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THE SELF, LINGUISTIC AND AESTHETIC

A STUDY IN THE EARLY PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN AND SARTRE

J. BARRY STOBART.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(90,000 Words[Approx.])

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM



DURHAM

1997

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THE SELF, LINGUISTIC AND AESTHETIC
A STUDY IN THE EARLY PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN AND SARTRE

Submitted for degree of PhD, October 1997

ABSTRACT

The dissertation operates at two levels: an account of a problematic of self in the early philosophy of Wittgenstein and Sartre - which simultaneously supports a comparative study that claims convergence is significant, detailed and extensive. The thesis thus disputes the traditional - 'Divide' - reading of Sartre and Wittgenstein.

The problematic is defined by the view that the self desires an ethical absolute and that this can only be achieved when a metaphysics of aesthetics is assumed. It is a certain concept of language and self, based on a saying—showing distinction, that so constitutes the problematic, and which is the focus of inquiry. This results in the following structure: §1 Defines and defends the thesis 'Art-and-the-Ineffable' - and thus the generic principle of the present thesis. §2 Claims, firstly, (and perhaps for the first time), that Sartre has a philosophy of language that includes a formal principle of the ineffable and a - (Tractarian) saying—showing distinction: both of which are equally formative in his own (early) philosophy. Secondly, that the saying—showing distinction is identified with a concept of self. §3 Exposes the (previously neglected) early account of self in Sartre and Wittgenstein and, secondly, argues for four definitive points of convergence: that the self is bi-polar, non-substantive, eliminated, non-encounterable. §4 Presents modalities of the non-substantive self: as operational intentionality, as programmatic, and as a relation or attitude to the world (clinching the ethico-aesthetic structure). §5 Claims convergence on some key aesthetic principles (including disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*), identifying them, in terms of Showing, with the self, and stating the proposed - dual - solution to the problematic: *Aesthetic determination* and *Aesthetic deeds*. The former is the self (a relational attitude) choosing it-self as an aesthetic relation to the world; the latter, represented here by *Tractatus* and *Nausea*, are limited wholes with a transcendental message that can only be shown: the self disclosing through a work of art the unsayable solution to the problematic.

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**TO
MAM AND DAD**

**AND TO THE MEMORY OF
MRS. CARMAN.**

PART ONE
SAYING

INTRODUCTION

**Our problems are not abstract, but perhaps the most concrete
that there are.
(*Tractatus 5.634 & 5.5563*)**

**To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by Being and
anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language
... Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against
something.
(*Wittgenstein, Conversations with Waismann, pp68*)**

**Even today I would rather read 'thrillers' than Wittgenstein.
(*Sartre, The Words, pp53*)**

**If philosophy has anything to do with wisdom
there's certainly not a grain of that in *Mind*,
and quite often a grain in the detective stories.
(*Wittgenstein, quoted by Malcolm in his Memoir*)**

INTRODUCTION

Here we shall introduce the main objectives of the dissertation and the two main themes of the thesis - the problematic of self and the comparative study. In this introduction, where quotation is overdone, we are to recall Benjamin's remarks:

“Quotations in my works are like robbers by the roadside who make an armed attack and relieve an idler of his convictions” (*Schriften I*, 571). This discovery of the modern function of quotations, according to Benjamin, ... was born ... out of the despair of the present and the desire to destroy it.¹

(i) Objectives

The problematic is presented (through comparison) as a convergent thesis, one that is significant and extensive in both its details and as a whole (a vision of the self). This is not due to the comparative method, but due to precise conceptual and historical connections. Throughout, an effort is made to establish these connections, and in support of this I have tried to remain close to the details of the texts while balancing this with evidence from both the broader context of the philosophy and, though sparingly, philo-historical connections/influences (such as certain formative ideas found in Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche). Although in general the approach is critical, and although many objections to details are discussed (as well as the central objection to the thesis as a whole), not all issues are evaluated, for the main aim is to establish and put forward *the* thesis, not to offer a critique.

The objective of the comparative level of the thesis is to dispute the traditional - 'Divide' - reading of Sartre and Wittgenstein. Their (early) subject matter, in details *and* in breadth, is in fact convergent, and, it is not what it is often thought to be. If then, these two philosophers each

¹ H. Arendt, in her Introduction to W. Benjamin's *Illuminations*, Fontana, (1973), pp43.

represent a side of a Divide, then it can only be by virtue of their differing approach, methodology - indirect communication aside - or temperament - and not their subject matter or philosophical concerns: and in fact, such a state of affairs is happily conceded. Wittgenstein's Tractarian engagement with the problems of philosophy and the meaning of life is as concrete and existential as anything in Sartre's early writings.

The order of material - linguistic prior to self - is much better suited to Wittgenstein's approach: but the laterality of writing (and thought too) *is* costly, even without a comparison. In fact, in weaving together both the comparative and the problematic objectives the structure of the thesis becomes fairly complex - more so, as the problematic itself must be supported by many other individual (though integrated) claims - notably, the internal unity of the *Tractatus*, *Tractatus's* commitment to intentionality, Sartre's commitment to saying—showing. The structure is facilitated in being based around major section breaks which can usefully be seen to have independent as well as collective objectives. Independently, the *primary* objectives of each section break are such as stated in the abstract.

(ii) Problematic of Self

The majority of the thesis is the setting out of the framework from which emerges the problematic. It is thus only in the final chapter that the whole problem can be stated and the solution offered. Here, there is offered only the necessary outline - that there is a problem that requires a solution; the problem is existential and the solution would be salvation. Within this problem—solution framework, 'problematic' refers to that which is to be enunciated or supported as *possible* though not necessarily realisable. The problem is that life is either absurd (Sartre) or it is a riddle (Wittgenstein), and it is so for the same reason: that it appears to lack ethical meaning or Value.

All that is in the world is contingent; ethical value, unless it were to be relative, and not then the value sought, would have to come from a standpoint outside the world. Moreover, the self is in a crucial sense bi-polar, one part, the empirical, exists in the world, the other, the

subject, foundational, non-substantive and eliminated, is in a sense outside or at the limit of the world. Furthermore, the linguistic, emerging from the self, is itself and coextensively bi-polar, between 'ordinary' and 'poetic' discourse. Thus, one pole, ordinary, denotative, instrumental, working as a sign: *signification*, (representation), limited to describing Facts (including the psychological) and world of phenomena in the world, and which cannot say anything about the world as a whole or totality, but which offers, with reference to states of affairs, *bedeutung*, that which is necessary to the realm of Saying. The second pole, poetic, connotative, non-instrumental, operating as symbol, offering *sens* or *sinn*, (expression), the presupposition to the former, identified with Value, the subject, and the world as a whole, and which itself cannot be represented, it being necessary to its realm of Showing.

The subject is a relation and it relates to the world as an operative intentionality (involving will) that is programmatic - a systematic synthesis of consciousness constituting itself as a method of altering how the world appears. This methodological structure of consciousness is understood, finally and fundamentally, as an 'attitude' to the world. Only when the self chooses itself as aesthetic attitude will it distance itself from the (contingent) world. In this - aesthetic - appreciation, the world is experienced from without, as a whole or totality, as an aesthetic object; the subject experiences itself as independent of the world, it sees that the ethical self, a no-thing, exists outside the world and outside language, that it can be encountered only when it chooses itself as aesthetic: *aesthetic determination*: the self resolving the problematic of it-self by choosing itself (a relation) as an aesthetic attitude with the resulting insight into its freedom, project and goal. The *communication* of the solution: *aesthetic deeds*: such deeds I am claiming are *Tractatus* and *Nausea*: limited wholes, with a transcendental message that is shown.

(iii) Comparative Study

Historical Remarks (Wittgenstein). That 'The Divide' may in fact be superficial and harmful to our understanding of philosophy (and the present century) is a view with increasing coinage. The exaggerated and persistent dichotomy can lead to a poverty of understanding, especially

when considering individual thinkers. Jean-Paul Sartre's contribution to philosophy, for example, is often reduced to an Existentialist doctrine of freedom and is hence, for all the richness there, underestimated. (No doubt the unfortunate popularity of his views - with the bourgeoisie of all people - has also contributed). On the other hand, the position of Ludwig Wittgenstein is still largely misunderstood - most especially the early Wittgenstein. Unlike Sartre, the richness of Wittgenstein's thinking has hardly been doubted, whatever it may ultimately mean. (Possibly his slow but presently sure assimilation into the popular waters of our time may similarly in time dilute his stature). Whereas Sartre's philosophical heritage is well known² the case with Wittgenstein is not so straightforward. indeed, the possible allegiance of Wittgenstein's work to existential philosophy is neither new nor limited to my self: as I shall now indicate.

The very fact that Wittgenstein was introduced to other Cambridge philosophers - and so to the whole network of English-speaking academic philosophers - through Bertrand Russell, has given the whole subsequent interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas a Cambridge-orientated stamp. As a by-product of this gulf, a gulf has opened up between our views of the academic Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein the man. ... the preconceptions with which his English hearers approached him debarred them almost entirely from understanding the point of what he was saying. ... We would have done better to see him as an integral and authentically Viennese genius ... whose intellectual problems and personal attitudes alike had been formed in the neo-Kantian environment of pre-1914, in which logic and ethics were essentially bound up with each other and with the critique of language.³

That Russell, the Positivists, and Ayer tried to interpret Wittgenstein exclusively as part of that (*their*) tradition, goes some way to explaining why Wittgenstein claimed they did not understand him. Wittgenstein - early and late - claimed that nobody in his lifetime understood him, his results were "variously misunderstood, more or less mangled or watered down" (PI Preface). Like Nietzsche (in the preface to the *Gay Science*⁴), when Wittgenstein wrote what was to become a book, it was "for such men as are in sympathy with its spirit" (PR Forward). According to Wittgenstein, few were, and indeed today there is still such disagreement.

² G. McCulloch (1994), like Danto (1975), has endeavoured to translate Sartre's views into an Anglo-American idiom.

³ Janik and Toulmin *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1973), pp20/22. This work is as good a read as can be had on the philo-historical background out of which the *Tractatus* emerges.

⁴ 'There would still remain room for doubt whether anyone who had never lived through similar experiences could be brought closer to the *experience* of this book'.

The presently dominant - and correct - interpretation of Wittgenstein as a thinker who *began* with logic and language does not wholly explain this mistake, for, as with early existentialists such as Weininger and Kraus, Wittgenstein's primary ethical concerns were integrated, for sound philosophical reasons, with logic and language. Wittgenstein used logic and language as a ladder to climb in order to look down and understand "the darkness of his time" (§5). Existentialists like Sartre, for similar reasons, chose to climb the ladder of consciousness (a matter of historical temperament). That Wittgenstein and Existentialists had different ladders for similar solutions to similar problems has been noted over the years by many competent scholars, though it rarely gets a hearing.

In 1969 Erich Heller wrote of Wittgenstein's work that

It will one day be seen as a integral part of the tragically self-destructive design of European thought ... Of greater weight still would be the realisation that the name of Wittgenstein marks the historical point at which, most unexpectedly, the cool analytical intellect of British philosophy meets with those passions of mind and imagination which we associate first with Nietzsche and then, in manifold crystallisation's, with such Austrians as Otto Weininger, Adolph Loos, Karl Kraus, Franz Kafka and Robert Musil ... It is in such a constellation of minds that Wittgenstein is truly at home, whereas in the history of British philosophy he may merely "hold an important position". (E. Heller, *Unphilosophical Notes*, in 'Wittgenstein; the Man and his Philosophy,' (ed.) K.I. Fann, pp941)

Somewhat later, 1975, in a similar vane, and similarly prophetically, Ian Hacking writes that:

"We shall shortly have essays 'Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer' and 'Wittgenstein and Nietzsche'. Finally, we note that for the first time in two centuries there is a real and growing coincidence between the problems, though not the idioms, of some of the more important elements of Continental philosophy" (*Why Does Language matter to Philosophy*).

At the 1977 Wittgenstein Symposium in Vienna, many brief papers hinted at the same possibility:

Similarities between the outlook and approach of such thinkers as Pascal, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy and those of Wittgenstein are more than merely coincidental. Wittgenstein, in effect, is a religious existentialist. The special nature of his religiosity is, of course ineffable. (Riesterer, *Wittgenstein and Ethics*, 2nd Wittgenstein Symposium 1977)

And in 1978 G. H. Von Wright himself wrote of Wittgenstein that: 'Broadly speaking, one can notice an alienation of (Wittgenstein's) influence from the typical logico-analytical philosophy and an affiliation of it to thinking in the traditions of phenomenology, hermeneutics and even

Hegelianism'⁵. Finally, another Wittgensteinian scholar, Allan Janik, expressed a similar view at around the same time:

If Wittgenstein is a Weiningerian as I claim ... he, like Jaspers and also Lukacs, Heidegger and Berdyaev to name but a few, is developing certain Kantian themes concerning the relation between subject and object, the primacy of the moral over the epistemological and the notion of totality which are characteristic of the Southwest German School.⁶

The claims of scholars to a Continental Wittgenstein could be extended to pages. But for all these indicators to another Wittgenstein - to an inclusive non-Divide Wittgenstein, for all the hot air inflating such a likelihood, and for all the ever increasing winds of time, there remains hardly a balloon in sight.

Janik places Wittgenstein's way of *thinking* in the Continental - nay, again, in the Existential tradition, due to "a certain pre-eminence of moral concerns". This is excellent, and it offers a point from which to substantiate the claims, more so if it is combined with the following four views⁷: that Wittgenstein was (in the *Tractatus*) committed to (1) anti-scientism, (2) the 'fall of the self' (attack on the pure ego), (3) 'background': the attempt to expose the conditions which influence, prejudice - maintain the Kierkegaardian 'illusion' (see below) - and ultimately prevent self-understanding.: these conditions can be historical, social, psychological - or linguistic. (4) A 'cultural critique': an assessment and diagnosis of the human condition seamlessly connected to the philosophical enterprise - (*Tractatus* as ethical deed, §5).

Such was Wittgenstein's commitment, as the following thesis will seek to vindicate through a detailed consideration of point 3, the self, that draws on the 'moral concerns', the 'background', the anti-scientism, and the whole as a philosophical - cultural - enterprise; some further comments on this final, underlying aspect conclude this introduction.

⁵ 'Wittgenstein in relation to his Times' in *Wittgenstein and his Times* (1982), pp108. (Ed.) B. McGuinness

⁶ A. Janik, *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger* (1985), pp94

⁷ Taken (though used freely) from D.E. Cooper 'Analytic and Continental Philosophy' (1994). These four characteristics are shown to be part of a five-part definition of Continental, as opposed to Analytic, philosophy. The fifth characteristic, informing all of the above, is certain attitudes to language - such as the belief that it is the foundation of philosophy, that philosophical inquiry does not consist in the systematic rendering of rules. Here then, I should say, lies the difference between the two traditions: approach or method, as governed by attitude to language.

Historical Remarks: a shared heritage. The above quoted commentators could in fact have been more specific in identifying Wittgenstein's philosophical heritage. Aside from the many (auto)biographical references to influences, including especially Dostoievsky and Pascal, there are the many references to Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer and, taking Janik's lead, the pre-eminence of moral concerns when speaking of these authors.

Kierkegaard, like Wittgenstein and Sartre, is, to borrow a term from Richard Rorty, an edifying philosopher⁸. The common interest of these three philosophers is in living a certain kind of moral life *which is* bound up with their philosophical writings *and* the desire to disclose this life to others. When also this desire to communicate is identified with indirect communication, with, as is its form in the present thesis, with showing as opposed to saying, then the philo-historical point of origin for such edifying philosophers would seem to be Kierkegaard. This hypothesis is strengthened further with the knowledge that both Wittgenstein and Sartre read and admired the works of Kierkegaard (Wittgenstein is quoted saying that Kierkegaard was the profoundest thinker of the last century).

Besides indirect communication and freedom of (will) choice, a formative point of contact between the three philosophers is a concept of the self as a relation (§4). But these three concepts should not be separated: as edifying philosophers, all three see themselves, as authors, as uncovering or diagnosing an illusion, such that their readers can be freed from it. The illusion is that meaning is given with the world, that Christianity (Kierkegaard) or Science (Wittgenstein and Sartre) provide a fixed and objective body of knowledge that is value laden and through which existence can be justified. The diagnosis stresses the need for subjectivity and individual will, for the role of inwardness (or attitude). The natural relation to the world (§4) must be overcome. It is not now only a matter of what one does 'in the world', it is ones relation to the world as a whole: one must mediate one's relation to the world through an absolute, or at least an

⁸ R.Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.

idea of an absolute. God or duty. Shunning the natural relation to the world entails - for the edifying philosopher - shunning natural (philosophical) responses.

Here, with philosophical method, we have a point of convergence⁹. For all three philosophers, philosophical method must be *converted*: Argument becomes subservient to image, metaphor, simile, aphorism and irony. Silence ever increases its presence. In *The Present Age* (1940 - pp49ff) Kierkegaard says that only he (or she) who remains silent can really talk, that silence is the necessary ideal, the essence of inwardness and the inner life¹⁰: exactly as we will find in our accounts of Sartre and Wittgenstein. The method, its parts, all point to the necessity of Art. In Philosophy, problems do not necessarily have answers; they cannot be argued, explained or defined away. The point is and must be reached where explanations come to an end, where the problem can only be dis-solved, where the solution can only be presented by a subjectivity to a subjectivity. Moreover, as in *The Sickness Unto Death*, human behaviour is seen (by Wittgenstein and Sartre also) to be based on a fundamental desire to be God (§5) while simultaneously the structure of consciousness and subjectivity ensures that such a condition is contradictory (§5.4).

If Kierkegaard is the common point of historical convergence for many defining concepts, then Kant on Sartre and Schopenhauer on Wittgenstein are similarly formative relationships. It is not possible to understand the non logico-linguistic dimensions of the *Tractatus* without recourse to Schopenhauer, and many of the conceptual influences are noted *passim*. In Schopenhauer we find much that is in the present thesis: the importance of art and the aesthetic experience of disinterestedness, the claim that the aesthetic offers a transcendental escape from the will, the claim that seeing the world aright is identical to willing the world aright, that good and bad willing alters only the limits of the world, that the will or limit is the self. In Schopenhauer too, we find many of the metaphors that are central to the late pages of the *Tractatus*: the 'eye', the

⁹ In general and on the surface, as is clear from a glance at *Being and Nothingness* and *Tractatus*, approach and methodology are very different: this *is* where the Divide lurks. Nonetheless, as has been noted, methodology is certainly linked by the use of indirect communication and also, perhaps, by a common starting point: the attack on the cogito - on this, see the appendix.

¹⁰ Kierkegaard stresses the social, educational and intellectual importance of the distinction between 'talkitiveness' and silence in a way that strikingly resembles Wittgenstein's approach to 'daily life' and conversation.

'ladder', the 'limit', the 'riddle' (and philosophy as therapy) (WWR: II, p287; II. p80, 49, 6; I, p104; I. p100). This belies Schopenhauer's method as much as Wittgenstein's: again, a reliance on image, metaphor, example, on persuading and not arguing. And here, having indirectly reintroduced Sartre, Schopenhauer speaks of all motivation arising from a lack (WWR I, p196), of the need to promote the welfare of others if we wish or hope to increase or own (ibid., pp92).

In Schopenhauer, as in Nietzsche - a formative influence on Sartre, and himself a Schopenhaurian in key essentials here, in all of these philosophers, and including Wittgenstein, there is to be found the main theme of our thesis. Thus, Nietzsche,

One should speak only when one may not stay silent, and then only of that which one has *overcome* - everything else is chatter, 'literature', lack of breeding. My writings speak *only* of my overcoming: 'I' am in them, together with everything that was inimical to me, *ego ipsissimus* [my very own self], indeed, if yet a prouder expression can be permitted, *ego ipsissimum* [my innermost self].¹¹

This is just one of many locutions of *the* theme found throughout Nietzsche's works. A similar situation is found in Schopenhauer, as in the following account of *our* forthcoming thesis:

When my teaching reaches its highest point, it assumes a *negative* character ... thus it can speak here only of what is denied or given up; ... but what is gained in place of this, what is laid hold of, it is forced to describe as nothing. ... this may very well lie in the limitation of our point of view. Now, it is precisely here that the mystic proceeds positively.¹²

If here we have intimations of a Divide free philosophical community, and if such a prospect is unappealing, then we may wish to turn to Moore or Russell. But then, here is Russell:

Mysticism is to be commended as an attitude towards life, not as a creed (p29). ... The elimination of ethical considerations from philosophy is both scientifically necessary and - though this might seem a paradox - an ethical advance. ... Thus the ethical interests which have often inspired philosophers must remain in the background: some kind of ethical interest may inspire the whole study (p45), ... paradox, that a philosophy which does not seek to impose upon the world its own conceptions of good and evil is not only more likely to achieve truth, but is also the outcome of a higher ethical standpoint [there will be] a realisation of the limits of human power. ... The good which it concerns us to remember is the good which it lies in our power to create - the good in our own lives and in our attitude towards the world (p47). ... Human beings cannot, of course, wholly transcend human nature: something subjective, if only the interest that determines the direction of our attention, must remain in all our thought (p48)'.¹²

This is from 'Mysticism and Logic', written in 1914. Here Russell is in effect summarising key aspects of Wittgenstein's final position (see below, especially §5), at the time when it is presumed

¹¹ Nietzsche (19) *Human, All Too Human*, pp209

¹² Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, II, pp612

Wittgenstein had barely begun to think about his first Tractarian proposition. Moreover, the above quotation from Russell's essay on mysticism encapsulates much of the subject matter to follow, in what is a very clearly non-Divide problematic of self.

