things. Outside life there cannot be any meaning. The meaning of life is in life, in its everyday randomness. There is no beyond-this-world metaphysical reality where we can find the meaning of life. By denying the hiddenness of the rules of language Wittgenstein also denies the dogmatic approach to the meaning

³⁹ Refer to the table 2.1 on p.53.

of life. The meaning of life can vary, it is not fixed. The meaning of life, accordingly is here in this world, on the surface, in the context of our life.

Now, it is time to give more detail about his conception of language as a game. Wittgenstein discusses what ties games together, and asks if there is a common feature of all games. The answer is no. The games are connected by different sorts of similarity, but they do not have one unique feature that defines all of them. They are similar to each other as family members are. Language-games, like ordinary games, do not have a single feature that is the same for all of them either. Some games are closer to each other than the rest of the games, as far as their rules are concerned but none of them has a unique common rule. Wittgenstein calls the similarities between different games *family resemblances* (PI, par.67):

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations.-For someone might object against me: "You take the easy way out! 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 to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and of language." And this is true. 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 that 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". I will try to explain this (PI, par. 65).

Languages do not have a unifying characteristic or essence, they each have distinct set of rules. They do not share a fixed logical form in common. The main characteristic of form of life is the fact that it is based on a shared experience, it pertains agreement on the shared experience. But each form of life requires different kinds of agreements. Like games, forms of life have different characteristics, and one single rule does not govern them. Forms of life and languages require an agreement but the characteristic of this agreement can be different in each form of life.

This notion of agreement is the basis of Wittgenstein's rule-following argument. Wittgenstein, with his argument of rule following opposes to the Platonist conception of language,

i.e. that language has an abstract unique essence. Wittgenstein argues that for a proposition to be meaningful, it needs to be rule-governed. Linguistic meaning is based on rule following. Understanding the meaning of a proposition is knowing the rules it is governed by. Agreement is the basis of rule following. Wittgenstein states:

The word “agreement” and the word “rule” are related to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other word with it (PI, par. 224).

The use of the word “rule” and the use of the word “same” are interwoven. (As are the use of “proposition” and the use of “true”.) (PI, par. 225)

Thus, according to Wittgenstein linguistic meaning requires an agreement upon the rules followed. The same word can mean different things in different contexts if the rules the propositions are governed by are distinct from each other. According to the *Tractatus*, the meaning of words and propositions are governed by a single rule. This rule is the requirement of a correspondent object or fact in the world. A person has to apply that rule in future expressions to make up meaningful sentences. In the lack of the condition of that rule —picturing the objects or facts— she cannot speak. In order to make up meaningful sentences we needed to obey this pre-determined rule. But now Wittgenstein abandons this notion and starts to deal with the actual use of language. Meaning is simply its use in the language game, and each language game has different rules. These rules based on an agreement not a pre-established fixed rule.

Wittgenstein focuses on human experience in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Rule-following is a learning experience. If agreement in the language game is not established then we can change the rules. The rule is dependent on the agreement in the form of life:

Doesn't the analogy between language and games throw light here? We can easily imagine people amusing themselves in a field by playing with a ball so as to start various existing games, but playing many without finishing them and in between throwing the ball aimlessly into the air, chasing one another with the ball and bombarding one another for a joke and so on. And now someone says: The whole time they are playing a ball-game and following definite rules at every throw. *And is there not*

*also the case where we play and-make up the rules as we go along? And there is even one where we alter them-as we go along*⁴⁰(PI, par. 83).

According to the *Tractatus*, language was limited to one kind of game: describing the facts of the world; thus there was one single rule to be followed all the time. And this unique rule did not include the expression of the mystical. Now Wittgenstein asserts that we do not need a single rule, and we can make up the rules as we go.

Thus the same proposition or expression can have different meanings in different contexts. The meaning of an expression is its use in the language game. The most important aspect of the meaning is its shared life form since the main task of language is to facilitate understanding.