In reading Wittgenstein, as in reading Sartre, and unlike reading many other philosophers (especially Schopenhauer), one is struck by the outward continuity between their work and the lives they lead. These *authors* are not dead, their intentionality is not a textual fallacy (and philobiographical matters should not be ignored): but as subjects they exist at the limit, as, it will be seen (§5) a transcendental message that is shown. But all remains situated, and showing, for all its formality, finds a place in saying, in the world, in actions (§3.1), such that both Sartre and Wittgenstein choose a life that shows:

**The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life or of the work,
And if it take the second must refuse
A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.
(Yeats, *The Choice*).**

§1
ART-AND-THE-INEFFABLE
(CLARIFICATION AND DEFENSE)¹

**There are indeed things that cannot be put into words. They
make themselves manifest.
They are what is mystical.
(*Tractatus*, 6.522)**

**If the reality which one wants to signify is one word, it must
be given to the reader by other words ... besides ... the
greatest riches of the psychic life are silent.
(*What is Literature*, pp122)**

**The for-itself is always something other
than what can be *said* of it. (BN 439).**

¹ A version of this chapter appeared in *Philosophical Writings*, No.5, May 1997.

§1

This chapter aims to defend the generic concept of art-and-the-ineffable - and hence the remainder of the thesis - mainly by clarifying what is not necessarily entailed in holding such a thesis. Some prevalent prevailing presuppositions, the basis of most criticism of art-and-the-ineffable, are laid bare as nasty misconceptions. Through this criticism and the rejection of a fit of misconceptions we have the emergence of a more specific concept of art-and-the-ineffable - one held by many philosophers. The basic tenets of such a thesis are held also, however, by the early Wittgenstein and Sartre. Their particular art-and-the-ineffable thesis, which is a cocktail of ideas idiosyncratic, traditional and original, is founded on poly-polar principle that is aesthetic, it is to be understood in terms of modalities, and is identified with the metaphysical subject (§3.1iii & §4) and the problematic of self that directs this thesis.

The approach in this chapter is thus: we work within a methodological limitation - that is, by art, in what follows, the referent will be linguistic art. Generically the subject may be Literature or, better, poetry. Such art is paradigmmed by metaphor and thus includes metonymy, synecdoche and other figurative modes of language. It excludes what I have termed, for want of a better term, ordinary language - language taken as literal, discursive, denotative or significative. The objections to the idea of the ineffable that is transcended by art would seem to gain most force when the art form is language itself, or at least a certain use of language, as trope.² (It is just this notion of art, of '*lingua-aesthetic deeds*', that is central to the remainder of the thesis).

² D. Davidson is right to argue that if discourse does furnish itself with two meanings, literal and metaphoric, then this should not be understood as the view that sentences and phrases possess within themselves two meanings; but rather, that a sentence or phrase can be taken either literally or metaphorically, after which arises the question of its meaning and truth value - of which, in either case, the sentence may or may not possess. But of course, as far as Davidson is concerned, metaphor is devoid of cognitive content, says nothing beyond the literal, and, taken metaphorically, a sentence is without meaning. See, for example, 'What Metaphors Mean' in S. Sacks (1978), pp29-45.

Within this framework the opening section defines the concept 'art-and-the-ineffable'. Then, a short section clarifies what is the merely contingent relation of the ineffable to the incommunicable and the unknowable. This is followed by another short section that clarifies the central importance of a fact—value distinction, and what this entails. Next, in the long central section, the non-commitment to, and non-identification with, some relationship with emotions or the expression or representation of emotions is discussed: this entails a discussion of the 'generic-specific distinction', as well as the further idea that 'art embodies its meaning'. Two final considerations as taken from Kennick's *Art and the Ineffable* allow us to conclude this generic clarification, and do so with a final section on *the* issue in art-and-the-ineffable: the putative possibility of saying the unsayable. At this point, the particular formulation of Wittgenstein and Sartre can and is allowed to stand clear. Finally, when still on the subject of approach, it should be noted that much of this chapter is commentator lead, a valid approach given that a central aim of this chapter is to *defend* a thesis.

♦ Art-and-the-Ineffable??

In speaking of the ineffable we are speaking of a formal principle: obviously there is in *practice* the common experience of not being able to find, for psychological, physiological, social or cultural reasons, the words needed to define or describe a particular thought, feeling or sensation. It follows that the ineffable in practice is of linguistical, psychological, physiological, and even, Heaven and Hades forbid, sociological importance; but is of little philosophical interest. The ineffable in *principle* pertains to a formal and structural limitation within language itself. Combine this with a theory of art and we have the following (generically formulated) tri-part doctrine. Art-and-the-ineffable states that (a) Ordinary language constitutes its own formal limits to what can be said. (b) About such presumed ineffabilia something can in fact be communicated: by or through art. That is, art facilitates the transcending of the limits by communicating something in a sense, described multi-variously as, for example, 'indicating' or 'suggesting' or 'showing'. (c) What is communicated, though similarly the formulation can and does vary

enormously, will be certain key truths, of religion, of ethics, and of aesthetics (of an abstract or intuitive meaning); of the self - as the precondition of the sayable, and as situationedness of private emotional states; of the metaphysical nature of the world, as essence or underlying reality.

That this generic definition constitutes the claim of art-and-the-ineffable is unproblematic, it is held by many people including a whole tradition of our greatest philosophers and thinkers. However, the validity of the claim is dogged through the ages by controversy and criticism. In contemporary debate we are referred to W. E. Kennick's 1961 established paper *Art and the Ineffable*³. This classic and influential work (itself influenced by Alice Ambrose's *The Problem of Linguistic Inadequacy*⁴) remains representative today of the approach taken by critics of art-and-the-ineffable.

The following analysis will reveal the fundamental weaknesses of a criticism which is either misplaced or steeped in bias, thus indicating the direction a fruitful criticism would have to take. In so doing, the representative views of Sartre and Wittgenstein are put forward.

♦ Incommunicable and Unknowable?

Is the ineffable the incommunicable, the unknowable, is it hence the mystical, and is it necessarily so?

'Ineffable' is from the Latin, a compound of the prefix 'in', used to express negation and privation, and *effabilis*: to speak out. Hence, strictly speaking, the ineffable is not that which *cannot* be expressed, but a privation or negation of what can be expressed. If 'speaking out' could regain the attribute or quality that it is without, and which it formally possessed before loss, it could then express (or represent) itself fully. The loss of the *effabilis* may well be due to subjectivity, to, in Sartre for example, History; to, in Wittgenstein for example, the conditions of logical representation. In either case, that which we can 'speak out' about is limited, and limited

³ W.E. Kennick, 'Art and The Ineffable', *The Journal of Philosophy*, LVIII, No.12, June 1961, pp309-320.

⁴ A. Ambrose, 'The Problem of Linguistic Inadequacy' in M.Black (1963), pp14-35.

because it is conditioned as privative. Naturally, if this loss can be regained then the inherent privation can be transcended. Traditionally, religious experience and art have been seen as means of regaining the lost qualities or attributes. The distinctive feature of literature (as art) is its non-literal use of language. It is in this sense that we can offer in philosophy and in aesthetics (and on the street) the following definition of 'ineffable': 'That which cannot be communicated, nor even expressed perhaps, by words (*in their literal uses, at least*)'⁵. This suggests, a truth of what follows, that a non-literal use of language can express what is otherwise lost in 'speaking out'.

Naturally enough, the ineffable can be identified to the incommunicable, such is the case in Zen, where the ultimate mystery of life remains always inexpressible. Also, some things - we think of truths - may well be both ineffable and unknowable, as Kant also asserted about things-in-themselves. This must not be confused, however, with the view that a person can, firstly, know something, though be unable, in principle, to *say* what it is: 'Though I was thwarted of my wish to know more, I was conscious of what it was that my mind was too clouded to see' (Augustine, *Confessions* bk., 20); and secondly, that a person can then communicate this knowledge through some other method, a deed, including an aesthetic deed. This latter claim will be supported in what follows; as to the former, there is no shortage of arguments, and if need be more could be invented. I should rather invoke Augustine and Wittgenstein, the latter once said of Augustine that the conception *must* be important if so great a mind held it. In fact, it is cardinal as far as art-and-the-ineffable is concerned that the ineffable certainly is communicable (it can be 'shown' for example), and in this sense it is *usually* identified with new knowledge (often in terms of intuition), and a second non-literal sense or meaning. It was Kant (and transcendental idealism) that give this claim to limits its theoretical respectability and grounded it, as did Wittgenstein and Sartre, in a concept of the subject. Thus, in what reads like a summary of much that is to follow.

The subject of the categories cannot by thinking the categories acquire a concept of itself as an object of the categories. For in order to think them, its pure self-consciousness, which is what was to be explained, must itself be presupposed (CPR, B422).

In recent times what is now the thanatos of the nefarious objectifies itself in the

⁵ My emphasis - from D.E. Cooper (ed.), 'Ineffability', in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, pp221.

proliferation of textual debate between the poles of Ricoeur and Davidson. This is a massive debate, entered by the present dissertation through its accounts of double meaning theory in Wittgenstein and Sartre. But for the present, singularly required is a clear recognition that art-and-the-ineffable accepts and argues for double meaning, and does so, in language as art, at the level of semantics (and also the level of hermeneutics). The cognitive limits of the ordinary language (significative) pole are taken to be transcendable by a second non-literal cognitive content, drawn in experience from the poetic (symbolic) pole of a proposition as it opens up further realms of possible meanings. The point that we must take with us is this: that neither the ineffable nor art-and-the-ineffable is either necessarily incommunicable nor necessarily unknowable (prevalent and misleading assumptions, even among non-philosophers); and in fact, art-and-the-ineffable is a generic affirmation of the possibility of language transcendent experiences and their communicability: where a claim to knowledge (intuition, insight) will be made, and where the very existence of art-and-the-ineffable identifies the hope of the communicable: the point of art-and-the-ineffable *is* that the formal limitation on communicating is transcended in its reciprocity with the formal principle of ‘showing’ or ‘suggesting’. In short, the ineffable and art-and-the-ineffable can not justifiably be dismissed as ‘mystical’ in either the primary sense of pertaining to a reality beyond all apprehension or in the pejorative sense of vague speculation and belief without basis. If it is necessarily mystical, art-and-the-ineffable is so as a communicable communication of Being or Truth between self and ultimate reality (universe and/or God).

♦The Fact—Value distinction

The second key and too often overlooked aspect of art-and-the-ineffable consists in a distinction, that between fact and value. This ancient acquaintance haunts philosophy, it has a distinguished but chequered history - its purpose, since the Stoics and in the powerful systems of Kant and the Tractarian Wittgenstein, is to protect through segregation a pure non-derivative (i.e. foundational) realm. Facts, the realm of science and empirical data, are bounded, given and

classifiable (and verifiable). Value is a matter of clarification or appropriation, or attitude to, the empirically verifiable facts of existence. For Wittgenstein, value is identified with will, a silent attitude that changes the meaning of the world as a whole for the converted individual, but does not, because it cannot, effect the facts (6.43)⁶. The moral (and religious) implications are immense and cannot for Stoics or Wittgenstein be annexed from a consideration of art. Of the moral dimension, Murdoch is surely right when she says that

Post-Kantian developments in moral philosophy outside the Hegelian tradition have been largely attempts at different versions of this fact—value distinction, which also appears in its more histrionic form in Sartre’s existentialism (*en soi* and *pour soi*) and Heidegger’s contrast of “everydayness” with heroic authenticity.⁷

Aside from the traditional identification of the fact—value distinction to morality, it must be observed that the relevance of the fact—value distinction to the propositions of language is neither as new or as peculiar as may be thought and indeed pre-dates Kant. Carnap saliently reminds us that ‘The opinion that metaphysical propositions have no sense because they do not concern any facts, has already been expressed by Hume’, in the *Enquiry*⁸. In both Wittgenstein and Sartre, the metaphysical will become one with the moral and the aesthetic (below). A. J. Ayer, like Carnap, embraces and places himself in this tradition. In his preface to *Language, Truth and Logic*, Ayer writes that

The views which are put forward in this treatise derive from the doctrines of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, which are themselves the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and Hume. Like Hume, I divide all genuine propositions into two classes: those which, in his terminology, concern “relations of ideas”, and those which concern “matters of fact”.

Neither, in this propositional context, and with the moral imperative, is the relevance of the

⁶ This does not entail that the two realms - fact—value - are pure *and* independent. As Rorty says, ‘To use one set of sentences to describe ourselves is already to choose an attitude toward ourselves, whereas to use another set of true sentences is to adopt a contrary attitude’ (*Philosophy in the Mirror of Nature*, pp364). As to Wittgenstein and Sartre, the relation between Fact (empirical self) and Value (attitudinal self) is discussed below, §3.1i, and *passim*.

⁷ Iris Murdoch *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Penguin, 1992, Chapter Two ‘Fact and Value’.

⁸ R. Carnap *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London, 1935. pp35/6 - and the final chapter of Hume’s *Enquiry*. I do not address - directly - Carnap’s criticism of Wittgenstein’s ‘ineffability thesis. His criticism is directed especially against the propositions of the *Tractatus*: ‘instead of keeping silent, he writes a whole philosophical book’ (pp38), and his arguments are perhaps based on a (then endemic and) basic misunderstanding or a misrepresentation of the latter pages of the *Tractatus*. The foundation for such a reading may well have been the insistence of taking the *Tractatus*’ metaphysical propositions as normative when they must be regarded as descriptive. Of course, at one level, much of the present thesis is directed against the Positivist’s misunderstanding.

fact—value distinction to Art peripheral or novel. Susanne Langer has pointed out that:

Poetry is quite generally regarded as communication, not of facts, but of the values the poet puts upon facts which, simply as facts, are as well known to us as to him. ... [They] constitute *what he says*; the values are given *by the way he says it*. His aim ... is to make us share his particular way of experiencing the familiar events and conditions of the world.⁹

Rarely in truth is it or has it been held that either the propositionally ineffable or art-and-the-ineffable has anything to do with what are taken to be facts, i.e. the objects of scientific discovery and description, empirically verifiable states of affairs. (Though as we shall see things become more complicated in the phenomenological tradition, and the ontology of Sartre and Heidegger in particular raises objections to the possibility of describing Being, objections which they, and especially Heidegger, clearly endorse, see §2.3-4, especially §2.3iii Being and Nothingness). Whereas facts are taken to constitute the realm of the sayable and are said to be satisfactorily represented or signified by literal discourse, the ineffable, even when conceived in terms of emotion, is seen to pertain to something empirically non verifiable. The fact—value distinction can take many forms, and it can be embraced in different domains, even within the confines of the existential subject and art there are various levels to be dealt with - the linguistic (literal and figurative), the epistemological (perception and image) and the ontological (body and consciousness). And a particular commitment to the fact—value distinction is accepted by both Wittgenstein and Sartre and constitutes an important premise of their ineffability thesis (see below §2.2 and §2.3). Nonetheless, the singular structural point to note is this: that where art-and-the-ineffable is concerned, the endemic fact—value premise cannot be ignored or overlooked; if it is not recognised or acknowledged then only misinterpretation can ensue, neither critical affirmation or castigation will have foundation or justification.

The commitment of art-and-the-ineffable to the fact—value distinction thus naturally pre-empted and leaves foundationless many attacks on the doctrine. A particular and commonly used line of attack is ably mobilised by Kennick (1961). He characterises the ineffability thesis as

⁹ Susanne Langer, *Problems of Art*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1957, pp146

holding that sentences 'say nothing or literally express no fact' (182)¹⁰. The problem, he then maintains, is that when we consider the sentence, say, 'God is good', then according to 'the mystical theologian' the sentence 'cannot literally be about God, cannot literary express a fact'. In all this we agree. Kennick then says that the theologian would nevertheless hold that the sentence is not without sense - again we agree - for 'metaphorically or symbolically it is about God *and does express a fact*'. My emphasis marks the point of departure. The mistake of identifying a metaphorical sense of a sentence, or better, the sense of a sentence metaphorically construed, with the expression or representation of a *fact* leads Kennick into an unnecessary and illegitimate argument against the possibility of certain sentences expressing a second non-literal meaning. 'God is good' is of course a sentence with sense; but the sentence cannot, in any of numerous variations on the same theme, be said to be expressing a fact - to begin with, neither subject nor predicate refer to anything empirically identifiable in the world. Taken literally, the sentence 'God is good' is without sense (*sinn* - though it has meaning, *bedeutung*, see next chapter), as with the sentence 'The moon is a ghostly galleon', and as with the following proposition:

Cogito. Ergo. Sum. —
 The fathomless whiteness of your body
 The sun sleeping between our chests
 Our lips stilling oceans
 Our touching leaving the sky bereft,
 To the enflamed earth say only: I am.

Some less emotionally absorbed critics of the ineffability thesis, in respect of the above difficulty, do recognise the importance of the (linguistic) fact—value distinction. Henceforth, W.P. Alston (1956)¹¹, in his dialogue between *Mysticus* and *Philologos*, considers arguments for and against the possibility that the term 'God', for example, is one which either predicates or concepts can be applied to. 'To say that God is ineffable is to say that no concepts apply to Him', that He is unconceptualisable (507). Alston's starting point is, he claims, in the 'philosophical

¹⁰ Not necessarily equivalent rules, the former is readily identifiable with the logical positivists, the latter with Wittgenstein, the conflation endemic.

¹¹ W. Alston, 'Ineffability', *Philosophical Review* 65, October 1956, pp506-502.

tradition in which we ... can apply a concept to x whenever we predicate anything of x ', and in which to do so is 'equivalent to saying x is conceptualizable' (508). Thus understood, the grammatical form of, say, 'God is good' is misleading, for it looks as if we are attaching a predicate (i.e. concept) to God when we are not. The proposition is said to be of the same status as 'King Arthur is fictitious': no predicate is attached to King Arthur. Nonetheless, it is argued, understanding the sentence means identifying the phrase 'God', therefore some condition of meaning, and hence concept, must, it seems, hold. But this does not, as is pointed out, effect the original claim: I could just as easily identify a person I do not know, Jane or Richard II, by saying 'the girl whose picture was in last night's paper' or 'the character in Shakespeare's play'; in neither case do I predicate anything of the person; nor do I form a concept of them. Given a particular and persuasive theory of meaning, proper names have a non-conceptual status. The point being brought out by Alston's *Mysticus* is that propositions which contain such phrases display a misleading grammatical form, so that when we say, for example, 'God is ineffable', ineffable is not predicating anything. Identifying x as ineffable is not to imply anything about what sort of entity x is. Another point: as we are not predicating anything of x , we are not therefore in such cases speaking prescriptively. This is the position of Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. To say 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent' (7) is not to say anything about the x we *cannot* speak of; the statement is purely, with the rest of the metaphysical propositions in the *Tractatus*, descriptive. To say God, art, self is ineffable is not to contravene the law of non-contradiction: it is to describe a state of affairs. A further point made by Alston is that some of these non-factual and therefore non-conceptualizable matters, including God, are such that they must be categorised under the umbrella term Value. This returns us to the main moral with which this discussion of the fact—value distinction began. It is one thing to dispute the coherence or validity of such a position, and its resulting theory of meaning; such a dialogue is clearly necessary, but not recognising its place in the scheme of things for theorists of art-and-the-ineffable (such as for example Wittgenstein) is something else altogether.

The fact—value distinction is crucial and perhaps necessary to art-and-the-ineffable; the

many criticisms and arguments pitched against art-and-the-ineffable which take no account of a foundational premise are themselves without sense and serve only to mislead.

♦ **Emotions; The Generic–Specific distinction**

There is a second common and fundamental mistake made by philosopher-critics, one that generates still further spurious arguments and criticism, and consideration of which constitutes the promised third aspect of art-and-the-ineffable. In this case, it is not that a foundational premise has been overlooked or ignored, rather, such a premise has been attributed where none might nor need exist.

As art-and-the-ineffable need have nothing to do with the practical difficulty of accurately stating particular feelings or emotions (above), then any criticism is spurious which is based solely on a view of art as *being* expressive or mimetic *of* feelings or emotions which must otherwise remain inchoate. Although in fact both Wittgenstein and Sartre claim that language does have a problem in conveying emotional states (see §2.2), and although neither are against the idea that art can more readily *express* such emotional states, nevertheless there is for both philosophers far more to the ineffable than the emotional. It is not presently possible or desirable to argue for a theory of art that avoids commitment to the expression or representation of emotions: more to the point, no such argument is required. Art may or may not express or represent all the ineffable emotion it likes. What matters is that we are aware of the serious limitations inherent in the works of those critics who presume such a thesis is (a) a necessary condition of art-and-the-ineffable and, (b), a sufficient condition of art-and-the-ineffable: in both cases they are mistaken, their arguments are not and cannot be validated by the fact that many art-and-the-ineffabilists do claim *as part of* their doctrine the view that art does express or represent emotion. This is often an empirical and contingent matter, drawing no breath from a formal principle; but when, as with some theoreticians, such a principle is invoked in an explanation of how dumb emotions find expression in art, then still this is one part of a wider principle and does not on its own guarantee that principle and cannot, therefore, be legitimately

used as a premise for an attack on art-and-the-ineffable.

Nonetheless, for good or ill (the latter I would suggest), the view that art conveys emotions, that it, or the artist, express or represent emotional states, is one with a great tradition in philosophy of art. Some consideration of the specific principles involved in such criticism would then seem to be called for, and will in fact prove fruitful in other ways. For it is not enough, perhaps, to *state* the generic confusions that structure much criticism - even though it is just such a confusion that underlies the most common attack on art-and-the-ineffable: the putative impossibility of art expressing otherwise ineffable emotions. This very offensive is usually conducted along the lines that there are two contrasting sets of terms used to express emotions, general and specific. The former are said to be abstract, inaccurate, imprecise; the latter are said to be concrete, accurate, precise. Kennick, for example, characterises art-and-the-ineffable as holding that all descriptions of emotions must come from the former group. (Empirically, this may well be true: precise terms do not appear applicable [usefully applicable?] to the emotions; but logically, there is no reason why they should not). As an a priori claim, such a 'discovery' is seen by Kennick as 'uninformative'. How, asks Kennick, is it possible to maintain that art, 'assuming that works of art are expressions of emotions', expresses emotions precisely, when all this can mean, when followed through, is that some works of art are good, successful or better at expressing emotions. The argument (fully stated) is valid, but irrelevant to most art-and-the-ineffable theories because it is based upon an erroneous premise, that works of art are defined in terms of artefacts that express emotion. In fact, the thesis that language generalises and art particularises is not one that art-and-the-ineffable is bound to: rather, it appears bound up with those who hold that the ineffable is *exclusively* concerned with those emotional experiences that art, as the expression of emotion, is said to communicate.

A similar idea to that based on the above noted generic/specific distinction is found in Alice Ambroses' pre-Kennick paper *The Problem of Linguistic Inadequacy*. She says that to some extent the ineffable thesis depends upon the view that it is the 'Communication of the concreteness of our experience [that] is impossible' (29). Ambrose offers as a reason the idea that

'specificity always escapes embodiment in general terms'. She quotes Whitehead to the effect that art aims to embody what it indicates, and claims the statement is self-contradictory: what would it be like for the 'experience indicated by a colour word to be incorporated in the language?' She continues,

Apparently the experience itself would be in the position of a word. But in that case the embodiment would function to indicate something beyond itself. It would then not be an embodiment, but a symbol - the original unsatisfactory substitute for the experience. The only meaning we can give to the expressed aim that what the symbol inadequately stands for should be *embodied* in the symbol is that what the symbol stands for should *replace* the symbol. (29)

These are crucial issues and it is especially disappointing to be faced with such a misleading picture - there are too many problems here. The first statement - that experience should be in the position of a word - is without justification: we cannot countenance this particular dismissal of Whitehead (and by proxy the ineffable) who, with Russell and Wittgenstein, excepted - with modifications - a basic tenet of Fregean semantics. That is, the unit of meaning is the proposition and not the word, or sign: this is a cardinal point (discussed below, §2.2,) adhered to also by phenomenologists such as Sartre (§2.3i), and one which there is no reason within the present (inclusive) debate not to apply equally whether we take a sentence literally or metaphorically.

Returning thus to Ambrose's first point, we can state that the experience would have to be 'in the position of' a sentence or a phrase, not 'a word'. Take, for an expansive example, the word 'belly' or the word 'breath' or the word 'sea' or the word 'pulse' or the word 'day'; what in each case is the semantic source of experience? It is a sign, a meaning, it is not, as Wittgenstein helps us to see, a symbol - that which bears meaning *and* sense (*sinn*). Now, take the proposition 'your belly is the breath of the sea and the pulse of the day'¹². What, again, is the semantic source of the experience? In both parts of the example, as sign and then as symbol (proposition), a phenomenological description may well be endless - but for different reasons, as based on the *bedeutung sinn* distinction. Nonetheless, what for certain can be said is that there is a qualitative difference in experiencing this unit as a sign and as a symbol; and that this is theoretically

¹² A proposition, by Octavio Paz, that *must* be taken metaphorically - unless we are to deny that *the poetry* of Paz, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Keats *et al* has meaning?

explained in terms of the latter having both meaning and sense¹³.

If now we proceed to Ambroses' next point, to say that the word - or, to be generous, the proposition - indicates something beyond itself and functions therefore as a 'symbol', this is equally spurious. For example, Kennick, who in all this is led by the hand of Alice, but who sees more, quotes Miss Ambrose as follows (my lettering):

[a] Suppose we require that terms describing experience be made less and less general until finally a point is reached where they carry in themselves what they indicate. [b] At this point one would apparently not have a symbol at all, but the experience. [c] An experience, not a symbol, would now be a constituent of the description, in which case understanding a statement about someone's experience would consist in having the experience. This is to say the symbol would incorporate its referent only by no longer referring to something beyond itself. But then it would no longer be a symbol. (Quoted from Kennick [1961], pp319)

It is *a priori* tempting to accept 'a' as a real possibility, i.e. a position on which both effabilists and ineffabilists could agree upon. On the other hand, it does not follow that words, 'terms', could ever *be* the experience itself. It becomes clear that something queer has happened in this argument. The point 'terms' reach when they carry in themselves what they indicate is not, I do not believe, an experience - nor obviously is it a symbol; it is, as has elsewhere been stated, that of embodiment. Admittedly, the word 'embodiment' *suggests* experience (even for philosophers), but we now know not to allow diction to lead us astray. If we are to make any sense of this concept and these arguments we must mean by 'embodiment' *expression*, and not experience¹⁴. Again, we must be careful not to be led astray by the ordinary meaning. Thus the term 'expression' is to be understood in the same way that Roger Scruton uses it, i.e. intransitively¹⁵. Hence, the usual use of expression (in art) is transitive, such that the question arises as to what is being expressed (by a poem, say); whereas intransitively expressiveness is identified with the art-work, or rather with the 'power' or 'effect' of the work. In this sense, the impact of a work of art is not specifiable in any way other than by direct reference back to the

¹³ The cognitive status of this *sinn* is irrelevant in the present circumstances, as is the question of truth, the semantic consideration is primary (see also note 2 above).

¹⁴ The notion that works of art are 'iconic embodiments of their meaning or significance' is one that Stephen Mulhall considers in some detail in his *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects*, Routledge, 1990.

¹⁵ R. Scruton, *The Aesthetic Understanding*, Carcanet Press, 1983.

work itself, to the art-work as a whole. Both embodiment, which entails expression, and symbol, are thus pre-conditions of an experience, not *the* experience itself. Statement 'a' - the supposition that we require terms which describe experience to reach a point where they carry in themselves what they indicate - this then seems in fact to be false. But even if true, statement 'b' (that originally terms are not symbols but experiences) is certainly false - the argument may be valid, its premises and conclusion are all false. In effect, what we should read at 'c' is the following: 'an *expression* is the description that is offered when the terms that describe an experience reach the point where they carry in themselves what they indicate'.

That embodiment could function to *indicate* something beyond itself we can agree, but we assert, with the company of Wittgenstein, that this is not an experience itself and it can only be understood by referring back to the work itself. Further, that this then entails that this embodiment is a symbol (having both meaning and sense) clearly and patently does not follow. Embodiment, the formal structure, entails meaning; sense, a possibility, requires representation (cf. detailed discussion at §2.2). Finally, as experience is not embodiment, and as embodiment as expression is, must be, an intransitive quality, then even if we ignored the other counter-arguments, it would not ensue that this symbol was the 'original unsatisfactory substitute for the experience': Unless, a singular possibility, we are founding the arguments on a particular view of art as (transitively) expressing emotions. Such a position is of course maintained by some philosophers of art, but if such a view is to be seen as a necessary condition of art-and-the-ineffable, and thereby used to inform one's arguments against art-and-the-ineffable, as in the above examples, then naturally one's criticisms must be found wanting.

That art *is* the expression of emotions is a bacterial view; since Rousseau, Romanticism has spread it wide and insidious, unfortunately there appears to be no antidote, and it thrives to an alarming extent in the criticisms of art-and-the-ineffable: the criticisms of Ambrose and Kennick are no more than representative.

Kennick in fact opens his attack on art-and-the-ineffable by stating that there is 'no conviction in aesthetics more deeply rooted than that works of art expresses what cannot be

expressed in ordinary discourse' (309). As a generic claim this is fairly uncontroversial (though it must be stressed contra Kennick that it does not entail expressing emotions and expression is to be understood, I believe, as intransitive). As to this conviction, he plans to show that 'the principle arguments that have been offered in its favour are without substance'. He then cites Prall, Dewey, and Langer as exponents of this view and summarises their positions thus:

Prall says that language cannot name the feelings that works of art embody and convey; Dewey says that language cannot reproduce the feelings that works of art express and evoke; and Mrs. Langer says that language cannot give us insight into, or knowledge of, feelings, whereas works of art can. (311).

A good enough summary, perhaps, but why these three? An all too conveniently emotional trinity.

It is clear that Kennick, Ambrose, and the neo-positivist tradition of criticism they may well represent, cannot, for all the validity of their arguments, succeed in showing that 'the principle arguments' of art-and-the-ineffable are 'without substance'. Whether we ignore the fact—value distinction, or whether the premise for a general attack on art-and-the-ineffable is that art objects represent or express (in the transitive sense) emotions or feelings, or whether it is the narrower point regarding the generic-specific distinction, or finally whether it is the claim that art-and-the-ineffable is committed to the view that art communicates concrete experience and its corollary that art objects cannot embody what they indicate (meaning), when *any* of these positions is assumed as a premise for an attack on art-and-the-ineffable, then it is like marching in arms into a deserted and snowy Moscow, guns, flags, and pens waving in the cold empty air.

♦ **Saying the Unsayable?**

Two final points require some comment before closing this defence via clarification of art-and-the-ineffable, and again in Kennick we find them ably and representatively stated. They return us to an earlier issue, but make different points, to *the* key issue, that of communication.

Regarding the idea that a work of art is a vehicle of communication, this, he believes, is essentially unproblematic: but that, such a notion implies 'that there is something wrong with ordinary discourse' (310). Such a complaint, he says, is unfounded, unreasonable or no complaint

at all, it is like a man complaining 'that there must be something wrong with his protractor because with it he could not draw a square circle' (318). If Kennick has here identified *the* 'complaint' against ordinary discourse then, for good or ill, his condemnation would stand. But alas, this is representative of another common mistake or misrepresentation: Kennick and company are all excited over a clay hare. The suggestion, embodied in the concept of art-and-the-ineffable, is not, in fact, that there is something *wrong* with ordinary discourse; rather, it is that such discourse is *limited*, in the same way, we might well say, that our audio, tactile or visual field is limited.

'Works of art may serve as vehicles of illumination and enlightenment, but they do not do so by saying the unsayable, communicating the incommunicable. ... What works of art say can be said in words' (320). It has already been made absolutely clear that the ineffable and the incommunicable are not the evening and morning star. More to the point, the claim of art-and-the-ineffable is never (as far as I am aware) that works of art *say* the unsayable. *If* works of art do say *something*, as linguistic works of art undoubtedly do, then yes of course they do and must say it with words: what they say, if they say, is the sayable, i.e., drawing on the fact—value distinction, the literal. But works of art do *not say the unsayable*. Art-and-the-ineffable holds that works of art, as works of art (and here to our apparent disadvantage we are still speaking of linguistic works of art), define themselves by a second, non-literal, non factual, cognitive content. Just how we shall characterise this is the subject of much of the rest of the dissertation. Nonetheless, one thing is provisionally and thankfully clear. The existence of a second non-literal meaning is not something that is communicated in the sense that it is *said*. Such communication is spoken of variously as connotation, suggestion, or as an image, a picture, showing. Just how such a second non-literal cognitive content arises is itself constituted by different philosophers in differing terms - ambiguity, resonance, expression. These are large and troublesome questions - but the single point in the picture that we need to hold on to is that art-and-the-ineffable does not claim to be saying the unsayable, the latter - in for example, Sartre and Wittgenstein - is said to be shown.

Saying is not showing, and works of art do not say the unsayable, they show the unsayable. Frank Ramsey's quip apropos the *Tractatus*, that what cannot be said cannot be whistled either, is notable for its self-refutability: some of us may well be fortunate enough to be able to whistle the score of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, but say it, no. Not because it is in an untranslatable language or medium, but because it is a non conceptual medium, an indirect language.

Of course, the view that language shows what it formally cannot say is typified in a most original and rigorous way by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus*. The *Tractatus* does not permit of metaphysical statements that say anything. The inexpressible is also the ineffable (*unaussprechlich*), it is this that shows itself. To quote from that erudite and empathic study of the *Tractatus*, Max Black's 'Companion'. Wittgenstein's

book cannot be held to 'say' anything, for it would be a howler to take it as consisting of empirical statements. But there remains the alternative of treating many of his remarks as formal statements, 'showing' something that can be shown. Then they will be in no worse case than logical and mathematical statements and there will be no theoretical barrier to their use in rational communication.¹⁶

A more complete defence of art-and-the-ineffable would have to include the affirmation of a particular doctrine such as Wittgenstein's - indeed, in the early works of Wittgenstein and Sartre we find such an account of art-and-the-ineffable, one that holds further interest as it impinges upon a concept of self that, with its commitment to the framework set out above, and its ethical (existential) ideal, constitutes the problematic that will direct the remainder of this thesis.

Before proceeding, we should end here by noting that, like so much in philosophy, the target which critics of art-and-the-ineffable aim at often has less reality than they assume; in this case, less reality than for example Beethoven's Tenth Symphony. It would appear (and this is all too familiar) that such philosophers are prone to creating their own subject of pleasure, that their projects defend their prejudices, psychology and ideology clothed as philosophy, case studies for the historians of Therapeutical Philosophy. It is a misleading picture that they paint, and at the very least it leads them and their readers to misunderstandings and erroneous conclusions. It is against such misrepresentation that art-and-the-ineffable, like the transcendental, must these days

¹⁶ M. Black, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus'*, Cambridge University Press, 1964. pp381

defend itself.

Still, it is not that the picture which holds these philosophers captive is wholly incorrect, though as we saw in parts it is. Perhaps indeed it *is* a comforting picture: that everything can be said, that Art is in fact art, that Art is a pretence to new insights, to a spurious realm of meaning and communication. And perhaps the alternative to such a picture would be The Wager, and perhaps the anxiety that art and ethics is one is too much - and yet, for all this, I believe the greater anxiety lies ultimately in the denial of the existence of judgements and experience that can *only be shown*, where, as is the case, emphasis falls back on human action, on the situated self, and on the possible as theoretically possible through Art: if religion, ideology and philosophy fail, succeeding in fact only insofar as they show us something of value, then a pure metaphysics of showing, in terms of a metaphysics of aesthetics, may well succeed.

§2

SAYING—SHOWING; EMERGENCE OF SELF

[It is] in language that the limit can be drawn ... the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world.

(Tractatus, 5.641)

The *pour soi* is always something other than can be *said* of it. ... Ordinarily, to describe something is a process of making explicit by aiming at the structures of a particular essence. Now freedom has no essence. Indefinable and unnamable, is freedom also indescribable?

(Being and Nothingness, pp439).

[The poet] considers words as a trap to catch fleeing reality, rather than as indicators which throw himself into the midst of things. In short, all language is for him the mirror of the world.

(What is Literature?, pp6)

What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said.

(Tractatus, Preface)

§2

Firstly, (at §2.1) some cautionary comments on what some would see as a contentious inner shift from a theory of art-and-the-ineffable, (as described above in §1, and as entailed throughout), to the theory of aesthetic experience which is found in Sartre and Wittgenstein, and which underpins their concept of art-and-the-ineffable, and which is to be central to the problematic of self. Next, §2.2 summarises Wittgenstein's Tractarian notion of the ineffable and its corollary the saying—showing distinction. It is not necessary to dwell on these well known concepts - at least when the emphasis is on the linguistic dimension - and a brief forward-looking exegesis is given. On the other hand, that Sartre is even philosophically interested in language may be contentious. Thus the first section of §2.3 begins with an attempt to confirm Sartre's interest in, and relation to, language, in terms of his methodology. The two remaining sections then set out to prove that Sartre is in fact committed to a notion of language in terms of the ineffable and a saying—showing distinction. The case for Sartre and such a thesis is not well known, and is perhaps being made for the first time, this necessitates much detail, and the lengthy discussion (in three parts) incorporates many minor as well as major points, including comments on his concept of the 'image' (and imagination) as this also entails the crucial linguistic notion of *le sens*; the discussion also includes an important sub-section on my interpretation of *What is Literature?*, *le sens* and poetry, a necessary addition for both the intrinsic claim and its wider theoretical import to the aesthetic solution. §2.4 begins with some comments on a traditional philosophical notion of definition which helps, as first indicated in the discussion of Sartre, to explain via contextualization, Sartre's (and to a lesser extent Wittgenstein's) commitment to linguistic inadequacy and the ineffable. An attempt to offer some such philo-historical background must be seen as particularly important in the case of Sartre. The

remainder of this final section summarises, firstly, the lengthy discussion of Sartre, and secondly the key points of convergence between the two philosophers, and does so by shifting the emphasis from the ineffable to the *possibility* of (aesthetic) showing and the self.

§2.1 THE INEFFABLE: FROM ART TO AESTHETICS

It was stated above (§1) that it is out of art-and-the-ineffable that a particular aesthetic emerges. To some this will be very contentious, at least *prima facie*, for any supposed coextensivity between art and aesthetics cannot be taken for granted. Supposing that the account of the ineffable and showing that is being drawn on in Wittgenstein and Sartre does entail some notion of aesthetic experience, even so, in itself this is insufficient to assume that any demands were thereby being made on a theory of Art. Recall that Kant for example claims, persuasively with much particularity, that our aesthetic sensibilities are initially aroused by our experience of nature. The claim then, is not that art and aesthetics are coextensive, or that they are so in the philosophy of Sartre and Wittgenstein, problematically or otherwise. No such claim could be reasonably upheld in the present work. The claim is that as far as the works under discussion are concerned, the aesthetics of showing (in §5) does, for good or ill, draw on a theory of art. It does so, as shall be seen, in its demands upon the concept of disinterestedness. Disinterestedness, since at least the time of Kant in the Western canon, has consistently been taken to be an ingredient of aesthetic experience. And more specifically, it has been and is identified with the aesthetic attitude. It is this disinterested attitude, that of a non-utilitarian ‘purposeless purpose’, that can, and is sometimes taken as central to an understanding of the nature of Art. The theory of art that is found in the early works of Wittgenstein and Sartre is committed to such a thesis. Art exists as an unreality, and at a distance: it is the resulting and reciprocal disinterestedness which characterises, and identifies, art with the aesthetic experience of art, with the aesthetic attitude.

For purposes here, the following suffices: that neither of the following two points is taken for granted: firstly, any move from art to aesthetics, *or*, secondly, the fact that it *is* a move that

both Wittgenstein and Sartre made in their early thought, and which is therefore entailed in the following discussion. This second point will be made clear in the final chapter.

§2.2 WITTGENSTEIN: SAYING AND SHOWING

So much has been said on the Tractarian account of the ineffable and the saying—showing distinction, much of it by now (thankfully) uncontentious, that here my intention is to do little more than outline Wittgenstein’s position, with an obvious emphasis on those aspects - still contentious - which will permit the important comparison to Sartre, the self and aesthetic showing. The following, after a preparatory comment, is divided into four parts: an outline of what Wittgenstein terms the *mystiche*, its relation to ‘saying’ and then ‘showing’, and finally a conclusion.

Wittgenstein in his own preface to the *Tractatus* introduces an important preliminary point: ‘The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence (T pp3)’. It is crucial to the present thesis that this statement of intent - *and all it implies* - (which includes it will be seen what Wittgenstein calls the *mystiche* as well as the self) is taken as definitive. This should not raise any eyebrows, the evidence is overwhelming, both internal and external, for an interpretation of the *Tractatus* as being a work which is internally unified by an ethical doctrine¹. The present thesis does offer evidence in support of Wittgenstein’s claim - most especially, that the concepts of showing, self, and matters of value are inextricable, and bound up with the *Tractatus* as a work that must properly speaking be understood as an ethical and aesthetic deed. Holding all this together is the central distinction between saying and showing: the logical form of symbolic, propositional representation which, along with mystical pronouncements, cannot be stated. The bi-surface structure of the *Tractatus*: atomistic ontology, picture theory and science,

¹ See many of the works listed in the bibliography, including the excellent philo-historical account in Janik, A and Toulmin, S (1973) *Wittgenstein’s Vienna*.

against self, solipsism, ethics and aesthetics, is held together by the saying—showing distinction. The *Tractatus* is not, so a claim of the present thesis runs, a work on logic and language with an appendage to the self, ethics, and value. Few conceptions, as will be seen, could be further from the truth.

The *Mystiche*. What is beyond the meaning of all propositions is what Wittgenstein calls ‘the *mystiche*’. To draw together all the forms of Wittgenstein’s generic *mystiche* is to picture his pantheon of the ineffable, the very existence of which implicates the doctrine of showing. With only smoke damage to this picture the *mystiche* can be placed under four headings. One: The truths of logic (6.12ff). Two: The way propositions acquire sense, picture (3.262, 4.022, 4.12ff). Three: The possibility of the laws of nature (6.36). Four: Matters of value (5.62, 6.421, 6.44/5, 6.521-2, 7).

Possibly no one engaged in a study of Sartre has as yet been concerned to any worthwhile extent with the truths of logic, and in the present work only a minimum comparative requirement will be satisfied, and done so *passim*. Nor, in this study, is there too much concern with points Two and Three: the exception is some important remarks made below regarding the problem of defining essences, which therefore includes both the *form* of scientific laws and pictorial and logical *form*. The thesis can therefore continue discussing the *mystiche* within terms of its and the *Tractatus*’ central concern, that of Value.

‘How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher’ (6.432). The fact—value distinction in the *Tractatus* (below, *passim*) is a matter of semantics embedded in ontology. Facts, we will see, are in the realm of saying; Value in that of showing, where Value is given a universal, non-relative status². In the realm of Value, of what ‘is higher’,

² In introducing a universal—non-relative distinction into his account of value Wittgenstein is making what could be a Kantian distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. A concrete example which supports this view is offered in his *Lecture on Ethics* (LE), a work from the very beginning of Wittgenstein’s mid-period, and very similar in content to his Tractarian position. In this lecture Wittgenstein distinguishes between a ‘good tennis player’ and ‘Good’. The former is the sayable, a fact in the world - it is contingent, empirical, verifiable etc., but the latter is universal, a matter of the world as a whole: it is, as a judgement, what *ought* to be the case. It is also a necessary condition of the former, and it finds itself in the realm of the ineffable.

Wittgenstein places logical form, ethics, aesthetics, the ethical will, the metaphysical subject and philosophical inquiry itself: they are all seen as being transcendental (6.421ff). Thus in what follows, unless otherwise stated, the mystical, Value, is to be understood in a specifically ethical and aesthetic sense, including of course, the account of self as (metaphysical)–subject.

Saying. Wittgenstein's early philosophy would seem to rest on his conception of language which, in turn, depends upon the picture theory of meaning and the implied doctrine of saying and showing. According to this all pictorial representations pertain in virtue of what Wittgenstein calls logical form, 'the form of reality' (2.18f). Logical form is the minimum and necessary requirement and is common to any and all pictures. The determinate way names are concatenated to each other as a picturing relation Wittgenstein calls 'pictorial form': 'Pictorial form is the possibility that things are related to one another [i.e. in the world] in the same way as the elements of a picture' (2.151). The correlative elements of picture and world are names and objects. A name denotes an object (a simple thing)³; where these objects are the foundational constituents of reality. A (determinate - by the objects they represent) concatenation of names forms an elementary proposition which is the basic picturing unit, representing a possible situation, assemblage of objects or 'a fact [which] is the existence of a state of affairs' (2.).