This is how Wittgenstein's understanding of linguistic meaning changed, from a metaphysical perspective to an anti-metaphysical one. He still defines his aim as defining the essence – the use and function— of language but we are turning the whole examination around this fixed point:

We see that what we call "sentence" and "language" has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another. —But what becomes of logic now? Its rigour seems to be giving way here. —But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear? —For how can it lose its rigour? Of course not by our bargaining any of its rigour out of it. —The preconceived idea of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.) The philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life when we say e.g. "Here is a Chinese sentence" or "No, that only looks like writing; it is actually just an ornament" and so on.

We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal chimera.[Note in margin: Only it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways]. But we talk about it as we do about the pieces in chess when we are stating the rules of the game, not describing their physical properties.

The question "What is a word really?" is analogous to "What is a piece in a chess?" (PI, par. 108)

Logic was conceived as pure since it was thought to be the common structure of both reality and language. It was considered as transcendent and sublime. Our task is still the same, to understand how language works in the world. But now, we do not conceive the logic of language as sublime. Language is a spatio-temporal communicative activity; it is not sublime or transcendent. Wittgenstein brings language back to the midst of human experience.

⁴⁰ My italics

Now, we can look at its existential implications. The Tractarian conception of logic as a crystalline purity put the mystical higher and the world and language lower. The valuation between the different levels of reality was made. As the other component of the mystical, ethics, was also put at a higher level and conceived as pure, abstract, transcendental and beyond this world. The essence of language was logical form, it was higher and not expressible. He was assigning one kind of rule to language. In *Philosophical Investigations*, by abandoning the idea of the crystalline purity of logic, Wittgenstein effectively abandons the conception of ethics as transcendental and abandons the idea that the meaning of life is at a higher level that cannot be found within the limits of this world. Our task is to understand the structure of language. The existential implication of our task is that language is a human activity, it is an essential part of life if not the whole of it. Understanding how language works is also understanding how life works. How does the language work in his new argument? Language is a rule guided activity, but the rules are based on shared experience and agreement. Rule-following is a learning experience; old rules are given up once they are not useful anymore. This is how life actually works. We live in a community, we have shared experiences with the rest of the society. Our phenomenological structure is shaped by the existence of others. Living in a community is human beings' main characteristic, that is what makes them themselves. What kind of rules are there in life? We pick up some attitude towards something and it might be understood by the rest of the group or it might not be understood. We change our attitude when we feel like what we say does not make any sense to the other. We set up different rules. We learn as we go along. The meaning of life, in this context, like linguistic meaning is based on experience. It can be one thing at one time, another thing at another time. It is to be found in the narrow streets of everyday experience. With Wittgenstein's new conception of language, we can say that the meaning of life is put back within the limits of the world again. Saying that the rules of language are not determinate, we make up the rules as we go along means

the meaning of life is not something fixed and unchangeable and beyond this world. Rather, the meaning of life is in our everyday life and we create it as we go along.

At this point, I shall discuss Wittgenstein's response to the solipsism of the *Tractatus*. According to the *Tractatus*, a person does not need others to build language since the logical form of the language is the form of the world, and once the individual grasps that logical form he can create his language. Thus, one can create a 'private language'. But according to the *Philosophical Investigations*, language is based on interpersonal agreement, so private language is not possible:

... 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence 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, p.202).

The word "agreement" and the word "rule" are related to one another, they are cousins. If I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it (PI, par.224)

The use of the word "rule" and the use of the word "same" are interwoven. (As the use of "proposition" and the use of "true".) (PI, par. 225))

"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" —It 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. Par.241).

Language is essentially social according to Wittgenstein's argument. Propositions have meaning only insofar as we have a criterion of their correctness. The criterion of correctness is the agreement in the form of life. This can be agreeing on the colour of the sky or the warmth of the weather. If the social practices of the individuals were not connected it would not be possible to have agreement on the form of life and thus there would be no language. The essence of language, its function, is to establish communication. Rule-following regulates the communication. Rule following is not reflective, it is spontaneous and based on instinctual reactions. For example I tell my friend what I have done yesterday, I use a name of my friend that she doesn't know, she doesn't understand whom I am referring to, so I jump into another way of explaining my friend to her like saying "Do you remember the guy who was Jesus in the "Jesus Christ Superstar"" etc. I find a way to explain things to my friend by creating rules as I go. Private language is impossible since there would not be agreement based on the shared experience.

Wittgenstein's emphasis on the form of life, rule-following and his opposition to private language have existential implications. First of all, it is clear that he keeps emphasizing the centrality of human experience in language and thus in philosophy. Linguistic meaningfulness is conditional upon agreement in the form of life and in rule following. And linguistic meaning is not distinct from existential meaning. If the meaning of a proposition is determined by its use in the context, the meaning of life is determined by the context of life. In setting out goals to be attained, dreaming about the things we want to experience we in fact set up some rules. These plans give a certain meaning to our everyday life. We get excited, we look forward to something. They help us live the day. But then after a while we give up the plans we made and start new ones. We have a freedom in our choices. But each of them happens in the context of life. Sometimes small things make us happy; sometimes even the largest things cannot help. The meaning of life is not at the higher level, it is at the ground of life.

The double sidedness of the existential and linguistic meanings reveals itself in the solipsistic account of the *Tractatus*. Following the parallel between the linguistic meaning and existential meaning so far, we saw that the *Tractatus's* account of linguistic meaning does not involve anyone besides one's self. Presumably by saying "The world is my world", Wittgenstein does not include any other individual in the meaning of one's life. Meaning can be created within one's relationship with a higher reality, without any human contact. According to the Tractarian account of meaning, linguistic meaning is conceivable even if there were only one mind. Parallel to this the meaning of an individual's life does not involve anyone else. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, by arguing against the possibility of a private language, Wittgenstein also denies that the meaning of life can be found in an individual's relationship with a higher reality, without society. Existential meaning is conceivable in this world, being among people.

Later Wittgenstein thus abandons the higher/ lower distinction between the world itself and the grounding of the world —the mystical. There is no metaphysical ground of the world. Language does not only express what is the case it also can express what is not the case, since its task is not limited to describing the world anymore. Language is a human activity. We ask questions, tell our ideas, and make jokes. These make sense only in so far it is shared with a community of people. We can not find or create meaning —either linguistically or existentially— apart from others. We can talk about the meaning of life; it is a part of our existence. We do not need to make a clear definition of what it is, we can just talk about it. We can talk about how it is attainable or not attainable. We can find meaning in yellow tulips or we can find meaning in Wittgenstein’s philosophy or we can even find meaning in playing instead of working. Wittgenstein, by bringing words from their metaphysical place back to their everyday use, abandons the distinction between what can be said and what can be shown. The distinction between the higher and lower realms of reality is not true. Everything is at the same level, at the surface; there is no hidden structure of reality behind the veil. The meaning of life is not at somewhere beyond what we experience in this world. We have to be in contact with the world, with people, with different cultures in order to find the meaning of our lives. There is no unique structure of reality that in order to be happy we should live in accordance with.. His metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life is totally abandoned in identifying the grave mistakes of the *Tractatus*.

There are different certainties and grounds of different life forms. What Wittgenstein is opposed to is “the concept of some ideal exactitude given us a priori, as it were. At different times we have different ideals of exactitude; and none of them is supreme”(OC, p. 37). If there are different life forms and different language games and each of them can be guided by different sets of rules, then there can be different ways to talk about ethics or the meaning of life. Language is

not considered as functioning only for the purpose of the explanation of facts but a way of communication. So we can talk about ethics too. Once we get rid of the Augustinian conception of language we can form different language games to talk about all dimensions of life, including ethics. Ethics or the life forms do not have a singular characteristic. The rules they are guided by are not fixed; they can change, they can be more than one kind. The second period of Wittgenstein's thought gives more room to diversity and different groundings and different meanings of life. He pulls the meaning of life from *heaven* down to "*the rough ground*".