Central to this structure is a technical distinction between 'sense' and 'meaning' (adopted from Frege, but modified). Names can have meaning but not sense, and propositions can have sense but not meaning (3.3). A name has meaning when it *does* in fact represent (3.221) - 'stand proxy for' - an object. A proposition has *sense* when it does in fact correlate - 'represent' - a possible state of affairs, arrangement of objects or fact (3.14). In both these affirmative cases, name and proposition are each said to be, respectively, 'simple sign' (3.202) and 'sign' (3.14ff).

Meaning (*bedeutung*) is a matter of a particular and determinate structure, obtained when a simple sign denotes or refers to an object (verbal, psychic, graphic, physical) in a state of affairs.

³ Meta-arguably an object and a simple thing are not identifiable - but this does not effect the case. Glock (1996) following Hacker claims they are identifiable.

The meaning of a picture is both determinate and experimental. 'A proposition possesses essential and accidental features. Accidental features are those that result from the particular way the propositional sign is produced [i.e. the structure of the sentence]. Essential features [i.e. verifiable states of affairs] are those without which the proposition could not express sense' (3.34). Sense (*sinn*) is a formal possibility. 'What a picture represents is its sense' and it is this 'agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality [that] constitutes its truth or falsity' (2.221/2). Hence, each name in the picture must refer to an object in the situation; the objects are given and determinate, but the truth or falsity of a proposition (picture) is experimental: 'In order to tell whether a picture is true or false we must compare it to reality' (2.223). Thus, any proposition with meaning can be asserted, experimentally, and only then can it be verified by comparing it to reality. The formal limit to what can be - legitimately - said, is constrained to propositions by both *sense* and meaning. Ultimately, this comes down to facts, the empirically verifiable, the terrain of natural science: 'The world is the totality of facts ... If all the true elementary propositions are given, the result is a complete description of the world'. This is a description of 'how' the world is, and is of far less importance than the ethical (and thus aesthetic) existential experience 'that' the world exists: '*How* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher' (1., 4.26, 6.432).

For all its cursoriness the above account omits one crucial feature of the central structure of the picture theory of meaning. Sense (*sinn*) is, as stated, a formal possibility - but it is also a mental event. It is this feature which ultimately answers the vexed question: 'How do the elements of a picture actually relate to the world?' ('isomorphic representation' can only be part of the answer). Such a relationship Wittgenstein calls 'pictorial' (2.1514). It is said to be a correlation between the picture's elements and the situation it represents. It is this pictorial relationship that introduces a 'method of projection' (3.11). That is, provided that other necessary (combinational) criteria have been fulfilled, what is left is this: an elementary proposition constitutes the *possibility* of depiction - actual depiction depending upon a method of projection (2.1513f). Thus, a 'propositional *sign*' would have within its structure the formal

possibility of sense: 'a proposition does not actually contain its sense, but does contain the possibility of expressing it' (3.13f). As far as sense is concerned, its content is added to the given form. Without content the propositional sign does not depict, which means it does not become a symbol. The sign becomes a symbol through a method of projection. 'A proposition includes all that the projection includes' it does not contain 'what is projected' (3.13).

The claim, regarding the self in the following chapters, is that this method of projection involves an intentional structure that entails the self, and that this in turn formulates the actual as opposed to formal possibility of sense and, therefore, (aesthetic) showing. For the present, however, we are satisfied that an important exegetical requirement has been fulfilled: that of identifying the semantic source of the 'intentional-self', the metaphysical subject, in a detail of the picture theory of meaning and the possibility of saying. What then of the possibility of showing?

Showing. If the sayable is the Factual and the contingent, what remains, and what lies beyond language, will be Value and necessity. The sayable is concerned with the objects or simples which are in the world; value is concerned with the world as a whole. Propositions express facts, contingencies. Value and logic are not contingencies, but necessary structures (of the world as a whole), they are in this (Kantian) sense transcendental. Thus, although value propositions are not and cannot be excluded from the Tractarian account of propositions, their importance rests within this very fact. A value proposition is significant in that it attempts to say something which can only be shown - it pushes against the limits of language, as Wittgenstein elsewhere says.

Matters of value, as with the rest of the ineffable can, nevertheless, claims Wittgenstein, be *shown*. In order for a proposition to picture, it is dependent upon a logical structure which it must share with reality: logical (and also, pictorial) form (above). This underlying structure, common to all propositions, constituting the very possibility of saying, can only be shown. For in order to picture logical (pictorial) form one would have to stand outside any attempt at picturing: but then, one could not picture at all! A picture cannot both step outside itself and depict itself: 'What can

be said can only be said by means of a proposition, and so nothing that is necessary for the understanding of *all* propositions can be said' (N 25). Given Wittgenstein's account of propositions, their necessary, prerequisite features are beyond representation. Thus for example, the pseudo-propositions of logic (those with formal concepts) do not deal with facts, they have no application to the world: they are non-sense - and it is in this, their being non-sensical, that, says Wittgenstein, they show something. Similarly, with tautologies and contradictions, exactly because they say nothing about the world, the logical properties of language and world are shown. Ordinary (denoting) propositions show their underlying logical structure in their application. (3.262).

Finally, propositions pertaining to value and life are also non-sensical. Value propositions are pseudo-propositions, without sense: for example, 'The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man' (6.43). This does not refer to anything in the world, it does not *say* anything. It will be seen that all propositions which are not describing the states of affairs of 'natural science', propositions that are in fact concerned with value or what Wittgenstein terms the 'world as a whole' are non-sensical, say nothing. And such propositions, about the world as a whole, show us something about that world. The claim is that value propositions show something of the first importance, in this case, as I shall now outline, about Value, (life), and self.

Conclusions. Here, five key points of lasting interpretative value will be noted. Firstly, the bipolarity of language with the claim to showing ensures that the ineffable is not necessarily the incommunicable (see above, §1): it is what cannot be *said*, the ineffable if it is thus to be communicated, will have to be *shown*.

The second main point of this conclusion hinges on the fact that such matters as those that cannot be said are not gibberish or nonsense. Yes, they lack sense (*sinn*), but this is a technical distinction which has been blurred by the intellectual sloth of ordinary language as practised by an audience that comes to the gathering with its own agenda. The status in the *Tractatus* of what cannot be said is unequivocal: such statements are not nonsense, they lack *sinn* and are what is

most important in life. The fact that some things cannot be said but can be shown is not due to some confusion of logic - it is not something to be removed by logical analysis. Metaphysics is non-sense, its statements unverifiable - this much, the roots of truth for some, the Positivists saw. But why were Ayer and co. afraid to look up from the roots to the crown? Metaphysics is non-sense, its statements are unverifiable *and thus* it is what is most important in life. On this the *Tractatus* is as clear as a tree in a wheat field. That the truths which are metaphysics can only be shown is an ontological fact, something, for Wittgenstein, to admire and defend. For what is *shown* is something of importance, of the first importance.

A third - and centrally important - consequence of the above discussion is the satisfaction of an exegetical requirement: that of identifying the semantic source of the 'intentional-self' (the main subject of the remainder of this thesis) in a detail of the picture theory of meaning and the possibility of saying. Facts, including the ego or psychological self, and the propositions of natural science constitute the sayable. Ethics, aesthetics, logical form and the metaphysical pole of the bi-polar self are to be found in the realm of value, in the realm of the ineffable and showing. Propositions of value that involve judgement highlight this claim: for traditionally, a judgement is an act-object term, the object sense will always be true or false, a matter of belief, whereas the act sense depends upon a propositional attitude, a matter of decision. Choice, and not belief is, clearly is for Sartre, the point where we are to locate the (original) self. The self is in the realm of value and will have to be shown.

The fourth main point concerns Wittgenstein's *bedeutung—sinn* distinction. Sartre divides his semantic into two, this is based on a technical distinction between signification—*sens*, a distinction that in both form and application mirrors Wittgenstein's *bedeutung—sinn* distinction, as we shall go on to see.

Fifth and final main point. Sartre's signification—*sens* distinction underlies a generic and practical claim, that the bi-polarity of language, between sign and symbol, between saying and showing, is the founding principle behind a distinction between poetry and prose. I should say that similarly Wittgenstein's account of saying—showing supports such a generic and practical

use of language.

This claim, that Wittgenstein's very specifically formulated saying—showing distinction supports a generic and practical account of language in terms of (and similar to Sartre's) prose—poetry distinction, is first of all based on the above exegesis and secondly on further evidence. The above exegesis revealed the following points. (a) Value propositions, those that show, do *not represent* an actual or possible state of affairs *in the world*. (b) Value propositions are, necessarily are, according to Wittgenstein's position, depicting the world *as a whole*. (c) Clearly, value propositions are concerned with Value, as opposed to fact. Each of these three principles is painlessly identified with necessary conditions of (a contemporary ontology of) art, of language (fiction, paradigmatically poetry) as art: Value (not fact): not *in the world* ('unreal', as Sartre will have it): depicting, as do art objects, a complete or self-contained world. Equally, these principles indicate an affinity with an aesthetic relation to the world: each of the three positions entails the principle of distance and disinterestedness. Here then, is a multi-layered web of (aesthetic) principles that the saying—showing distinction identifies itself with.

The elucidation of the aesthetic nature of the saying—showing distinction, along the points just noted, is the subject of §5 where further evidence is drawn upon. Here, in the semantic fundamentals of Wittgenstein's saying—showing distinction, we are content to draw attention to the (often neglected but) crucial aesthetic dimension of the saying—showing distinction.

It will be a key theme of our conclusions that this aesthetic dimension (and the principles which it relies upon) is not fortunate, but causal to the logical and linguistic doctrines of the *Tractatus*, as clearly and rigorously envisaged by Wittgenstein. It is central in its contribution to firstly, solving the apparent paradox that the *Tractatus* is meaningless and Wittgenstein should have remained silent (its propositions, the propositions of philosophy, falling under the same conditions as those of Value [6.53 and §5]) and, secondly, the problematic of self, which is Wittgenstein's and Sartre's main (early) concern.

§2.3 SARTRE: LANGUAGE: PROBLEM AND POTENTIAL

The main aim here will be to delineate in Sartre's writings a commitment to the linguistically ineffable and the saying—showing doctrine. Such a commitment naturally aligns Sartre with Wittgenstein's position (accepting some differences) in the *Tractatus*. The method is to pursue the line of inquiry through certain key works - *aside from which*, the clearest or most detailed account that Sartre gives of his views on language is to be found in four notable short pieces, 'Aminadab' or *The Fantastic Considered as Language*, *Black Orpheus*, *A plea for Intellectuals* and the extended essay on 'Mallarmé'⁴. Nothing in any of these works contradicts what is being claimed here - on the contrary, the choice has been limited (to other key works) for the sake of brevity. Thus, for the initial formulation of the ineffable and showing (and for future long-term reasons) *Nausea* (1938) (and briefly *The Psychology of Imagination* {1940}). For detail and development towards the self *What is Literature?* (1947) and, then, this work again in the context of a critical assessment of my interpretation. Then, for clarification and development in key areas, brief consideration of two short works, the interview given in 1965 and published as *The Writer and his Language*, and the essay *Departure and Return* (1946). Finally, *Being and Nothingness* (1943). The same notion of the ineffable and saying—showing distinction is to be found in all these works, and with only slight differences in formulation. The 1965 interview is included partly in order to support an additional claim of continuity, that Sartre's early philosophical position concerning the (lingua-aesthetic) self *is* one that is upheld in the later writings, although in those works it is subsumed under his social and political agenda.⁵

⁴ It is of more than a passing interest that Sartre devoted so much of his time to the study of poets - such as Genet, Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Flaubert. We can date his work on Mallarmé to 1952. The one hundred or so pages which we have is all that seems to be left after hundreds of pages were lost in a fire in Sartre's Paris apartment. It appears that Sartre's ambition was to accommodate what he saw as Mallarmé's importance with his complexity, in a massive Flaubertian like biography. (Cf. introduction to *Mallarmé*, 1986). This is another example of Sartre's acute intellectual awareness - of Mallarmé's' poems, besides the example of Paul Ricoeur, a critic of no less credibility and stature than G. Steiner has said: 'With them [Mallarmé's poems] Western literature and speech consciousness enter a new phase ... after Mallarmé ... the change is immense and we are only now beginning to grasp it' (Steiner, 1975, pp186f).

⁵ A thorough defence of Sartre's continuity on these points could be obtained via a study of these early works in conjunction with *Flaubert* (1970). For secondary evidence, see also Howells (1979) and Goldthorpe (1984).

Socio-political agenda or not, it may well be thought that Sartre had nothing (of interest?) to say on the subject of language. That in fact, there was not even a foundation out of which a particular thesis could emerge. There is in Sartre's works a philosophy of language, and some comments on the place of language in his philosophy, besides their intrinsic interest, are in order before extricating any specific thesis.

(i) A matter of method

G. Have you ever thought of doing a philosophy of language?

Sartre. No. Language must be studied within a philosophy, but it cannot be the basis for a philosophy. I think that a philosophy of language could be drawn out of my philosophy, but there is no philosophy of language that could be imposed upon it.⁶

Wittgensteinian's and others may feel inclined to doubt whether Sartre had much if anything to say on the subject of language (of significance?). Certainly, studies on Sartre rarely discuss in much detail whatever views on language he may have held⁷. Sartre's views on literature have fared better. This is not surprising, for Sartre has consistently and explicitly contributed to Literature, for example, as both critic/philosopher in *What Is Literature?* and as man of literature in his plays, short stories and novels. Sartre has not, it may seem, consistently and (very often) explicitly contributed to 'a philosophy of language [which would have to be] drawn out of my philosophy' (ibid.). Is this a lack of concern for language - or could it be non-reductively a matter of method or temperament and attitude? For certain, his views on language are dispersed throughout his vast *oeuvre* of philosophical, literary, and other writings, rendering

⁶ Interview in 1975, in Schilpp (1981) *The Philosophy of J-P Sartre*, pp17.

⁷ Admittedly, Caws, Manser, and Danto have chapters on language. But what of Barnes, Aronson, Grene, Warnock, Thody and McCulloch? It is a pity, for in the brief treatments of Caws, Danto and Manser there are hints at the rich potential which a fuller study would offer. Manser, for example, does discuss Sartre's account of language as technique (as presented in a short section of *Being and Nothingness*), and does so in relation to linguistic philosophy. However, the three studies which I shall draw on are notably more detailed and expansive accounts, Howells (1979) and Goldthorpe (1984 & 1991) - whose study of *Nausea* (1991) - and language - is more insightful than most other works. The truth is, where Sartre and language (not literature) is concerned, even the studies of Howells and Goldthorpe have done no more than map some of the contours of a large and otherwise undisturbed continent.

uneasy any task of formulation.

There is no doubt that Sartre has a different attitude to language than that of his contemporary analytic philosophers, and to Wittgenstein: this much is certain.⁸ The essence of this difference will be found in the fact that Sartre does not attempt to consider in isolation the structure of language or the way it expresses meaning: except that is, where language poses a particular difficulty as he works through his ontological, ethical, and - later - political problems. (Of course, the opposite is true of Wittgenstein, he only considers ethics and ontology in isolation when they pose particular difficulties as he works through his linguistic problems). Thus Sartre:

While psychological and historical problems exist with regard to the existence, the learning and the use of a *particular* language, there is no special problem concerning what is called the discovery or invention of language. Language is not a phenomenon added on to being-for-others. It *is* originally being-for-others. (BN 372).

Sartre sees language as a form of life - to borrow an appropriate term. Language as a scientific project, such as linguistics, or the study of language as the basis for philosophical method, would not at all suit Sartre:

Linguistic research can be mistaken here ... Social facts such as invasions, great thoroughfares, commercial relations seem to be the essential causes of linguistic changes. But this is because the question is not placed on the true level of the concrete. Also, we find only what we are looking for. (BN 514).

Or again, in a criticism of Brice Parain that could for sound philosophical reasons be directed toward the early Wittgenstein and his approach (see below, section on 'Departure and Return'):

The linguist usually acts like a man sure of his ideas and concerned only with knowing whether the old and traditional institution of language renders them accurately. Thus, he may study the parallelism of the logical and the grammatical, as if, on the one hand, logic were given in the heaven of ideas and, on the other, grammar were given on earth. Thus one looks about for a French equivalent for the German word 'stimmung' ... and that the only question that arises is that of its expression. But language thus considered is anonymous. Words are tossed on the table, killed and cooked, like dead fish. In short, the linguist does not study the language as it is spoken ... (LPE: DR 127f)

Sartre's contextual approach to language introduces a second contributing factor in the obscuring of his real concern with language: as a form of life and activity, language cannot be discussed, he believes, in isolation from the human body. It is the case that when Sartre is

⁸ Manser (1966) and Danto (1975) have the merit of noting that Sartre's views on language are similar to those found in the anglo-tradition, and that the apparent and real differences are due to a difference of attitude, and hence method.

discussing the human body, especially in *Being and Nothingness*, in its modes of existence and its situations in the world. he is not, if he is taken at his word, discussing the body in isolation from language. On the contrary, as he says at one point in *Being and Nothingness*:

The problem of language is exactly parallel to the problem of the body and the descriptions which apply in the one case also apply in the other. ... I *am* language. ... I *am* what I say. Language is not an instinct of the constituted human creature, nor is it an invention of our subjectivity. It forms part of the *human condition* (BN 372 & 373).

Or again, as he says in the later work, *What is Literature?*:

We are within language as within our body. We *feel* it spontaneously while going beyond it towards other ends ... we perceive it when it is someone else who is using it ... The word is a certain particular moment of action and has no meaning outside it. In certain cases of aphasia the possibilities of acting, of understanding situations, and of having normal relations with the other sex, are lost. (WL 11).

For Sartre the problem of language comes into being only in the situated *use* of language.

The use theory of meaning in Wittgenstein's later work is familiar: '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 hearer' (PI 43). Moreover, there is strong textual evidence to support the claim that this theory was present *and active* (as part of the structure of intentionality) in the *Tractatus* 'The way language signifies is mirrored in its use' (NB 11.9.16). And, one of three direct references to the possibility, 'In order to recognise a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense' (3.326).

For Sartre also, meaning and understanding are dependent upon *use*. Thus, 'Belonging to the human race is defined by the use of very elementary and very general techniques; ... [such as] to know how to speak.' (BN 512). And Wittgenstein: 'To understand a language means to be master of a technique.' (PI 199). For both philosophers, technique is not learned by studying the structure of language, rather, again, the emphasis is on intersubjective - public - use or activity: 'It is the blow of the axe which reveals the axe' (BN 519). 'The very fact of the Other's existence results in the fact of the collective ownership of techniques' (BN 512). And Wittgenstein: 'What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the wind and the application still be different. Has it the same meaning both times? I think we shall say not'

(PI 198).

In fact, the idea that meaning is revealed through the application of a sentence is just as dominant in Sartre's semantics as it is Wittgenstein's. 'The word therefore has only a purely *virtual* existence outside of complex and active organisations which integrate it. It cannot exist "in" a consciousness or unconscious *before* the use which is made of it: the sentence is not *made out of words*' (LPE 72). Meaning is dependent upon a reciprocal relationship. Sentences, the units of meaning, can only be understood in their full context, otherwise meanings 'Will lose their colour and their life once they are out of the water' (LPE 73). Here Sartre has expressed in his own characteristic way the Fregean⁹ thought which underlies much philosophy this century, including his own and Wittgenstein's from the *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations*, namely, that a something, word, object, sentence, only has meaning when it is considered in its context and in relation to its (functional) whole. The point here, and it links this Sartrian methodology to future concerns, is to emphasise Man's finite freedom. Words alone can be seen as having objective - or at least 'given' meanings. For example 'chestnut tree' carries with it self an inherited and somewhat fixed body of meanings. The speaker would seem to be bound to this 'given'. On the other hand, claims Sartre, if the sentence 'pre-exists the word' as the unit of meaning, 'We are referred to the *speaker* as the concrete foundation of his speech', for the sentence can only be interpreted in terms of a given 'which one wishes to designate while its designation 'itself supposes other ends in relation to which it is only a means'. (BN 515f). More and more it will be seen that 'The created sentence *stands for* the created being' (NE 159). The context of language, or a sentence, is its use, and in this sense language is seen as a tool. 'With respect to words [they] are tools' (SG 303). Words, at least for the writer of prose, 'Are useful conventions, tools which gradually wear out and which one thrown away when they are no longer servicable' (WL 5). And Wittgenstein: 'It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools of language, and of the ways they are used' (PI 23). It is as tools to be used in various human

⁹ *If* this entails the question: 'Did Sartre read Frege?' The answer is unknown. But it is known that he was well acquainted with the works of Russell.

activities and situations that the notions of 'language game' and 'form of life' re-enters into the discussion. 'Words, for example: I wanted my own words. But the ones I use have been dragged through I don't know how many consciences: they arrange themselves in my head by virtue of the habits I have picked up from the others'. And so language itself 'is a characteristic part of a large group of activities - talking, writing, travelling on a bus, meeting a man etc.' (Sartre, IN, 'Erostratus', pp125 and Wittgenstein LA 2). Human reality is inside language, the 'first moment' of language is one of exteriority:

I regard language as something we are inside. Language is a kind of vast reality, what I would call a practico-inert entity, and I am in constant touch with it - not in so far as I utter speech but precisely in so far as it is primarily, for me, something which encompasses me and from which I am able to take things. It is only subsequently that I discover its function, as communication. ... I do not see language as being something which is inside me. ... I possess it, I own it, as something external to myself. (PL:WL 77/8).

Language is one part of human activity: it is not an inner, private, activity, and it cannot be understood in isolation from the body: language must be understood *within* a concrete contextualized framework.

It is the differences in *method* that help to obscure the fact that Sartre regarded language as important, and that there is to be found throughout his writings a perennial interest with language, though it is often an implicit concern - here Manser's point could be invoked, that language is in fact of the first importance to Sartre, that his acute awareness of its role and potential lead him to *use* it in a way which will *disclose* to his readers its importance; it is through the use of language, through the reciprocity of text and reader that an insight into the various fundamental attitudes involved is achieved. Thus,

It might be claimed that he is less interested in purely philosophical issues that arise in its [language's] boundaries because he regards it as more important as a human activity than do so many who talk about "linguistic philosophy". He finds less need to discuss it in isolation because he sets language in relation to the rest of human activities, even makes it more central. (Manser, 1966, pp105).

With language, the *pour soi's* relation to the world is complete in the sense that it is given a language and that therefore there are no gaps in its linguistic awareness of the world ('except in the trivial sense of not knowing the name for a particular object'). It is for this reason that Sartre speaks of language as a "world". Nothing then, can be said about language as a whole, for any

particular utterance (proposition) presupposes the whole. As Wittgenstein has it in the *Notebooks*: 'What can be said can only be said by means of a proposition, and so nothing that is necessary for the understanding of *all* propositions can be said' (NB 25). This correct way of seeing Sartre's relation to language will help us understand some developments found in the chapters on self and aesthetics, for an important Sartrean (and Wittgensteinian) concept is that of the world as a totality or whole.

It is interesting to conclude these remarks on Sartre's philosophical approach to language with some comments on a similarity of attitude to traditional philosophy that ultimately depends on the above views. There is in the writings of both Sartre and Wittgenstein (especially in the late works) an ambivalent and uneasy relationship to traditional philosophy - and at times reflection in general. Sartre's clearest expression of this distrust is found in *Nausea*: 'Thoughts are the dullest things on earth. ... I exist. I think I exist. If only I could prevent myself from thinking!' (NI44/5). In the novel the main protagonist gives up his intellectual - reflective - occupation: the historical study on Rollebon, which he had used to 'justify existence'. This reflective *raison de etre* is gradually replaced by a move toward creative, imaginative endeavour. In *Being and Nothingness* there is the uneasy idea, burdensome in *The Age of Reason*, that philosophic reflection can cause the anxiety and nausea it is in fact attempting to cure. Philosophical problems, and in *Nausea* words themselves, are seen as a kind of disease to be cured - with philosophy as 'An effective weapon'¹⁰. If language is inadequate when confronted with (a contingent) reality, it is up to philosophers and ordinary users to revive and cure it. Recall Wittgenstein's remark: 'The philosophic treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness' (PI 255). The solution to the 'illness' is found for Sartre in human activity: language is a form of life. Wittgenstein's later solution is also to be found in forms of life and language games, though his treatment is the analysis of language itself. But we must beware, Wittgenstein tells us, of 'The dogmatism into which we fall so easily in doing philosophy' (PI 131). Both

¹⁰ As noted by Caws (1979) from which, on pp17, I take the quote of Sartre's from his *Search for Method* (1963), pp6.

philosophers. ambivalent in their subject. see the struggle with language as central to their approach. Sartre echoes his own view when he comments on the writer Parain that 'He is word-sick and wants to be cured. He suffers at feeling out of gear with language' (LPE DR 127). Wittgenstein: 'Philosophy is a battleground against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (PI 109). Philosophical problems arise when 'Language goes on holiday' (PI 38). For Sartre, as Roquentin, language is continually slipping off 'on holiday': 'Absurdity: another word; I am struggling against words; over there I touched the thing. ... That root there was nothing in relation to which it was not absurd. Oh, how can I put that into words?' (N 185). Unlike Wittgenstein, Roquentin's (metaphysical) illness has so undermined his search for meaning in existence that he lapses into metaphysical (and occasionally - i.e. blank diary 'entries') linguistic despair: 'I don't even bother to look for words ... and I don't fix anything' (N 17).

The only way to fix the illness as either philosopher or writer is through language, an attempt to bestow meaning and understanding on an indifferent world *through* language: an attempt which, for Roquentin, fails if pursued in reflection and criticism (historical study). It is this failure which persuades Roquentin to turn to art, and write a novel. Similarly, as will be seen, Wittgenstein's early Tractarian ambivalence to traditional philosophy and reflection is manifest in his Romantic appropriation of the unsayable, of how little traditional philosophy achieves when it solves all the problems set before it, and in the affirmation of art through his aesthetics in the *Tractatus*.

(ii) The ineffable and the possibility of showing: *La Nausée*

Silence is a hole in the Being of Sartre's writings; particularly *Nausea*, *What is Literature?*,

Being and Nothingness.¹¹ Silence: actual, potential, imaginary; social, philosophical, metaphysical, aesthetic. What is silent, or what we are silent about, obviously is not necessarily that which, it is sometimes claimed, can not be spoken of, but which can only be indicated or 'shown'; nor less is it that which is sometimes claimed to be incommunicable (cf. §1). Although in the *Tractatus* and in parts of Sartre's writings, the silent is in fact equated with the ineffable, it is not always so, neither is it consistently identified with the incommunicable. Iris Murdoch is typically perceptive on this: 'It is only Sartre's practical interests that put him in need of speech; his ideal is not the actual silence of Rimbaud but the intellectual silence of Mallarmé' (Murdoch, 1953, pp146).

Of course, at a social or psychological level to remain silent over something is revelatory, at the very least it shows us something of the person involved: 'Silence itself is defined in relationship to words, as the pause in music receives its meaning from the group of notes around it. This silence is a moment of language; being silent is not being dumb; it is to refuse to speak, and therefore to keep on speaking' (WL 14). This, a commonplace, is also common to Sartre. But it should not be confused with that other silence of Sartre's (and Wittgenstein's) that is sometimes constitutive of the ineffable, but never necessarily the unknowable: from the outset we should be wary of equating the silent with the ineffable, and the ineffable with the unknowable. If and when there is an identity of sorts between these concepts, then it shall be stated.

◆The ineffable

We should not lay claim to an objective text, to a singular correct reading of *Nausea*. The many lines of thought found in *Nausea* are not to be denied. The very openness of a text that depends upon symbols and not signs is being affirmed in the following reading. *Nausea* is a remarkable work of fiction: it deals with political (class) issues, the relation of art and society,

¹¹ Sartre's many comments on silence seem often to recall Heidegger - but are in any case worthy of study. However, research itself remains silent to this phenomenon. Bindeman's *The Poetics of Silence* (1981) manages to discuss the comparative views of Wittgenstein and Heidegger on silence without a single mention of Sartre. That could have been an achievement, were it not in the context of a PhD.

and with other philosophical themes such as contingency, induction, perception, mind/body, the nature of time and authenticity. It also commits itself to the topic of this thesis: the problematic of self, the relation between (linguistic) art and the situated self. Indeed, a point to be acknowledged from the outset, one in line with received opinion¹², is that *Nausea* is, at one level, a sustained engagement with the philosophical problem of language, not merely language in terms of communication but, primarily, with language-and-Being.

Nausea makes persistent reference to an inadequacy of language: acknowledging that a level of grasping the world is beyond ordinary discourse. There is constant and clear recognition that some thing, or things, are in a sense beyond language, or rather, beyond a certain kind of language, what may be termed propositional¹³, but that, nonetheless, such ineffable matters can somehow be expressed. In fact, various narrative techniques are used in *Nausea* to denote the inadequacy of language, including most obviously the continued use of blank and minimalist diary entries. It is fair to say, of course, that many such techniques are equally intended by Sartre to show, besides the ineffable nature of certain of Roquentin's experiences, the distorting influence of language if and when it is used descriptively: by not writing Roquentin is avoiding at least one mode of bad faith (i.e. a false ordering of experience). But perhaps more perspicuous, at least in an inquiry such as ours, is what the novel/journal 'says'.

On the very opening page of the novel the narrator attempts but fails to offer an adequate description of such a banal unity of objects as a box containing ink and pen (N 9). If this is due to a 'mere' neurosis, it soon becomes clear that such an 'affliction' is, as with Wittgenstein, metaphysical and not psychological. In fact, the novel/journal relays a constant struggle between both language - contingent world (*en soi*), and language - value¹⁴ (*pour soi*): language struggling

¹² For example, see Goldthorpe (1991), Howells (1979), and Danto (1975).

¹³ To avoid clumsy expressions I shall henceforth have recourse to use the term 'propositional' to refer to what I have identified as the ordinary, significative pole of language or a sentence (as sign) as opposed to the poetic, reflexive pole (as symbol) which, it is claimed, shows what the former cannot say. Similarly, I will refer to the latter as 'non-propositional' language.

¹⁴ In what follows there will be many an occasion to speak of 'value' and a 'fact—value distinction' (as we did in §1 and again with Wittgenstein earlier); with Sartre this will be a developing notion, a fuller treatment is best suited to the opening of §4.

between object and subject. Roquentin, the narrator, is for all complete purposes Sartre himself: 'For all intensive reasons. I was Roquentin' (W 171) Roquentin, as would be expected, 'want[s] no secrets, no spiritual condition, nothing ineffable' (N 21). Nevertheless, as the novel progresses the reader is shown that Roquentin will at the very least have to relent to, if not embrace, the idea of the ineffable.

Roquentin is trying to complete his research into the historical figure Rollebon. As readers we witness an increase in Roquentin's awareness of his situation paralleled only by the decrease of his faith in language. An attempt to reconstruct the truth or meaning of a person's life through the language of an historical study becomes to be seen as futile. Rollebon's ideas have become unnameable: 'The idea is still there, the unnameable idea' (N 60). Moreover, within Roquentin's own life, interpersonal linguistic exchange also becomes to be seen as futile: 'We barely exchange a few words. What would be the use?' Roquentin doesn't 'even bother to look for words' because 'they don't fix anything' (N 17). Words remain only on his lips, refusing to 'settle on the thing', for things, objects, 'have broken free from their names' (N 180). 'Words had disappeared and with them the meaning of things' (N 182). In short, in *Nausea* any hope of language, and hence thought, ordering the world is abandoned. This, as has been noted by others (such as Danto), is interesting in itself, for what must have been abandoned is a prior view: that there is a common relation, a structure, between language and reality which ensures that language is governed by certain laws that ensure our experiences of reality are ordered and represented by our language - hardly an uncommon view. Once Roquentin rejects this co-structure, as bad faith, a false ordering of the world, and once he then takes the further step of not seeking any other conceptual connection between language and reality, then his attempts at ordering his experiences of the world will have to come, so the novel makes us believe, in a revelation, in what others might term a mystical experience. That this is what happens is clear from reading the whole novel: it is also made clear in the (now famous) metaphysical and narrative culmination of the novel (to be discussed below), where Roquentin finds the 'key to existence' in his confrontation with the roots of an old chestnut tree.

I am struggling against words ... That root - there was nothing in relation to which it was

not absurd. How can I put that into words? I saw that the bark was still black. Black? I felt the word subside, empty itself of its meaning ... black like the circle did not exist. ... I was on familiar ground, I had already scrutinised, with the same anxiety, unnameable objects, I had already tried - in vain - to think something *about them*. (N 185f)

There are passages too numerous to mention, though perhaps not quite as effective, where Roquentin undergoes the same experience: i.e. a revelation, one that causes the experience of nausea. Where signification should hold office, the brute contingent existence of things runs amok. It is the failure of language to impose meaning on an apparently alien reality.

For Sartre the world would be realist, a material external world of objects exists, indubitably, though it is alien and contingent. But external reality does not exist *as the world*, as a scheme of relations - except as constituted by the *pour soi*. The relation that is experienced as holding between objects, we might want to call it a law of nature, can be seen to be inexpressible because the relation is prior to 'my world'. Description of such a world is therefore inadequate¹⁵ because there is no commitment to the belief in a necessary relation between language, objects, and the experience of objects. Subjectivity intrudes between the experience and the description of objects: this relation is, it will be seen, *a priori*, and remains prior to, and the pre-condition of, the ordinary significative structure of a proposition.

All objects, Being, a set of relations, the world as we experience it, drawing as it does on history (of language as much as anything) and subjectivity: a background, Being itself is, given a dominant theory of nominal and real definition, ineffable. Given this same theory of definition, only Being in its particularity, particular objects, can be defined and described. It is just such a theory of definition that Sartre subscribes to and that helps us to see (below) the reasons for Sartre's surprisingly large commitment to the ineffable.

◆ Showing

Unlike Wittgenstein, Sartre does not systematically use a precise term equivalent to what in

¹⁵ The insights found in J. L. Austin's discussion of language as descriptive and performative may if pursued be of some value here. I.e., since to speak is to act, then instrumental language is, necessarily, engaged; description does not contrast with linguistic performance.

English is rendered as 'showing', though the list of translated synonyms for the concept that *is* deployed is significant. most importantly, given their context, we have 'revealing', 'presenting', and of course 'showing' itself.

Sartre's commitment to showing, as with the ineffable, draws on many strands of his thought. This makes Sartre's position more difficult to state than Wittgenstein's, and much spade work is needed before his position can be stated with some authority (in our concluding sections on *Being and Nothingness* and *Convergence*). What then, is entailed by this concept of 'showing'? Clearly, it is important to the convergent aspect of the thesis that the comparison with Wittgenstein reveals a position that is at least *similar*. But the thesis shall go further, and claim that Sartre's doctrine is *identifiable* with Wittgenstein's (accepting one or two differences of detail).

The concept of showing in Sartre will be, as in Wittgenstein, the semantic counterpart to saying. That is, with regard to the basic principle, to the aforementioned bi-polarity of language, the ordinary and poetic poles, it is the latter that manages to disclose what the former inherently constitutes as the ineffable: matters of value. The cardinal point here, to re-state it, is that showing is, for both philosophers, a matter of communication *and* Being, it is to be understood semantically *and in* a dialectical relationship. That is, showing both reveals (displays) some new meaning to the subject, and this meaning, as insight, can itself only be shown¹⁶. The nature or structure of this new meaning is ethico—aesthetic (§5.2).

There is then, in *Nausea*, a twist; a twist I say from the impossibility of saying to the actuality of showing. Nameless disorientation discloses a new orientation, an insight. Roquentin: 'And suddenly, all at once, the veil is torn away, I have understood, I have *seen*' (N 181). Such insight or understanding is of a different character than the failed propositional 'naming' attempt

¹⁶ The above considerations should not be allowed to deny or overlook an important factor: in *Nausea* it is the *viscosity* of Being (in-itself) that acts as mediator to the self, and does so in terms of a feeling - nausea. Nausea is the feeling which accompanies the revelation of Being: it is thus part, a physiological part, of the structure of showing. Clearly then, *Nausea* introduces another kind of showing: nausea and anxiety are a showing, a revelation to the self, in introspection, of the self as a freedom. However, this strikes me as *not* having an aesthetic content, and is therefore of no further interest to the present inquiry.

to grasp the meaning of objects and the world as constituted by them. In this revelation, the meaning of the object, qua phenomenon, and as part of that which constitutes the world, my world, is revealed to me the *pour soi*. The novel makes clear that it is through such revelations (the 'pebble' and tree episodes are representative) that the meaning of Roquentin's life is grasped. Moreover, because of the nature of this experience the insight itself can only be expressed in a non-propositional, presentational manner (i.e. within a novel such as *Nausea* - cf. §5.3). It is not a matter of language losing or having no meaning. Rather, it is a matter of a particular identity between language and the thinking subject, a symbolic, non-significatory relation, that results in both a limitation *and* its possible transcendence.

The Psychology of Imagination. Elucidation at this early stage is best achieved by brief consideration of the philosophical origin of the points just noted, points that will become cardinal in the following chapters. Also, the following discussion of image (and imaging) will be drawn on in the final chapter when we discuss aesthetic attitude.

In *The Psychology of Imagination* Sartre states that there are 'two main irreducible attitudes of consciousness', perception and imagination ('attitudes' is emphasised for important reasons that will become apparent in the remainder of the dissertation). He then says that there are two main differences between imagination and perception. These are, one (1): imagination posits the imagined object "as a nothingness", as absent, existing elsewhere, or "in some neutral mode that prescind from existence entirely." (Flynn 1975, pp432). Two (2): Sartre states that the image suffers from an "essential poverty". By this he intends that images are 'given as a whole'. They are characterised by an essential poverty in that (a), as the observer makes them up (s)he cannot be surprised by them, and (b), given as a whole they are exhausted on appearance. That is, vague as they often are, it is impossible in any case to go on extracting information from an image: all that it contains is given at once. An example will illustrate and support this point.

If I were to imagine, say, the facade of the British Museum, it may seem that I have a perfect image of it. However, unless I already know for example the number of columns around

the door, then the definite number of columns cannot be extracted from the image (I could produce successive images, all with differing numbers of columns). But the essential point is that no further information can be extracted from the given *en singular* image except what is already, on its appearance, given. Now, on the other hand, as far as perception is concerned, it is characterised by the fact that it is inexhaustible, that it can always disclose to us something further. To perceive the British Museum facade is to be capable of extracting further details, we can move around it, counting more columns as we do so, and acquiring ever increasing amounts of detail. Perceptual experience is not *en singular*; it is a living and real relation between self and world: ever more information is extractable from the stream of perception.

It should be noted that although the material for images is provided by perception, images themselves "... can arise only at the cost of perceptual consciousness" (TPI 61). Nevertheless, images are of a fundamentally different order when compared to perceptions. They are neither copies nor reproductions of what is perceived (Hume). Nor are images 'perfectly definite' (Berkeley). Images are frequently vague and perfectly indefinite, in the sense that on inspection they yield no further information. The image offers all the information it contains on its initial *en singular* appearance; while a real object of perception is potentially inexhaustible. Sartre's distinction will appear too clear cut for many. However, it's significance (if not its general truth) could be established from two of Sartre's premises - premises that resound with insight. (1), his illustration and discussion of the image as 'essential poverty', and (2), his observation that the image is always present-absent

If I now form an image of Peter, my imaginative consciousness includes a certain positing of the existence of Peter, in so far as he is at this very moment in Berlin or London. But while he appears to me as an image, this Peter who is in London, appears to me absent. This absence is actually, the essential nothingness of the imagined object, and is enough to distinguish it from perception (TPI 209).

With perception conceived of in terms of 'pure thought', reflection, and open to potentially inexhaustible information, it is, at least in Sartre's early philosophy, identifiable with propositional language and conceptual knowledge and signification. The image, by contrast 'impure', unreflective, non-significative, given as a world-as-a-whole, and exhausted on

appearance, is not identifiable with nor suited to propositional knowledge. Imagination itself is identified with 'impure' or incomplete unreflective consciousness - and is in any case always a part of apprehension. Yet, when an object is apprehended imaginatively its presence is transcended by a 'de-realised object' which, though present to an unreflective consciousness, as *sens*, is actually absent: its presence is 'magical'. Thus, although Sartre sees mental images, like thoughts, as being ultimately dependent upon perception, elements of mental images remain, necessarily, beyond reflection - and thus beyond ordinary - propositional - linguistic formulation.

Moreover, in perception, our understanding of the qualities and relations of objects involves modes of apprehension which are not explicitly conscious, which are unreflective, (which involve what becomes in *Being and Nothingness* the pre-reflective cogito), and which fail to grasp *le sens*. This is very important to what follows, in *The Psychology of Imagination* it is what Sartre calls the *sens* of an object that escapes the perceptual mode of consciousness. We never have complete apprehension - and nor therefore effability.

Return to *Nausea*. The enigmatic *sens* does require the more concrete embodiment of propositional language, what Sartre will later call 'instrumental' language, being defined as signifiatory. The escaping *sens* of the empirical world, of for example the roots of the chestnut tree in *Nausea*, is not apprehended through reflective and conceptualised thought, and therefore poetic or non-significative language; rather, it is revealed, presented, *shown*, through its unreflective haunting absence. For Sartre the reality of the factual, contingent world, is something that can only be grasped by a self that apprehends the world in a non-propositional manner. Therefore, drawing no doubt on the principle of identity, this reality can only be expressed as what Sartre would call an un-reality; it cannot be represented in the sign/signified structure.

In *Nausea* there is the attempt to establish the extent to which language may be possessed by the 'impure' pre-reflective, intuitive and imaginative, and therefore be dependent upon an indirect mode of communication, that of *sens*, and this so whether it is dealing with the reality of

the factual empirical world or, for that matter, with the self's apprehension of this world. This leads Sartre to a point on which he has naturally been criticised - that of having what has been called a 'curious theory of the incommensurability of language and reality'. Here it will be worth the effort to quote extensively (in three parts) from an informative and encapsulating footnote taken from Goldthorpe's study (a footnote with further relevance to a central criticism of the *Tractatus* and the status of its propositions). Goldthorpe states that

A. D. Nuttall makes no distinction between Sartre and Roquentin, [and] takes Sartre to task for his 'curious theory of incommensurability', for indulging in superfluous metaphor when the ostensive pronoun *that* should suffice, and for using ordinary language ('root', 'black') while profoundly and misguidedly mistrusting it. This leaves Sartre in 'what is, logically, a pretty bad spot ... If Sartre has really shown us in this piece of writing that the tree-root is beyond language ... then he has pragmatically, refuted himself, since the thesis directly implies that language can do no such thing. If on the other hand ... Sartre has entirely failed to express the mystery of the tree-root, then his thesis is safe, though presumably it remains uncommunicated'. [See *A Common Sky: Philosophy and the Literary Imagination* (London: Chatto & Windus, '74), pp191-3].

Nuttall's empathic reading of the problem of language and communication in *Nausea* is rare and welcome. The limit and transcendence of language is, as stated above, a key theme of the work - a point too often overlooked. But Goldthorpe is equally perceptive in her criticism of Nuttall's unfortunately misguided conclusion. Goldthorpe continues.

Sartre's distinction between 'signification' and the twofold implication of '*sens*' goes some way to meeting this objection. Roquentin experiences a failure of the 'signifying' function of language (by which Sartre elsewhere [i.e. *What is Literature?*] sets much store); Sartre compensates for this by attributing to him a language which may create a '*sens*' for the reader, if not for Roquentin.