3. CHAPTER 3: NIETZSCHE AND WITTGENSTEIN

(i) A Summary

There are philosophies which, however difficult they may be, are in principle easy to teach and to learn. Of course, not everyone can teach or learn philosophy —any more than higher mathematics; but the philosophies of certain philosophers have this in common with higher mathematics: they present the simple alternative of being either understood or not understood. It is, in the last analysis, impossible to misunderstand them. This is true of Aristotle, or St. Thomas Aquinas, or Descartes, or Locke, or Kant. Such philosophers are like mountains: you climb to their tops or you give up; or like weights: you lift them or they are too heavy for you. In either case you will know what has happened, and “where you are”. But this is not so with the thought of Plato, or St. Augustine, or Pascal or Kierkegaard, or Nietzsche. Their philosophies are like human faces on the features of which are inscribed, disquietingly, the destinies of souls; or like cities rich in history. “Do you understand Kant?” is asking “Have you been to the summit of Mount Blanc?” The answer is *yes* or *no*. “Do you understand Nietzsche?” is like asking “Do you know Rome?” The answer is simple only if you have never been there. The trouble with Wittgenstein’s thinking is that it sometimes looks like Descartes’s: you believe you can learn it as you learn logic or mathematics; but it almost always is like Pascal’s: you may be quite sure you cannot (Heller, p.142)

Both Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s thought, when the multifaceted nature of their analysis of reality and multidimensional approach to the traditional problems of metaphysics and science are considered, give us the feeling that we are lost in the streets of Rome or Prague: at times we feel like we have found the cathedral we have been looking for but then we find out that we are in front of another cathedral as striking as the one we are looking for and cannot take our eyes away from it. In both Nietzsche’s and Wittgenstein’s thought, there are many different ways to explore the nature of reality and the structure of the world. They both talk about existential meaning by using different approaches and analyses. I have tried to show the similarity of their approaches to the meaning of life and the purpose of existence. The exciting journey of the analysis of their

approach to the nature or reality and the meaning of life in this thesis enabled me to wander around the narrow streets of their thought without feeling the anxiety of getting to somewhere.

In the first chapter, I argued that Nietzsche makes a metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life and the nature of reality. In his later philosophy, criticizing this perspective, he develops an anti-metaphysical interpretation of the meaning of life and the nature of reality. I showed the nature of this shift by focusing on his critique of the age he is living in and his conception of Greek society as creating a sublime culture. Early Nietzsche argues that the cure for the sickness of his age lies in going back to Greek roots. The reason for the sublime Greek culture is the Greeks' perception and creation of art. The essence of artistic creativity is the tension between the Dionysian and Apollonian powers. In spite of this tension, they form a primordial unity —Ur-Eine— which is the metaphysical comfort of the culture. Nietzsche criticizes the metaphysics of the philosophers before and during his time, as well as the science worship of the Enlightenment Age, yet he himself, as he admits later, creates another kind of metaphysics: “artist's metaphysics”. The meaning of life is art; art is used as the justification of life. Later Nietzsche criticizes this conception and makes a point of denying all kinds of metaphysics. His later interpretation of the meaning of reality is an anti-metaphysical one.