For Sartre it is the symbolic pole of language that succeeds through its existence as *sens*. The use of this in place of language as a signifying function is exemplified, as will be seen, with language as art, that which will, in Sartre, apprehend the world as an un-reality, creating a *sens* for the reader: what cannot be signified is what cannot be said, but it is this that can be communicated - shown - by *la sens*. This raises many questions regarding Sartre's writings themselves, including *Nausea* and *Being and Nothingness*, questions which will be shortly addressed, similarly, it raises a question regarding the specific passage in question, the description of the chestnut tree root. On this, the final instalment from Goldthorpe's footnote.

Interestingly, Nuttall's formulation of Sartre's difficulty echoes one of Sartre's favourite aphorisms: 'If the writing in the chestnut-tree passage succeeds, it fails, and, if it fails, it succeeds (*Common Sky*, p192). Or, as Sartre often puts it, 'loser wins'. (Goldthorpe 1991,

pp217f)

This early formulation of the limits of saying and the possibility of showing - in *Nausea* and *The Psychology of Imagination* - suggests that the ineffable, as the real object (quo phenomenon - 'root', 'black') is caused by a failure in significative language (saying) that is overcome by a second sense, *la sens*, which shows what cannot be said. As with the *Tractatus*, the possibility of showing, of regaining what language has lost in ordinary usage, this possibility is inherent in language itself.

With this, *Nausea* (and *The Psychology of Imagination*) can be left for the present, and attention turned to *What is Literature?* For it is in this work that Sartre gives most weight, through considered discussion, to the idea of *la sens* as the semantic consolation in the ineffable and, in so doing, consolidates his saying—showing distinction.

(III) Saying and showing: toward the subject

♦ *What is Literature? I: Signification—Le sens, Prose and Poetry*

From the outset we must be aware that Sartre's proneness to rushing ahead without rigorous editorial control is especially apparent in *What is Literature?* His terminology is often untidy, his distinctions understated, his syntax condemned to be free and roam: clear readings and conclusions are not easy to come by. Some may well see these characteristics as indistinguishable from the very best of Continental Philosophy. Whatever, the present discussion of *What is Literature?* will sustain the weight of the comparison to Wittgenstein because (a) it is a correct - careful and objective - interpretation of that one aspect of *What is Literature?* that concerns the present thesis: the *sens*--signification distinction. (b) Secondly, the said interpretation is hermeneutically situated within, and is in accord with, the other early texts that are under discussion. In short, although *What is Literature?* is an untidy and sometimes ambiguous work, the line of thought which is pursued here is defended as being a correct reading of one, crucial and central aspect of the text. This withstanding, and due to the wider and the fundamental

importance of the prose/poetry distinction, the question of our interpretation, taken at the core issue, is itself commented upon in the very next section.

The main aim of this section then, will be to give an account of the *sens*—signification distinction as presented in *What is Literature?*: this technical distinction underpins a generic concept of language along Tractarian lines, identified by Sartre in terms of language as scientific/fact based: prose, and, secondly, as language as literary/Value based: poetic. It is this, Sartre's *sens*—signification distinction, most fully articulated in *What is Literature?*, and its structural relation to self and aesthetics that is central to the limits and transcendence of language as generated in the problematic of self.

It is clear from a now famous footnote that Sartre in *What is Literature?* conceives of a part of the 'psychic life' of experience as the 'living movement' or the immediate experience of 'the thing itself - the tree the ashtray', which 'escape[s]' the 'subjective representation' of language. Such that, if this 'reality which one wants to signify is *one word*, it must be given to the reader by other words'. If an author claims to give us a sign, continues Sartre, that is both the 'objective essence' and the 'immediate psychic datum', then the author has disregarded 'the rhetorical law' and 'Can be charged, besides, with having forgotten that the greatest riches of the psychic life are *silent*' (WL 121f. n11). The reality, or 'essence' of something, is to be understood as that which is distinct from its accidental traits - i.e. *the formal relation* between them. As Sartre sees thought and language as interdependent, this idea can be seen as an elaboration of the view first found in *Nausea*: that a realm of psychic activity is not directly answerable to conceptual thinking and, hence, is beyond ordinary propositional expression. The idea is, I think, that language can disclose an actual reality or essence, the relation between objects, to an individual consciousness, but that this, quo-incommunicable, must be conveyed through what Howell's terms 'the suggestive powers of language' (¹⁷Howells, 1979 pp188). The reality of certain psychic

¹⁷ On the same page Howells notes that Sartre's problem and proposed solution, that of expressing reality, was similarly addressed by Bergson, where, in Fiser's words, 'the poet can use the word or 'symbol' to convey indirectly states of mind or soul'. We may also note that the essence of such a proposed problem/solution is to be found in numerous philosophies, including Dufrenne's *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*.

experiences requires words other than those that *signify* the experience: signification alone does not suffice.

The *sens*—signification distinction derives, it was seen, from the epistemological distinction first formulated in *The Psychology of Imagination* between sign and image (see last section). In *What is Literature?* Sartre maintains that words (i.e., in what follows, the sentence as unit of meaning), that words in ordinary communication are used as signs. When words are experienced as signs then their meaning will be derived from what they signify. Signs are tools through which we refer to objects in the world, they are, says Sartre, 'transparent'. Meaning is limited to what can be signified, which is, broadly speaking, particular objects or facts. When words - as sentences - are used also as images, they are both sign and image. As an image they are opaque and experienced as an object in their own right. In this, they still signify, but now they have a second sense. That is, words which are experienced as images have signification and *le sens*, giving them a second, non-signifying sense.

In practical and general terms the signification—*sens* distinction of *What is Literature?* takes the form of a distinction between prose and poetry. The former turns out to be characterisable as denotative, discursive, and instrumental. While denoting or referring it implies no further attributes; it is the ideal language of logic and science. Poetic discourse, on the other hand, is typified by metaphor, symbol, and myth, it is characterisable as connotative and non-instrumental. In addition to a primary meaning, denoting or referring, it implies further attributes; it is the ideal language of fiction and story-telling. The language of prose is seen as a transparent means of reference to objects beyond itself, words are as conventional signs; poetic discourse is seen as opaque, as using words as (natural) objects which embody a suggestive meaning - drawing on history as subjectivity.

This is a position which (given more time) I would argue Sartre held to throughout his life¹⁸. Certainly, it is clear enough in the 1965 interview (see below), and for sure it is explicit in

¹⁸ A distinction, it should be noted, for continuity in Sartre's thought is too often doubted, that is finely developed and extensively used in the late and massive study on *Flaubert*.

his inquiries into the poets *Baudelaire* (1947) and *Saint Genet* (1952). thus, for example:

The siglum "XVII" *signifies* a certain century, but in museums that entire period clings like a veil, like a spider's web, to the curls of a wig, escapes in whiffs from a sedan chair. In producing his first poem as an object, Genet transforms the *signification* of the words into a *meaning* [SG 304]).

The defining characteristic of prose is that it is 'used' to communicate meaning; 'Prose is, in essence, utilitarian'. 'I would readily define the prose-writer as a man who *makes use* of words'. The words of prose are 'transparent'. we look at the world through them, they are 'signs', instrumental. in that they refer beyond themselves.

Here is a passage reminiscent of the *Tractatus* (5.01) and its given relation between an elementary proposition (also Sartre's basic unit of meaning) and its truth function (meaning) .

Prose is employed in discourse; its substance is by nature significative; that is, the words are first of all not objects but designations for objects; it is not first of all a matter of knowing whether they please or displease in themselves, but whether they correctly indicate a certain thing or a certain notion. Thus, it often happens that we find ourselves possessing a certain idea that someone has taught us by means of words without being able to recall a single one of the words which have transmitted it to us (WL 11).

The language of prose is conceptual. it is the language of propositional communication: words signify particular objects or ideas.

The poet (like the painter with his colours) will attempt to communicate with material rather than use words conceptually. that is transparently. With poetic writing, what was the translucence of words becomes the opacity of words. In order to elucidate his conception of poetry Sartre uses an analogy to other artistic creation, in particular to painting. On this, he must be allowed to speak for himself.

For the artist, the colour, the bouquet, the tinkling of the spoon on the saucer, are *things* in the highest degree. He stops at the quality of the sound or the form. ... It is this colour object that he is going to transfer to the canvass, and the only modification he will make it undergo is that he will transform it into an *imaginary* object. He is therefore as far as he can be from considering colours and signs as a *language*.

Sartre then offers some examples from which he concludes. And thus.

The greatness and error of Klee lie in his attempt to make a painting both sign and object. ... The painter does not want to draw signs on his canvass he wants to create a thing. And if he puts together red, yellow, and green, there is no reason why this collection of colours should have a definable significance, that is, should refer particularly to another object. ... Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to *signify* anguish or to *provoke* it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time. ... it is an anguish which has become thing ... submerged and impasted by the qualities peculiar to things, by their impermeability, their extension, their externalality, ... That is, it is no longer *readable*. (WL 2f)

In short. 'It is like an immense and vain effort ... to express what their nature keeps them from expressing' (ibid.). Sartre then goes on to give a similar illustration of how it is the same with music. 'The significance of melody - if one can still speak of significance - is nothing outside the melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered in several ways. Call it joyous or sad. It will always be over and above anything you can say about it' (ibid.).

This unsayable aspect of art has little to do with it representing 'passions' (ibid.), i.e. emotions (§1). Furthermore, it does not represent at all: it expresses (and later Sartre will speak of expressing 'sensory meanings ... desires'). Nevertheless, with, for example, Picasso's *Guanaco* 'Something is said that can never quite be heard and that would take an infinity of words to express', while 'Picasso's long harlequins' are 'haunted with inexplicable meaning' (WL 4).

Next, Sartre informs the reader that what is left unsayable in art is to be somehow equated with meaning and, in this sense, poetic writing is to be identified with painting and music:

One does not paint meanings; one does not put them to music. Under these conditions, who would dare require that the painter or musician commit himself? On the other hand, the writer deals with meanings. Still, a distinction must be made. The empire of signs is prose; poetry is on the side of painting, sculpture, and music (WL 4).

He continues, in a *defence* of poetry¹⁹, to define its difference to prose along the lines that it 'serves' words, whereas prose uses, 'utilises' words: 'Poets are men who refuse to *utilise* language' (WL 5). The search for truth, continues Sartre, takes place 'in and by language conceived as a certain kind of instrument'. Truth then, is not the aim of language when such language is conceived as poetry (note here the presupposition: the artists intention). Nor do poets 'dream of *naming* the world ... they name nothing at all'; in fact, poets do not 'speak, neither do they keep silent; it is something different' (ibid.).

Sartre then gives an account of language, as he sees it conceived by the poet, which bears resemblance to Wittgenstein's account of the role of language in showing in the *Tractatus*.

For the poet, language is a structure of the external world. ... Instead of first knowing things by their name, it seems that first he has a silent contact with them. ... He sees in the word

¹⁹ A defence which is interestingly neglected by many commentators (it's easier to be committed to the obvious). In this, as in key fundamentals, and as in much that is very bad, Le Capra and his 'study' of Sartre leads the way.

the image. ... the *verbal image* he chooses for its resemblance to the [object] is not necessarily the word we use to *designate* these objects. ... he considers words as a trap to catch fleeing reality rather than as indicators which throw him out of himself into the midst of things. (WL 6 - my emphasis).

'In short', concludes Sartre, 'all language is for him [the poet] the mirror of the world' (ibid.).

The re-affirmation of image and *le sens* as the means of a 'silent contact' not otherwise possible in the signifying - 'designating' - relation between words and the world, and the claim to their trapping some other 'fleeing reality', positions us perfectly for a concluding summary of these first clear steps, found in *What is Literature?*, toward the subject and aesthetics in Sartre's account of language.

Conclusions. *What is Literature?* introduces us to the view that the meaning conveyed by poetic language and the other pure arts is expressed in the *sensory* qualities of the art object itself (though they are intertwined with expressive qualities which Sartre sees as common to human experience)²⁰. Thus, what is ineffable but potentially showable in *What is Literature?* includes sensory meanings, pertaining to 'desire' and emotion. What is important in this to the present study is not the linking of the ineffable to emotions, but the claim that the art object - poetic language (word as image) - embodies a meaning beyond ordinary propositional language and which can only therefore be shown: this meaning is a value, referring to the world as a whole or totality (§5).

A notion first encountered in *Nausea* is developed in *What is Literature?*: what Sartre terms an 'essence', that is, *the formal relation* between objects, between the given that is experienced as the world, as 'my world' (dependent upon my-self as attitudinal relation to the world - cf. §4.3), this relation is again found to be ineffable. Central to this idea, to *What is Literature?*, and to the present thesis, is the introduction and articulation of the notion of poetic language in its bipolarity with language as prose. The former is able of regaining the lost *sens* of language. Crucial

²⁰ This is a view Sartre shares with Merleau-Ponty, see Kaelin (1966). I have in this chapter forestalled many other points of contact between the two philosophers. It seems clear that an interchange of their ideas on language and silence took place at some level and at some time. See especially Merleau-Ponty's 'The voices of Silence (dedicated to Sartre)', in Merleau-Ponty (ed.) Johnson (1993)

features are that *le sens* is able to express the moment of totality as if it were complete; whereas significative language expresses the ongoing dialectic of experience: and is part of that dialectic. Poetry stills the dialectic, the totality or unity is isolated or distanced (§5) from its context of action. In this, poetry is said to exhibit an objective structure of the world: poetic discourse is seen as having the same status as painting, music, and sculpture; colours, sounds and the words of poetry are objects in themselves. On the other hand, whereas in prose a name represents an object; in poetry a word is a set of phonetic and semantic qualities, lacking conceptual communication because they do not represent anything outside of themselves.

This distinction between prose and poetry, founded on the signification—*sens* distinction, is identified, to reiterate the most important point, with the subject. The ineffable is the formal relation between objects, it is transcended by *le sens*, and this relation itself depends in fact upon the *pour soi*, or Freedom as foundation.

The failure within significative language (saying) that is overcome by a second sense, *le sens* (showing), is the revelation of the self: *le sens* reveals, conveys Freedom. Just as we can signify - name - particular objects, when freedom itself is manifested in particular and concrete situations we can speak of it - signify it - as the 'I' (§3 and §4). The source of the concrete 'I', however, original freedom, the universal, is the foundation and presupposition - the background - to meaningful, significative, language; it is therefore, or so it would seem at this point in our inquiry, perpetually beyond the sayable realm of signification.

♦ ***What is Literature? II: A (larger) problem of Interpretation?: Prose and Poetry?? — and Engaged Literature??***

There are further crucial aspects and developments to note in the following two sections of this chapter before we can finally clinch the full importance of the saying—showing distinction in Sartre's philosophy, this with reference to his masterpiece *Being and Nothingness*. Firstly, however, we must consider a crucial point of interpretation.

The discussion of *What is Literature?* began with a warning, it having all the appearance of a hastily assembled work. Specifically, we are concerned to know whether Sartre's position is

clear or ambiguous, and secondly whether there is any ambivalence on Sartre's part to what he does say. *Prima facie* there does indeed appear to be some ambiguity in Sartre's position, and this due to the given structural relation between the two poles of language, prose—poetry; the resulting tension is because of Sartre's adherence, in *What is Literature?*, to a literature of engagement. Does this not conflict (a) with the very idea of a prose—poetry distinction, and (b) with the notion of poetic language *per se* and, finally, (c) with the aesthetic project as a whole? It may appear so, for a morally engaged literature will have to describe social truths and prescribe an ideology: needs that on the face of it are as much satisfied by the significative function of a proposition as they are threatened by its symbolic or metaphoric function.

We begin with the prose—poetry distinction. At one point in *What is Literature?*, referring to this distinction, Sartre says: 'There is nothing in common between these two acts of writing except the movement of the hand which traces the letters' (WL 10). This is supported, we would think, by the statement that one aim of the poetry—prose distinction is to account for the fact, as Sartre sees it, that some forms of literature - i.e. poetic forms - are of the same status as other arts (he mentions painting and music), and cannot, and nor should he want them to be, socially or politically engaged:

'At least', critics say triumphantly, 'you can't even dream of committing it [poetry]'. Indeed. But why should I want to? Because it uses words as does prose? But it does not use them in the same way, and it does not even *use* them at all. I should rather say that it serves them. (WL 4).

We shall return shortly to the issue of poetry and engagement, but continue now with its presupposition, and the comment by Sartre that the 'two acts of writing' having 'nothing in common'?

We shall appeal here to an inclusive approach to the language and concepts of *What is Literature?* (and also the other early works). Such a reading contradicts *What is Literature?*'s early direct comment, and other later suggestive comments, that there is a decisive breach between the language as prose and as poetry. Rather, 'Poetic language rises out of the ruins of prose' (WL 24). Poetic language, it is indicated over and over again, will retain some vestige of conceptual meaning: poetry will always have some propositional success - on which traditionally

it depends for its meaning²¹. Indeed, without at least some minimum signification a proposition would be completely meaningless. This applies equally whether the proposition be poetically, metaphorically, construed or otherwise. Similarly, prose will always contain an element of *sens*, always a trace of the subject (and history), of what is, in the context of a scientific language, failure (*échec*): 'the driest prose always contains a bit of poetry' (WL 25).

Sartre recognises there can never be a radical separation of language as prose and as poetry, that any ideal of language is forlorn: neither the ideal of prose, a complete (scientific) description of the world, nor the ideal of Sartre (Socrates and others): intellectual silence (Mallarmé, indeed a certain poetry, is close - hence Sartre's fascination with the poet). As ideals, as edifices of hope, both prose and poetry fail. Even the greatest prose must fail, a point recognised by Laing and Cooper in a work singularly and peerlessly endorsed by Sartre:

Sartre recognises that the prose writer, at his moment of success, having arrived at meanings that outstrip the language, meanings that are in a sense secreted between the lines of the page, cannot do more than reveal what he cannot say. All great prose is a special kind of failure.²²

Prose fails. A proposition, as supported by *What is Literature?*, the other early works of Sartre, and this dissertation, is bi-polar, meaning is constituted on a scale between sign and symbol, between signification and *sens*: reciprocity holds; no clear breach exists; and there is on Sartre's part no ambivalence in this: only, in *What is Literature?*, some ambiguity, rooted in the occasional careless expression. But this ambiguity is readily dispersed, and consensus attained, by an appeal to the overall (contextualised) picture of Sartre's semantics both in *What is Literature?* and other works

Prose fails, but the entailed semantic and descriptive loss to Science is in fact a gain to Art and the Subject: through the unavoidable intrusion of *le sens*, through *échec*, prose will always, it follows, have some possibility of communicating - showing - the incommunicable (the self and

²¹ Of course the reverse is possible, as we see in the works of Polanyi with his account of 'tacit' understanding. Indeed, there is strong textual evidence supporting the view - as I do - that Sartre took poetic (i.e. metaphoric) meaning - *la sens* - as primary. I.e. as the necessary background to signification. This point will emerge as we proceed.

²² Laing/Cooper (1964), *Reason and Violence*, pp19.

realm of value): conversely, poetry, via its trace of signification, will always retain the possibility of describing the world. This principle, discussed by Sartre in terms of the sign—symbol identity of propositions, simple as it is, supports, for good or ill, the generic, the (acknowledged) massive hermeneutical complexity when confronted by a text. Where then, on this great shifting river bed of meaning, do we place a poem, or a work such as *What is Literature?* itself? More pertinent to the present, how does the affirmed reciprocity of prose and poetry effect the second of our two possible objections, the question of engagement?

Clearly, the language of prose can to a useful extent be engaged: description and prescription of social truths is to a large extent possible. The concern then is not with what we may now perceive as the difficulties of a *fully* engaged - morally directed - prose (difficulties recognised by Sartre himself); but rather with the very possibility of a - morally - engaged poetry. On this, one fundamental point of importance has already emerged: in degree, poetry will always be engaged just as prose will not: the sign—symbol identity of propositions ensures this, and no choice on Sartre's part will change that fact. Nonetheless, the more language depends upon *sens* and symbol the less suitable it would seem to become for engagement. The writer must choose, the principle of bi-polarity supports *a choice* of emphasis: sign and signification or symbol and image. Sartre, notably in the early works, elects for the latter, indirect mode of communicating his thoughts (and is much criticised for it). Our main thesis supports that choice and the question here now concerns the problem of whether the views of *What is Literature?* will reliably synthesise with our main claims. This ultimately depends on what way and to what extent poetry - showing - can said to be morally engaged, as it clearly is in Wittgenstein's account.

We must accept, due to the overwhelming textual evidence, that at the time of *What is Literature?* Sartre did not want to engage poetry (or the other pure arts) in the same way that he did prose: "you can't even dream of committing it [poetry]". Indeed. But why should I want to? (WL 4). Indeed, but surely some level or some sense of commitment, that is engagement is called for? Yes, a logical necessity: we saw that the reciprocity of the *sens*—signification distinction forces the way open for a poetry of engagement.

Hence, crucially, and as stated in *What is Literature?*, signification holds language as 'reflectiveness of the social body', while this is surpassed in *le sens* 'in the state of non-reflective reflectiveness' (WL 42). The distinction between prose and poetry, and the surpassing of language over ideology is due to it being (affiliated to and) alienated from the 'social body'. Thus, the sense in which Sartre must and will have poetry engaged is insofar as it is a 'non-reflective reflectiveness'. What is at stake then, in the surpassing of poetry, is the revelation of - pre-reflective - Original Freedom: the self.

For Sartre, as for Wittgenstein, language is more than communication (which signification takes care of): primarily, it is an expression of Freedom and of *the* relation between 'I' and world, the elucidation of Being, the attempt to disclose Value. We are thus not here dealing with a *Fall* from ordinary significative usage to poetic symbolic usage: it is only the latter that reveals - shows - the self, *the* relation between those in the park by the sprawling black roots of the tree of knowledge and a God (real or ideal) aspired to: with such revelation the individual's freedom is, as in Delphic tradition, *increased*.

The language of *le sens* creates the possibility of greater individual freedom: it is in this sense that it is engaged. As Sartre is happy to concede (above), this is not engaged in the way prose is: poetry can not be directly committed to an ideology, to social truths which depend upon accurate descriptions. However, in the way poetry elucidates (shows) Being and discloses Original Freedom, poetry is - morally - engaged, though *de facto* this is both less direct than is the case with prose *and*, importantly, more foundational.