Although not seen at first glance, Wittgenstein goes through a similar change in his thought and his conception of the meaning of life and the nature of reality. In the second chapter, I analyzed the change in Wittgenstein's approach to existential meaning through analyzing his main linguistic arguments on linguistic meaning. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein analyzes the nature of reality and the relationship between language and reality. Interpreting language as the means of describing reality, he says that language can only state the facts of the world. Reality has two aspects: the world and the mystical. The world, in Wittgenstein's analysis is at a lower level than the mystical. Logic, which is the mystical, is the governing structure of reality, and it shows itself

in the structured nature of the world and language. Language and world have a logical form in common. The meaning of life is an ethical issue and takes place in the same realm as logic. The meaning of life cannot be stated but it can show itself. The answer to the question of the meaning of life is mystical, thus it is at a higher level than the world. Since language can only state the facts it takes place at the lower level and is not capable of stating the meaning of life. This is a metaphysical interpretation of meaning. *Philosophical Investigations* is written in the form of a response to the main arguments that are made in the *Tractatus*. The *Investigations*, explicitly points out the grave mistakes made in the *Tractatus* about the nature of reality especially the nature of language, and criticizes the viewpoint of the *Tractatus*, but it does not directly point out the existential concerns. However, knowing that Wittgenstein has a double sided agenda in the *Tractatus* —existential and linguistic— we can interpret the criticisms against his earlier conception of language as a criticism of the existential aspect of the *Tractatus*. Later Wittgenstein denies the sublimation of logic and he introduces the concept of ‘form of life’ into his discussion on language. Language, in his later thought, is a part of the natural history of human beings and is fundamentally a means of communication. Language is based on the agreement in the form of life and linguistic meaning is dependent on the context of this form of life. Wittgenstein’s new conception of language is reflected in the change in his concept of existential meaning. The meaning of life, in his new philosophy is not to be found in an abstract, transcendent beyond this world reality but rather it is to be found in this world, in everyday reality —which is necessarily ‘public’, not ‘private’ (solipsistic). Wittgenstein takes the meaning of life back from the mystical, and brings it back to this world, and argues that it is something attainable within the limits of this world.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives examples from everyday life, e.g. he talks about the worker and the man working at the grocery store. In other words, even only by

looking at the language he is using, we can say that he is more concerned about the meaning of our everyday lives rather than the metaphysical and transcendent meaning he talks (or does not talk) about in the *Tractatus*.

Both philosophers were influenced by the political structure of their age, and the content of their books reflect that atmosphere. There is a similarity between the political and cultural atmosphere of Europe during the time Nietzsche and Wittgenstein developed their thoughts. Nietzsche writes his *Birth of Tragedy* during the Franco-Prussian war and in this work he criticizes the cultural and political milieu of his age. Wittgenstein, like Nietzsche, wrote his book during the time of war. Wittgenstein wrote the *Tractatus* during the First World War and his approach to philosophical problems was highly influenced by the pessimistic atmosphere of European society. In this respect, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein start philosophizing at a similar point. While criticizing the dogmatism of science and traditional metaphysics, they both create another kind of metaphysics in their earlier thought. While trying to run away from the dogmatism of science and metaphysics Nietzsche finds himself creating an artists' metaphysics while Wittgenstein finds himself discerning a metaphysical essence of the reality. Wittgenstein states that the meaning of life is identical with God. Nietzsche, although he announces the death of the Christian God, creates another kind of art deity in the form of Ur-Eine which gives metaphysical comfort to our existential restlessness. They both have a metaphysical interpretation of reality and the meaning of life at this point. They both make a distinction between levels of reality and rank them according to their value, and the meaning of life for both of them is beyond this world, at a higher level.

Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's thoughts went through a transformation without a change in the subject. In early Nietzsche the question of the meaning of life is less explicit than in his later works. In the *Birth of Tragedy* he mainly focuses on the Greek conception of life and art, and creates an artists' metaphysics to explain the nature of reality. However his analysis of reality has

important implications for his conception of the meaning of life. We understand his existential concerns in the *Birth of Tragedy* when we familiarize ourselves with his later works, especially the ones he wrote as a response to the *Birth of Tragedy*, such as the preface to the second edition of the *Birth of Tragedy* that is called “Attempt at a Self-Criticism”, *Human All Too Human*, *Twilight of the Idols* and the *Gay Science*. The existential concerns are discussed more explicitly in his later works. It is interesting to note that for Wittgenstein, the explicitness of the discussion of the existential meaning is in a reverse order compared to Nietzsche. Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* has more explicit discussion of the meaning of life than *Philosophical Investigations*. Yet the trend in their approach was similar.

Both philosophers see philosophy as a way to discover different aspects of reality; the task of philosophy is not making assertions about the nature of reality but to enable the curious individual wander around. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein states, “A philosophical problem has the form: “I don’t know my way about (PI, par. 123).”

This is a way to read philosophical problems as existential problems. Our main existential concern is to find a meaning for our life and to figure out where we want to go. How do we do this?

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words. —Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in ‘seeing connexions’. Hence the importance of finding and inventing immediate cases. The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things. (Is this a ‘Weltanschauung’?)(PI, par. 122)

Wittgenstein writes this fragment in order to explain how we can understand the meaning of a proposition. The grammar of a sentence does not reveal its meaning unless we analyze the sentence based on its living context. Understanding requires seeing the connections; it is the only way we can have a clear idea of what the proposition means. In order to see the connections we need to have a ‘bird’s eye point of view’ which would build up our “Weltanschauung”, viz. the

way we see things. We need to look at the sentence in the context of the form of life. The existential implication of this passage is not hard to see. The way we conceive the meaning of life is a matter of our perspective. Sometimes in our search for the meaning of life we try to find a pre-established and singular structure of life. In this process we may find ourselves in a fog since we are unable to see the connections and then got lost in the details. At that time we need to look at things from a different perspective, in order to have a lucid understanding. Our perspective determines what we see as the meaning of life.

Wittgenstein uses a city analogy to describe the nature of language:

Do not troubled by the fact that languages (2) and (8) consist only of orders. If you want to say that this shews them to be incomplete, ask yourself whether our language is complete; —whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated in it; for these are, so to speak, suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?) Our language may be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses (PI, par. 18).

Sometimes in order to find the way in an unknown city we need to look at the map—which was drawn from a bird’s eye perspective—for directions. Similarly when we get lost in the everyday concerns of life, and feel like we lost control of the ongoing events of our life we need to look at things from another perspective. It helps us finding the meaning of life. Sometimes it doesn’t:

Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer you know your way about (PI, par. 203).

Life, like language is a labyrinth, sometimes we find our way out of the labyrinth, sometimes not. Sometimes we create another labyrinth in the existing labyrinth and we totally get lost, or sometimes we find a much easier way.

Science is not concerned with helping us to figure out the way we want to go, but it can be one of the ends we want to reach, it can be something that we define as the meaning of our life:

scientific investigation of the nature of reality. But philosophy helps us to figure out the way we want to go:

It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically ‘that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible to think such-and-such’—whatever that they mean. (The conception of thought as a gaseous medium). And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose from the philosophical problems. These are of course, not empirical problems; they are solved rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings in despite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved not by reporting new experience, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our language (PI, par. 109)

Philosophy helps us to find the way we want to go or maybe the way back home:

When philosophers use a word —“knowledge”, “being”, “object”, “I”, “proposition”, “name” —and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself :is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home?— What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to everyday use (PI 116).

The way we are looking for is not something “unattainable”, “transcendent”; it is not somewhere beyond the borders of the city, it is the ways we pass by everyday. Sometimes we get lost sometimes we find the way we want to walk in. This can only be achieved by looking for the way within the limits of our existence. Nietzsche has the same concerns about existence and the meaning of life. Pointing out the abyss the individual faces in her search for meaning, he says:

Confidence in life is gone: life itself has become a problem.....Even love of life is still possible —only one loves differently (Gay Science, p.7).