We conclude thus, on the issue of poetry and moral engagement, as we did on the above issue of its presupposition, the relation between prose and poetry: that there is no ambivalence in Sartre's position, that yes there is some initial ambiguity, but that this will be dispersed on a closer contextualised and inclusive reading. Moreover, on the issue of moral engagement, the claim to non-ambivalence (in the reading of *What is Literature?*) is fully supported by central claims of this thesis - aesthetic determination and deeds (especially §5.3), the structural identity between the ethical and the aesthetic (§5.2), Fact and Value (notably §3.1i).

One last word, pertaining to the third and final of the possible objections in our reading of *What is Literature?*: the aesthetic project as a whole. In fact, as I have just indicated, the above considerations are not to be taken in isolation from the central themes of this thesis and the proposal of an aesthetic solution to the problematic of self: and here, for the first time, there is both no ambiguity but a definite ambivalence in Sartre's position. The (thankful) lack of ambiguity defines the ambivalence: for all the (above) argued for engagement of art and the aesthetic - as foundationally identified with original freedom, and this coupled with an synthesis between original freedom and action, it remains clear that the Sartrian (and existential) ideal of the primacy of action is only indirectly realised in any symbolic relation to the world. Poetry is less directly engaged than prose, and the poet, in identifying himself with the 'unrealisable' (§5), finds himself less engaged than the writer of prose: may indeed find himself in bad faith. Any aesthetic entrapment in bad faith does indeed concern the aesthetic solution as a whole and, for this reason, while acknowledging that our inquiry into the interpretation of *What is Literature?* reveals a potential objection, Sartre's clear ambivalence with the aesthetic, I shall treat of it (at §5.4) after presenting the full case for the aesthetic, with which we can now continue.

♦ *The Writer and his Language*

In 1965 Sartre gave an interview with Pierre Verstraeten that was published under the title *The Writer and his Language*. This late interview is useful in that (a) it clarifies aspects of the prose/poetry distinction. (b) It supports a (lesser) claim: that of continuity in Sartre's doctrines of art and the ineffable. (c) The interview is revealing because (unlike in the earlier - the pre late-fifties - texts and interviews) Sartre articulates his views with, *he claims*, a new and direct method of communication: by using what is essentially the language of prose. This way, Sartre hopes to avoid the 'ambiguity' which he so intentionally embraced and used so as to communicate his ideas in the pre 1954 works²³.

²³ In the *Force of Circumstance* Simon De Beauvoir locates 1954 as the point at which he loses faith in a certain literary method and its corollary 'Art as salvation'.

In communicating his ideas Sartre now hopes to shun what he would have been pleased of at the time of *What is Literature?*: the apparent paradox of that work. For it is to be recalled that the central prose/poetry distinction of this work, and Sartre's view that poetic language is open to suggestive and non-signifiable meanings (and is also therefore non-computable), and then in reading *What is Literature?* it is to be noticed that it is replete with poetic, connotative writing - especially metaphor. It follows from what Sartre says in that work, that often what the text says it does not say, and what it does not say (denote) it does 'say' (connote, show). This - indirect - method of communication is of course central to the early works of Sartre. The idea that language must be used beyond its signifiatory properties, that, to borrow a later term, it must symbolise its meanings: 'When I wrote *Being and Nothingness* it was uniquely to communicate thoughts by means of symbols' (BN 83).

In the interview Sartre still speaks of the poetry/prose distinction: 'I don't think the poetic intention implies communication to the same extent'. Poetry is 'deeply narcissistic' a kind of self-satisfaction - 'at least has been since Romanticism'. This is not a negative judgement says Sartre, simply 'descriptive'. Obviously Sartre is not so keen on his early distinction, nevertheless, there remains more than an acknowledgement of its foundational justification, that of *le sens* beyond signification. Thus, after a brief summary of what he still valued from the earlier view he goes on to explain his present views.

What was originally refusal to communicate or ignorance of the fact of communication at the time when I was making 'wordcastles' remains as a residue, as a kind of communication over and above the actual organs of communication (PL:WL 111).

Sartre, consequently, broadens the scope of his earlier poetry distinction to include 'literary' prose. This is to be distinguished from both philosophical prose and 'Scientific language'. The latter is 'pure application, action, and knowledge in the technical sense of the term. It makes no reference to man' (PL:WL 111). Philosophic language falls somewhere between the literary and scientific modes of expression. It maintains an element of *le sens*, that part which Sartre at times, especially in the later writings, identifies as its 'ambiguity': 'It always contains concealed literary prose'. Husserl's idea of philosophy as a rigorous science becomes that of 'a madman of

genius' (PW:WL 112). Moreover, it is again, as in *What is Literature?*, the failure of such prose that constitutes its very capacity for success. The philosopher, because he is the loser, wins:

On the other hand, precisely because philosophy always contains concealed literary prose, ambiguity of terms, any terms, the concept is interesting because it retains a depth which does allow it, through those ambiguities, to get a tighter grip on that sentence of literary prose which already contains - but in a condensed form, not as yet aware of itself - the meaning which it will be philosophy's task to render. (PL:WL 112).

Unlike the positivists, Sartre - and Wittgenstein - see the very failure of signifying or fact-based language as the necessary pre-requisite for a fuller meaning emerging from the necessary background.

The special problem that literary and philosophical prose have, compared to scientific language, is that they are 'concerned with the creator of the sciences' - i.e. *le sens* and showing has a particular relation to the self. What 'now' interests Sartre as a philosopher he says is 'communicating with the reader' (surely with a touch of irony - though many Anglophers, and some Contiphers, may choke in a fit of dissent at such a notion). By 'communicating' Sartre is again speaking of writing: 'The goal is always something that takes you back to the person who writes'. This is not the banality it first appears. Moreover, it takes us to the heart of the ineffable and showing in Sartre's philosophy: the self as consciousness. Thus:

What distinguishes the 'writer' is that he is a person who believes that language is object of total communication, and who believes this not in spite of the problems of language - the fact that one word has several meanings, or that syntax is often ambiguous - but because of them - What I mean is this: if you use words only in order to communicate, there is clearly a certain residuum, something not covered. That is to say, we have these symbols which designate an absent object and which are able to designate it as possessing such and such a meaning and furthermore as occupying such and such a concrete position in relation to other objects, but the symbols do not reproduce what one might call the 'flesh and blood' object. (PL:WL 84f).

This results, says Sartre, in a 'certain kind of linguistic pessimism': 'There is always this residuum of incommunicability'. For example, no matter in how much detail I describe, say, my feelings, 'Beyond a certain point the reality of those feelings will no longer correspond to the manner in which I choose to articulate them'. This is because 'language as pure symbol can only designate the thing signified in strictly conceptual terms' and because 'there is a relationship between signification and signifier and this is a retroactive, centripetal relationship by which words become changed' (PL:WL 85). Signification is 'the logical entity constituted by words, the

meaning of a sentence'. The intention, the self, is the signifier (the thing signified is the object) (PL:WL 86). The 'retroactive' relationship is understood in terms of words possessing their own history and standing in a particular social or cultural relation to language: there are many language games: 'I am already conditioned by my history in the words I use'. It's the writer's job to attain equivalence: 'That is what we call style'. Then: 'Basically I think everything is expressible provided you find the right expression for it' (PL:WL 88).

What this means in reality is working with that aspect of the word which relates to its own history or to the signifier considered as history. This to some extent means working in the dark; one is none too sure of what one is doing. The literary task is as it were a twofold one: it involves aiming at signification while at the same time charging it with something which must give you things as present. (PL:WL 88).

Verstraeten thinks this position to be close to that of the literary positivists. Sartre agrees that adherents of this view represent 'a kind of literary positivism' (PL:WL 87) who conclude 'that the idea of being able to attain the thing signified and thus to communicate it is illusory'. However, Sartre remains keen to distinguish himself from positivist theories of non-communication. He says that the thing signified will always 'be the product of a certain relativity - psychological, psycho-analytical - and so rather than be deluded they would prefer to 'do without communication altogether'. Sartre responds to this, in an important passage, by citing Merleau-Ponty and the 'Visible'²⁴; and then says 'the signifier *is* signified'. Consequently,

there is a very close relationship of being between the thing signified which signification misses, and the signifier who is at the same time signified by his signification. ... Language appears to me as that which designates me in so far as I attempt to designate the object (PL:WL 90).

Hence, importantly, and as Verstraeten points out, in an attempt to avoid the incommunicable, Sartre has had to resort to ontology.

Sartre believes that his dual concept of linguistic meaning and the invocation to poetic language is such that he has avoided the charge of positivist non-communication. Poetry will communicate that which can't be signified (though the sharp distinction of *What is Literature?* has been blunted). On this, the following from Sartre is well worth quoting in detail.

The concrete universal must always imply a kind of self-awareness that is other than

²⁴ A work which seems to have influenced Sartre and which was itself influenced by the Heidegger that understood Being as language.

conceptual, a kind of awareness that is awareness of Wish, awareness of History. ... There are certain relationships to life, ... which refer us back to ourselves at the same time referring us back to the universe. Strictly speaking then the wish is not directly related to articulation, as Lacan says. My language is incapable of designating my deep-seated wish, hence another non-positivist theory of non-communication - that one can never, except through vague approximations set in perspective, furnish by means of language an equivalent for the phenomenon of desire - whereas I maintain that one does furnish precisely such an equivalent in poetry and in that going beyond the kernel of meaning through signification which is prose. Particularly in poetry, though, one furnishes this equivalent through the use of words not in so far as these are uttered for their own sake, but in so far as the level below articulation is at work in their very reality, i.e. in so far as the density of the word in fact refers us back precisely to what has insinuated itself into it without having produced it. There is no deliberate expression of wish. Articulation is not designed to express wish, but the wish insinuates itself into the articulation of it. (PL:WL 1031).

Verstracten agrees with the 'deeper significance' of Sartre's views, that poetic language may, because it transcends denotative limitations, and because the self itself is beyond these signification's: it is the signifier, that 'Poetry may show man what he is, may actually be his lucidity, and awake him in areas of darkness of which he is not yet in control' (PL:WL 106). This in fact recalls a remark from what became the *Notebooks For An Ethics*,

Such language [as prayer] is not *informative*, it teaches nothing. ... Whence the particular *poetic* character of prayer, whereby one speaks without saying anything ... [through] appearance ... since there is a deeper-lying truth (NE, pp219).

Returning to the interview, Baudelaire is offered as an example: Sartre states that he objectifies his wish, desire, or experience of the empirical world in 'the poetic moment', such that 'desire objectifies itself through words, but above and beyond their articulation' (PL:WL 107).

As in *What is Literature?*, Sartre has cited desires and feelings as being beyond articulation. In *Being and Nothingness* he had done the same, suggesting that 'pain ... is not named in consciousness, for it is not *known*. ... Pure pain as the simple "lived" can not be reached; it belongs to the category of indefinables and indescribables'. Pain is not a psychic object, it is part of the 'non-thetic project of the For-itself; we apprehend it only through the world'. And again, 'The suffering of which we speak is never exactly that which we feel' (BN 333 & 91). In the interview, however, Sartre is clearer in stating that he does not believe feelings and desires to be incommunicable. They are conveyed, shown against signification by poetry - or language which functions as symbol through *la sens*. Indeed, the idea that feelings and emotions are ineffable (and unknown) but may be communicated *is* pervasive to Sartre's philosophy. This is an

important revelation, and certainly not without significance to art-and-the-ineffable. But as was noted in §1, such a notion, though common to art-and-the-ineffable, has had too much critical attention at the expense of further or, (I would say), more interesting philosophical commitments to the ineffable. Sartre's comments in the interview help to clarify not only the discursive remarks on the emotions and the ineffable in *What is Literature?* but also the scattered comments in *Being and Nothingness*: and this, plus the generic significance of such a view, is as far as the issue will be taken.

Of more immediate concern to the present inquiry are the following, now summarised points. In the interview of 1965 Sartre yet again, and with clarity, states his belief in a linguistic inadequacy. It is ascertained in the present circumstances via his study of the sign, signification, signified, signifier relation. Here though, there is both clarification and development. What began as essentially a metaphysical rumination on the problem of the ineffable in *Nausea*, to the ineffable in an explicitly philosophical context in *The Psychology of Imagination* - along the lines of an epistemological distinction between perception and imagination. The emphasis then befell an explicit semantic distinction in *What is Literature?* - between prose and poetry. In the present interview, conducted twenty years later, these distinctions are relied upon, and the doctrines of the ineffable and showing are maintained. Furthermore, the self, as signifier, is again present to the problematic of the ineffable. But now two seemingly new claims have emerged - firstly, that the ineffable and the self are structurally linked, as would be suggested given Sartre's ontology. Secondly, Sartre utilises the prose/poetry distinction to incorporate, besides the scientific and the literal, philosophical language. Philosophy, he states, always 'contains concealed literary prose...the concept is interesting because it retains a depth' which does not allow it to be rendered.

The introduction to the ineffable - and the possibility of showing (through *le sens*) - of the philosophical project, and the significance of the ineffable to ontology and self, these, coupled with clarification of earlier aspects, these are the key points which are to be taken forward from the account of the 1965 interview with Verstraeten.

♦ *Departure and Return.*

This essay offers itself as an uncomplicated junction, conjoining the previous inquiries to the final section on *Being and Nothingness*. Of more importance, the essay is interesting in the present context not only because in it Sartre deals with his views on language,²⁵ but also because he does so through a discussion of the French philosopher Brice Parain. In fact there are numerous references to Parain spread throughout Sartre's writings, worthy of study. This notwithstanding, the aim is only to draw attention to those aspects in the said essay which will move the present discussion forward in its current direction.

Parain developed a theory of language close to that found in the *Tractatus*. He sought a perfect language in which the philosophical problems of an imperfect language could not arise - silence played an important role. His solution was to restrict language to a single function, not the early Wittgensteinian one of natural science through the representation and verification of facts, but that of giving orders.

It has been suggested that Sartre became increasingly sympathetic to Parain's ideas²⁶, moving from some explicit criticisms, as found in the present essay, to implicit acceptance in the later works (especially by the time of *Flaubert* [1970]). The essay *Departure and Return* is complex, this is perhaps due to Sartre's known willingness to enter into the structures of thought of his subject, and there is a difficulty in disentangling Sartre's own opinion from the ideas under discussion. Still, some matters are clear - and can be stated with reasonable impunity. For example, that at this time Sartre is *generally critical* of Parain's position.

The totality of language is silence, for one must be situated in the midst of language in order to speak. However, in the case with which we are concerned, totalization is impossible for man, since it would have to be achieved by means of words. And Parain's silence is only a big optimistic myth. (LPE:DR 157).

An '*optimistic myth*'? indeed, and one that is shared by the ever optimistic Sartre (for a reader

²⁵ J.Fell *Heidegger and Sartre* (1979), supports his initial claim that the essay can be read as a critique of 'certain Heideggerian notions', including that of 'I am situated in language'. Although for Sartre language is not exactly the house of Being, there are close similarities to Heidegger's position on language and silence. On Sartre and Heidegger see especially J.Fell (1979); on Heidegger and Wittgenstein see Bindeman, Geir, Mulhall and others.

²⁶ R. Goldthorpe, *Sartre: Theory and Literature* (1984)

familiar with Sartre the textual context is enough to satisfy the conviction that irony does not play a part in Sartre's quoted reply). Something else is also clear: that at this time Sartre has *sympathy* for many of the details of Parain's' position - he is certainly not wholly dismissive: 'Let me say that I accept roughly the greater part of Parain's analysis. I challenge only their scope and their place' (LPE:DR 158). In fact, Sartre's sympathy is directed towards certain specific ideas which he finds in Parain.

Most notably, Sartre is sympathetic to Parain's idea of a necessary relation between silence, nothingness and the self, and understanding. For Sartre, this relation is constituted in terms of a self (as nothing), linguistic inadequacy and a *possibility* of showing: the failure of language to signify this 'silent' human reality. Here is a very useful passage:

Parain says that language interpolates between me and my self-knowledge. ... But when I am conscious of understanding a word, no word is interpolated between me and myself. ...the word is before me, as *that which is understood*. Where else would you put it? In consciousness? You might as well ... cut it off from itself. ... The effectiveness, the eternity, of the *cogito* lies in the fact it reveals a kind of existence defined as being present to oneself without intermediary. The word is interpolated between my love and myself, between my courage or cowardliness and myself, not between my understanding and consciousness of understanding. For the consciousness of understanding is the law of being of understanding. I shall call this the silence of consciousness. (LPE:DR 161).

The word interpolates between our objects of experience and our experience of them - not necessarily, it was seen, completely successfully. The word does not ever interpolate between our consciousness of understanding and our being of understanding because it is the *expression* of that being which is the foundation of understanding.

I grant what you [Parain] say about consciousness, but as soon as you try and *express* what you are, you get bogged down in language. I agree. However, I know what it is that I want to express because I am without intermediary. Language may resist and mislead me, but I shall never be taken in by it unless I want to, for I can always come back to what I am, to the emptiness and silence that I am. (LPE:DR 162).

Here then are the two central points to be drawn from this essay on Parain. Firstly, that Sartre states his belief in 'The identity of man and his expression through language' (LPE:DR 153). This is the failure of language to signify Man, the 'silent' human reality. As in the interview with Verstreten, only here at the time of *Being and Nothingness*, the notion of the ineffable is thus related to the human subject which is, in the Parain essay, connected to an - ontological - silence (the totality of language as Being in the world; we are in language as we are

in the world). Secondly, there is now an additional development, that the foundation or silent precondition of language, the self, is also the foundation of understanding. Thus, again, there is the possibility that the ineffable *is* the problem of communicating - disclosing - a new meaning (ethical), leading to a self-understanding.

Conclusion. So far the inquiry has also revealed that Sartre's commitment to the ineffable revolves around the possible problem of defining and describing *the relation* that holds for the subject (*pour soi*) between those objects (*etre en soi*) that form *my world*. Secondly, the subject itself as the source of these 'relations' is seen as ineffable, beyond propositional representation. (Also, less interestingly, it was noted that the ineffable pertains to emotions or 'desires'). Finally, with the essay on Parain, the human subject - and thus the problematic - has taken central stage in its ontological relation to the ineffable and the problem of disclosing Value (ethical): the very conditions of the ineffable constitute the possibility of showing.

Thus, the subject - and the problematic - now begin to directly dominate inquiries. But the most authoritative - or representative - Sartrean text, and an early one at that, is *Being and Nothingness*, and much that has been argued for in the previous sections (aside from the crucial *sens*-signification distinction) will only stand if supported by the views of *Being and Nothingness*.

♦ ***Being and Nothingness.***

Although this long section constitutes a continuous discussion, relief is supplied in the form of four parts, on 'Language: self, freedom, nothingness and being'; on 'Language and Being'; on '*Being and Nothingness* on language'; and finally a conclusion.

Let it be supposed that the above conclusions, drawn from *Nausea*, *What is Literature?*, the interview, and the essay on Parain, are accepted as essentially valid. With the resulting 'threat' of an inclusive ineffableness in Sartre's philosophy, effabilists and ineffabilists alike may turn to Sartre's master work with puzzlement and annoyance. Zeus himself was heard thundering:

'Is not the external world of objects of experience *Being* and is not the self that constitutes

these objects as *my world* a freedom or *Nothingness*? And is not the whole merciless book, *Being and Nothingness*, a phenomenological *description* of Freedom. Nothingness and the Being of phenomena?’

The question, a cool, insolent, nagging voice, responded: ‘*can* language describe Being, Nothingness and Freedom? *Can* language ...’

It is necessary, first of all, to re-acquaint ourselves, in a paragraph, with the central concepts of Being, Nothingness and Freedom. Sartre states that Being is all-embracing, universal and objective: it is contrasted with Existence which is the concrete present-at-hand, individual and subjective. Being-in-itself is non-conscious, it is the contingent empirical world of phenomena. Being-for-itself is consciousness - conceived of as a lack, a desire, and a *relation* to Being²⁷. It brings a nothingness into the human world which *is* human reality: freedom. What freedom and consciousness have in common is nothingness, in this they are set against Being; there will be a constant struggle between the two as freedom seeks objectification (to become Being, while yet remaining itself). Occasionally Sartre uses the terms consciousness and freedom synonymously; the linchpin is the imaginative structure of consciousness, which - through negation - he sees as necessary if consciousness is to emancipate itself from the world of causal relations. Consciousness becomes - is permeated with - freedom. Freedom is seen as unlimited, absolute: universal, the ‘foundation of all essences’; it is also identifiable with the self. In short, Being and Nothingness have this in common: first, Being (pure and unmediated physical being) conditions - is essential to the occurrence of - Nothingness (a no-thing, immaterial, thought); second, Being and Nothingness are universal and foundational, the latter brings freedom into the world as a relation (lack) to the former; the individual or particular pertains as an existential reality - concrete and subjective. What then, of language and, firstly, freedom and nothingness?

Language: Self, freedom, nothingness and being. *Being and Nothingness* has relatively few

²⁷ The constant emphasis placed on ‘relation’ is to remind the reader that this notion is crucial, the self as a *relatum* is in fact the subject of inquiry in §4.

pages devoted explicitly to language - but what there is, is significant. as will be seen. Equally significant are other passages.

Thus we are always wholly present to ourselves; but precisely because we are wholly present, we can not hope to have an analytic and detailed consciousness of what we are. ... the world by means of its very articulation refers to us exactly the image of what we are. Not, as we have seen so many times, that we can decipher this image. (BN 463).

Here Sartre acknowledges the identification of the very possibility of articulation as dependent upon the image and in a relation to the world as a whole (§5), and, therefore, an intrinsic linguistic inadequacy. Earlier in *Being and Nothingness*, in one of the most important passages for the present study, the nature of the difficulty had been ascertained.

At the start we encounter a great difficulty. Ordinarily, to describe something is a process of making explicit by aiming at the structures of a particular essence. Now freedom has no essence. It is not subject to any logical necessity; we must say of it what Heidegger said of the *Dasian* in general: 'In its existence precedes and commands essence' ... The very use of the term 'freedom' is dangerous if it is to imply that the word refers to a concept as words ordinarily do. *Indefinable and unnameable, is freedom also indescribable?* (BN 438 - my emphasis).