There is a problem about life but there are different ways to figure out the way we want to go, we just have to keep in mind that there are different ways to lead us to Rome. Wittgenstein says:

Working in philosophy —like work in architecture in many aspects— is really more a working on oneself. On one’s own interpretation. On one’s way of seeing things. (And what one expects of them). (CV, p 1931, p.16e)

In his preface to the second edition of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche contemplates the task of philosophy and the philosopher:

I still expect that a philosophical *physician*, in the exceptional sense of the word —one who applies himself to the problem of the collective health of peoples, periods, races, and mankind generally— will

some day have the courage to follow out my suspicion to its ultimate conclusions, and out to venture on the judgment that in all philosophizing it has not hitherto been a question of 'truth' at all, but of something else, —namely of health, futurity, growth, power life...(p.5)

Both Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein approach the philosopher, as a figure who gives remedies for a sick individual who got lost in her search for meaning. Further, they both conceive philosophy as a discipline assisting us to find our way about.⁴¹ Wittgenstein says:

...The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. — The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question. —Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off. —Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem. There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies (PI, 133).

Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus* that the metaphysical truths cannot be explained since they are the higher and language and the world is lower. With respect to the higher, Wittgenstein says that we should only be silent about them; we cannot state the metaphysical meaning of life with language. Nietzsche also makes a similar valuation between different levels of reality in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He gives long explanations of the importance of the primordial unity which are of great value. Instead of being silent, he talks about them 'loftily':

Concerning great things one should either be silent or one should speak loftily: —loftily— that is to say, cynically and innocently (WP, Preface 1).

In their later thoughts, both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein criticize their earlier approach to the nature of reality and the meaning of life for being a metaphysical approach. Instead of a dogmatic attitude to the nature of reality and the meaning of life they develop an anti-metaphysical and more dynamic approach. Like Nietzsche, Wittgenstein comes to argue that we do not need a metaphysical ground in order to establish meaning. They both show that there can be different ways to attain meaning. We do not require a single grounding in order to cure our feeling of getting lost; an anti-metaphysical approach to our existential concerns may as well make us feel like we have more than one home, more than one ground.

⁴¹ Marshall and Peters argue that Wittgenstein is the cultural physician that Nietzsche is talking about.

(ii) The Significance of the Similarity Between Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's Approaches

The similarity of the trend in Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's philosophical thoughts about the meaning of life is significant since their later anti-metaphysical approach gives more room for the diversity in the meaning of life. In their earlier thought, they both have a dogmatic approach to meaning, and prescribe one kind of medication for the existential sicknesses of human beings, while in their later thought, instead of writing a single prescription, they show different ways to cure our illnesses. Writing only one prescription carries a big risk of not curing the illness but leaving the individual even sicker if she cannot tolerate the medication or does not take the right amount. But showing the multiplicity of ways to cure one's existential self is a more efficient cure since the individual can pick up the medication which will work best for him. In this case the risk is that the individual might need to try different medications before coming to the right one, and during the process she may hurt herself. But in the end the medication, if it is found, will be the right one for that individual. It will be determined by the choices of the individual and individual will have the freedom to change it whenever she likes. Wittgenstein says to the philosopher: "Anything your reader can do for himself leave to him" (CV, 1948, p.77e). In a similar way in the preface to *Philosophical Investigations* he says: "I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own (PI, preface, p.x)".

The anti-metaphysical approach to meaning does not say 'this is meaningful that is not meaningful' but it says 'there can be different meanings'. So a metaphysical approach to the meaning of life can also find a place for itself in the anti-metaphysical one. Neither later Wittgenstein nor later Nietzsche tell what the meaning is but say that meaning can be divergent. Anti-metaphysical approach to meaning does not lead to a nihilistic attitude as Heller claims but rather by introducing multiplicity of grounds and diversity of meanings it

gives room to different remedies to our existential problems. The right answer to our existential problems is the one that leaves us in peace that we do not need to be concerned about anymore. But this peaceful state of mind cannot be achieved via one kind of method. Sometimes a nice poem cures our existential illnesses and sometimes just the voice of another person in the house makes us feel at ease.

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