A similar difficulty was encountered earlier, continues Sartre, when 'we wanted to describe nothingness and the being of phenomenon'. However, this 'did not deter us', because

There can be descriptions which do not aim at the essence but at the *existent* itself in all its particularity ... I could not describe a freedom which is both common to the Other and myself; I could not therefore contemplate an essence of freedom. On the contrary, it is freedom that is the foundation of all essences (BN 438 - my emphasis).

Freedom is not an essence, it is the 'foundation of all essences'. A description - which aims at the structure of a particular essence - cannot then be given. Freedom is, on Sartre's word here, (and commensurate with *Nausea*), indefinable and unnameable, *and possibly* indescribable. But how do we - how does Sartre - give some kind of account (description?) of Being and Freedom? If he does not, or if such a 'description' is not unequivocal, then what is the status of what he does and does not say in, for example, *Being and Nothingness*?

The suggestion in the above quoted passage from *Being and Nothingness* is that freedom, nothingness, and the being of phenomena are in fact definable and describable - *but only* in their existential *particularity*. Whereas, as again the above passage suggests, a description of the 'essence' of freedom, nothingness, and the being of phenomena is not possible. Here, although speaking of essence, we are not to think of Plato; but rather of *relations*, of a common structure,

of *the* relation that holds between objects of experience, of something foundational. Sartre is clear in stating that what he is proposing when he does speak of essence is that which is universal to all freedoms, and this so because it is in turn the 'foundation of all essences'. (Though in fact Sartre will occasionally speak in terms of the self as essence: 'myself, cut off from the world and from my essence. ... Consciousness possesses a pre-ontological comprehension of its essence' {BN 39}).

Sartre's claim, that essence is universal, indefinable and indescribable, while particularity is not, aligns him with the Scholastic tradition of nominal and real definition - cf. below, §2.4. The implication that follows from Sartre's alliance (tacit or otherwise) to the Scholastic tradition of seeing real definition as impossible is a point of great importance to both an understanding of Sartre and the claim of this chapter (and thesis) - though it is often overlooked and nearly always understated. Spiegleberg, charged only with understatement, is an otherwise unsurprising exception, in that he does identify Sartre's problem and, in general terms, the character of his solution. Thus he notes that when attempting to describe freedom Sartre 'Always shows it as imbedded in a given situation.' (Spiegleberg, 1960, pp231). Indeed, even *prima facie* and without recourse to a theory of dual-definition, one would expect that this must be the case, for 'Nothingness *is not*': 'We have to deal with human reality as a being which it is not and which is not what it is' (BN 58). Such that 'If we can speak of it, it is only because it possesses an appearance of being ... nothingness is made-to-be' (BN 22).

It is clear, says Sartre, 'That freedom is not a faculty of the human soul to be envisaged and described in isolation' (BN 25). Much more than this,

[Freedom] Is not a quality added on or a *property* of my nature. It is very exactly the stuff of my being. ... For the for-itself, to be is to nihilate the in-itself which it is. Under these conditions freedom can be nothing other than this nihilation. It is through this that the for-itself escapes its being as its essence; it is through this that the for-itself is always something other than what can be *said* of it. (BN 439).

Sartre says that the For-itself is, 'in the final analysis', that which escapes 'denomination', it is 'beyond the name which is given it, beyond the property which is recognised in it' (ibid.). Again, the point, one point, that is being pressed here by Sartre, is that original freedom, the negation of

being, is foundational - 'the foundation of all essences': it is foundational and also universal and, therefore, beyond real definition. Only when freedom is manifested in the particular, in concrete situations, is it revealed to consciousness, and only then can it be defined, denominated and described, can something be said of it. The numerous (concrete and imaginative) examples and attempts at description of freedom in *Being and Nothingness* amply demonstrate this, as Spiegleberg notes. Here then there is a response to the question, albeit provisional: (the universal) *Being and Nothingness*, freedom - the self in fact - escape 'denomination' and that which 'can be said', but are nonetheless denotable and describable when particularised in concrete situations.

The heart of this issue of self and the ineffable is thus, that freedom is ineffable because (a) it is *foundational*, and therefore an 'essence' or universal - beyond definition. (b) The activity of freedom, at its source, is to be seen as a complex of logical operations: it is these which constitute the activity of consciousness, and which constitute it the very precondition of language in its commitment to universals. Here is Sartre again, in his essay on Parain, *Departure and Return*:

The *external* identity of the word 'pellet' would be of no use to me, for however identical it might be physically, I would still have to recognise it, that is, extract it from the flux of phenomena and stabilise it. I would still have to refer it to its appearances of yesterday and the day before and establish between these different moments *a synthetic place of identification*. ... Even if the word did exist in the bosom of God, I must produce it by an operation known as 'synthesis of identification' *the word has no privileged status* ... I can name only if I have constituted [objects] as independent wholes, that is, if I objectify the thing and the word that names it in one and the same synthetic act. ... If I constitute my experience and my words within this experience, it is not on the level of language but on that of the synthesis of identification that the universal appears. (DR 160f)

The important issue is to explain how it is that in speech language is identified with the individual while committing itself to universals.

The most authoritative - 'Sartrean' - response is found in a fine study of Sartre and Heidegger by J. Fell²⁸. He analyses the argument Sartre uses and agrees with Sartre that a word on its own cannot *per se* universalise. For a word to stand 'for a class of things or a succession of appearances of a single being' we must understand the 'words transferability in time and space'.

²⁸ J. Fell, *Heidegger and Sartre* (1979)

This involves. Fell argues, all of Kant's twelve categories (Sartre *is* invoking Kant) and commits Sartre to the transcendental unity of apperception.²⁹ This in turn commits Sartre to the view that the 'use of words as universals presupposes the laws of logic, for Kant's categories both directly restate and express the implications of the laws of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle'. Therefore, for Sartre, the understanding of universals is brought about through a complex of mental acts, of distinction and synthesis, which is the precondition of understanding universals, and which is regardless of what particular words are spoken. Understanding is an *act* of consciousness 'that both distinguishes and synthesises'. So that in using universals an individual subject is committing itself to a complex of logical operations. Hence, in a champagne passage,

Against Parain, as against Heidegger, *conscience (de) soi* is the true beginning, the *fundamentum inconcussum*, the original negation of being whereby consciousness apperceives itself as nothing, emptiness, silence. There is consciousness *of* language, and consciousness is always therefore one step beyond language. But not beyond logic, for consciousness *is*, as perpetual 'other-than' and perpetual 'beyond' or 'surpassing', negation, mostly in the form of pre-reflective nihilation (Fell, 1979 pp286).

It is correct to identify the ineffable ('silence') with logical operations that are the precondition of speech in its commitment to universals. This precondition, the logical operations, is itself to be identified with original freedom and negation (nothingness) - pre-reflective consciousness. The original choice 'is the centre of reference for an infinity of polyvalent meanings' (BN 570). Such consciousness is the precondition of experience (it is also it shall and has been seen pre-conceptual). And indeed, when freedom is *ours*, particularised, 'As a pure factual necessity; that is, as a contingent existent', it is one that 'I *am not able* not to experience' (BN 438). Consciousness is then, an 'essence' or universal, the foundation of myself, my experiences, my language. It is the dialectical relationship between subject(ivity) and object(ivity). The *pour soi*, is, as a complex of logical operations which constitute the activity of consciousness, the very precondition of language and its commitment to universals.

Recall here that in the discussion of Sartre's *sens/signification* distinction, a truth of this

²⁹ On this Fell is undoubtedly correct - with interesting consequences. For if we accept a certain - most likely - interpretation of Kant on these issues (such an interpretation is pervasively offered by Allison in his study of Kant's *Transcendental Idealism*, see pp290-3) we will find his position to be in accord with both Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* and Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*.

doctrine was stated as follows. When words are limited to or are experienced as signs then their meaning will be derived from what they signify. Meaning is limited to what can be signified, which is, broadly speaking, particular objects or facts. With regard to freedom, when it is manifested in particular and concrete situations we can speak of it as the 'I'. And when the 'I', the personal or the 'singular' is brought into the world it can be denominated, defined and spoken of in propositional language. The source of the 'I', original freedom, is, so it would seem, perpetually beyond language. But when words are experienced as images or analogues they do so through *le sens*. Through this second meaning language suggests or conveys - or shows - the real description of an essence, the *quo incommunicabile*, such as, for example, *the* relation between objects. This relation depends in fact upon the *pour soi*, or Freedom as foundation. Thus *le sens* reveals, conveys Freedom. Whereas prose (signs as signifiers) can express the whole process of negating - present-at-hand - surpassing, the concrete; poetry (*le sens*) expresses the pre-reflective moment, the self, - which we shall see is one of 'totality'.

And so, to conclude this sub-section, four definitive propositions. (1) In *Being and Nothingness*, freedom is the universal foundation and precondition of language. (2) 'Freedom is the only possible foundation of the laws of language' (BN 517). (3) It is the universal that is pre-reflectively grasped and which is beyond language. (4) It is only in language as *la sens* that the universal singular - 'man' - is shown.

Language and Being. Not only freedom, but also it appears Being is agog with silence, the ineffable, and showing. If this is true, there is to be faced a conceptual surprise: the identification of Being *per se* with the ineffable would extend Sartre's ineffable realm beyond Wittgenstein's (for whom 'facts' are at least sayable, cf. above).

On this issue of a putative ineffability of Being there has in fact been some very recent discussion, in which, unsurprisingly, Sartre has been taken to task for holding to such a position. In challenging the counter-claims of S. Mulhall³⁰ on this issue, the present discussion both links

³⁰ S. Mulhall, *On Being in the World* (1991), pp54ff.

back especially to *Nausea* and *What Is Literature? (sens)* as well as forward to a developed concept of showing. But moreover, this is achieved via an account of Being and language in terms of saying—showing.

Basing his criticism on the interpretative model of perception, Mulhall notes that ‘when applied to the relation between basic conceptual frameworks and the world’ (Mulhall, 1991, pp152) such a model can avoid an infinite regress only on pain of ‘hypothesising a nameless, pre-conceptualised world-stuff’. But this is not, he claims, and contra Sartre (and Heidegger), because the essence of being is ‘never fully exhausted by the resources of language’, rather, it is because of a human response to a ‘quite specific sort of experience [which] can best be described as one of aspect-dawning *without* a change of aspect’. Any object of perception and the set of concepts that define it as what it is can be the source of such an experience³¹. The effect is of a separation between concept and object. ‘a heightened awareness of the conceptual framework one can impose upon that object’ (ibid., 153). a feeling of having stripped away ‘even the most minimal and basic conceptual framework’ and of having ‘a perception of what lies beyond those conventions of human language and its structures of intelligibility’. Mulhall refers to the description of such an experience as portrayed by Sartre in *Nausea*, where the narrator/author of this diary has ‘a revelation’. It is a well known encounter (first quoted above), in the ‘municipal park’, where

the root of a chestnut tree plunged into the ground just underneath my bench. I no longer remembered that it was a root. ... The root, the park gates, the bench, the sparse grass on the lawn, all that had vanished; the diversity of things, their individuality, was only an appearance, a veneer. (N 180/1).

In Roquentin’s revelation, the ‘veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, in disorder - naked, with a frightening obscene nakedness’. Here the objects individual coherence, which is indubitably concept dependent, is stripped away: ‘suddenly, all at once, the veil is torn away, I have understood, I have *seen*’ (N 181). Either this insight is as Sartre would claim a language

³¹ Mulhall would appear to be working in the same tradition as Alston: in the ‘philosophical tradition in which we ... can apply a concept to *x* whenever we predicate anything of *x*’, and in which to do so is ‘equivalent to saying *x* is conceptualizable’ (cf. §1).

transcendent *experience* of Being, or, it is as Mulhall claims, an example of a specific experience that can be understood as aspect-dawning without a change.

The difficulty with the former position, claims Mulhall, is that if these experiences *are* of ineffable Being, then they must be conceptualizable and therefore accessible to language, *because* they have been experienced and can - and have (as in the 'root' case) - been described and thus clarified by language. He thus concludes that although there is a type of experience where there is *a sense* of penetrating beyond language and encountering some Being external to language, this nevertheless is an experience of aspect-dawning where one becomes aware of a new set of concepts in terms that facilitate a description. Primary in, say, Roquentin's experience, is that set of concepts that determine what it is for something to be an object of the kind it is as experienced. When his awareness 'pertains most basically to the perceived object (e.g. the rootness of the root)', there is a sense of separateness effected between 'that set of concepts and the object as a stripping away of all language from the thing itself' (pp154). Roquentin's experience suggests a language transcendent reality, but does so because his encounter, as with all encounters, is dependent upon conceptual structures that cannot be stripped away, in this case basic property concepts, and which determine things as having an existence that is not in fact dependent upon language. 'His *experience*, however, is not language transcendent'.

Certainly there is in such 'revelation' experiences at least a sense of penetrating beyond the surface of things (as Mulhall acknowledges). Our directive question is threefold: does this 'sense' indicate an actuality? What is being experienced? Why is it ineffable yet communicable through art? To the first question all critical approaches into the veridicality of the experience will be found wanting - where in any inquiry (even if it were purely reflexive) shall be attained data pertaining to an 'inner identity of one's own inner being with that of ... the kernel of the world'³². On this, perhaps no one has done better than Schopenhauer and his lengthy historical catalogue of philosophers and poets who held such a view but were not 'madmen'; the Kantian

³² Schopenhauer, (1969) *The World as Will and Representation*, II, pp613

limits on inquiry must be accepted, and the possibility of such experiences granted. Reality for Sartre will be a conceptual background or 'totality' to atomistic predicate familiarity. (Hypothesising 'ultimate' is voidless, and would in any case only be true for Sartre in that Being is a condition of non-being).

In deference to Sartre it could be denied that that which is being presupposed on his behalf: a commitment to the dominant tradition of definition that equates conceptualisation with predicate-concepts. But a more subtle point is at stake. Much of what Mulhall says can be granted; first of all that experience is dependent upon basic conceptual structures, and that shifting aspects and perceptual interpretations heighten an awareness of a non-isomorphic relation between the language we use and reality - that the relation is contingent. But neither experience nor the experience of concepts is as one-dimensional as Mulhall would have it. Take the latter, it is not difficult to state what would be basic property concepts, and on which any given experience will be dependent. But though experience depends upon property concepts it is not sufficiently explained by them. It is the very fact that experience is necessarily against a conceptual background that makes the experience both describable and ineffable (limited): it is the whole background that is experienced in a revelation such as Roquentin's, it is this whole or totality that cannot be appropriated and given in language³³.

Certainly, enough of the background is conceptualizable that a description is possible, for it is dependent upon basic property concepts which are themselves describable and which in a new aspect disclose themselves and not the individual diversity of things (which are not ontologically dependent upon language) - 'chestnut tree', 'root'. But the whole alludes description, what is given is signification to the particular and the conceptual; what is missing and fundamental to description is *sens* (sense), which is according to Sartre a subjectivity that is historically derived and therefore always lacking in any experience of the particular in its conceptually given individual objects (names).

³³ D.E. Cooper has an important discussion of this Background in his 'Ineffability', *Aristotelian Society*, Vol. LXV, 1991.

It is in *What is Literature?*, it was seen, that Sartre speaks at length about this semantic distinction. It is, at least in linguistic practice, between language as prose and poetry, between the language of science and the language of art. The artist, will attempt to communicate with material rather than use words conceptually (though relying on *that* conceptual background). With music, for example. 'The significance of melody ... is nothing outside the melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered in several ways. It is always over and above anything you can say about it' (WL 4).

The municipal park passage presents a key theme of the novel, the effect of the perceived contingency of the external world upon an intending consciousness. The second key and fundamentally interrelated theme of the novel is an inquiry into the nature of the relation between art and life. The conclusion is that only through art, and the use of art as mediator, will an insight into Being be conveyed: shown. But surely we will respond, as Sartre recognised, by stating that if he has really shown us that the tree-root is beyond language then he has pragmatically refuted himself - similarly, if he has failed to express the revelation, then his thesis is safe, though presumably it remains uncommunicated. But no, *pace* Mulhall, what Roquentin experiences is a failure of language to embody *sens*; the background to the diversity of Being remains always beyond reflective consciousness and, therefore, can only be apprehended pre-reflectively: signification (basic property concepts) is present and necessary, but *sens* is lacking. Such a failure as Roquentin's can of course be communicated (described, just as the *Tractatus* can describe the conditions for the unsayable without self-contradiction); though to be consistent the experience *itself* cannot be described in conceptual terms: the experience will have to be shown - hence the appropriation of the language of art as a means to such an end. Of course, whether it works in *practice* is another matter, and this will in any case have to be assessed empirically and individually. The principle, however, is logically safe.

Being and Nothingness on Language. The discussion of Sartre and his views on language in this chapter has, as promised, slowly yet assuredly, taken us from semantics to self; it has striven

to ascertain the extent of the ineffable Freedom and Nothingness - and now Being - and done so throughout key works. And yet, there remains presently undiscussed the one section in *Being and Nothingness* which is devoted explicitly to the discussion of language. It will be well, therefore, before drawing together conclusions or points of convergence, to see what Sartre has therein to say.

The section in *Being and Nothingness* devoted to language is entitled 'My Fellowman'. It falls in Part Four of that work, where Sartre directly addresses the problematic of Freedom. The main question is whether Having (including understanding and knowledge) and Doing (including acting) are dependent upon either the fundamental existential choice or upon human nature. As would be expected, Sartre argues that Freedom is free choice, absolute, pure, original, spontaneous. However, Freedom always arises in a situation or context (if it did not manifest itself hence it could not be thus represented in propositional language). Therefore, Freedom and Being are reciprocally dependent upon each other: they each come to have meaning in the context of the relation between them. The very existence of things as obstacles presupposes Freedom (BN 486). A stony crag, for example, could be a challenge to a climber or an object of beauty for an artist: 'Meaning [is] in terms of an initial project', and 'For the simple traveller who passes over this road and whose free project is a pure aesthetic ordering of the landscape, the crag is not revealed either as scaleable or as not-scaleable; it is manifested only as beautiful or ugly' (BN 488). Sartre then considers some 'specific examples' of the structure of this reciprocal relation: 'My Place', 'My Past', 'My Environment', and 'My Fellowman'. My fellowman, or, it may be said, my fellow freedom, is the only possible *limitation* on my freedom. Nonetheless, freedom is always in relation to Being, and Being is the context, the background out of which Freedom arises as a nothingness. Sartre chooses to illustrate this point with a discussion of nationality and language.

The existential reality of the *pour soi* is its being situated as a certain nationality, in a particular district etc. In like manner the reality of language for the *pour soi* is a particular use, a particular dialect etc. Words themselves, Sartre tells us, and echoing Wittgenstein (see above,

§2.3i). only have meaning (a) in their use (BN 514) and (b) within the context of a proposition: 'the elementary structure of speech is the sentence [where] the word can receive a real function as a designation' (BN 514). The meaning of the proposition itself ultimately depends upon the intentional act of the *pour soi* (see below, §4.2i. on intentionality). But language (and Past and Environment, and Place), as the concrete and particular (dialect etc.), as facticity, is not a limit to Freedom: it *is* the being of the *pour soi* as nihilated. Indeed, while speaking of the *factual* existence of the for-itself, Sartre says that among the 'Factual characteristics of this 'facticity' - i.e. among those which can neither be deduced nor proven but which simply 'let themselves be seen' - there is one of these which we call the existence-in-the-world-in-the-presence-of-others' (BN 512). It is the existence of others that presents the real limitation to freedom. It is also at this level - *etre pour autre* - that 'facticity is expressed'.

How then shall I experience the objective limits of my being: Jew, Aryan, ugly, handsome, kind, a civil servant, untouchable, etc., when will speech have informed me as to which of these are *my* limits? ... My beauty or my ugliness ... are apprehended by the Other in their full concreteness, and it is this concreteness which the Others speech will indicate to me. (BN 527).

Here it will be seen that the above account of language and freedom from Part Four of *Being and Nothingness* fits easily into the context of the rest of the discussion. The following point most quickly illustrates this. Existential reality (which is not Being) is, as was seen, concrete and particular. The facticity of the *pour soi* includes nationality, a place, a district; it also includes language, a particular use, a dialect. But beneath and below the concrete and the particular is 'the *truth* of the dialect', 'the *truth* of the language'. Sartre makes his point with the example of 'techniques':

This means that the concrete techniques by which we manifest our belonging to the family and to the locality refer us to more abstract and more general structures which constitute its meaning and essence; these refer to others still more general until we arrive at the universal and perfectly simple essence of any technique whatsoever by which any being whatsoever appropriates the world (BN 513).

'Truth' or essence is again to be understood as *the* relation or relations between the objects that constitute the concrete and particular. Without such a relation holding, spoken of in terms of 'the given', absolute idealism would entail. Besides, unless there is, for example, a 'universal and simple essence of any technique', we could not, claims Sartre, use any technique, for that would

require the use of a former technique and, nothing new here, an infinite regress ensues. The essential point remains: it is the concrete and particular, including Freedom when so manifest, that is signified by speech. The essence or the universal is beyond such designation.

Conclusion. Freedom can only be spoken *of* when it has been revealed as *mine* in concrete, particular, situations. Original Freedom is a 'lack', it has no experiential nor - direct - linguistic reference: its reality is the pre-condition of the sentences that *would* be used to refer to it. Freedom, as pre-reflective is beyond language as sign—signification ('prose' in *What is Literature?*). But Freedom is not beyond image/*sens* ('poetry' in *What is Literature?: Art*, next chapter). It is clear that 'freedom is not a faculty of the human soul to be envisaged and described in isolation' (BN 25). For 'we have to deal with a human reality as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is' (BN 58). Thus, as far as our original, foundational project is concerned 'Let us understand clearly that there is no question of a reflective, voluntary decision, but of a spontaneous determination of our being' (BN 68). Indeed, in this final section on *Being and Nothingness* we have seen a conclusive development in Sartre's ineffable thesis: the universal part played by Freedom - the self.

The ontological description of *Being and Nothingness* is limited to the categories of Being, not being itself, not self itself. The self, as far as propositional language is concerned, is 'indefinable and unnameable' and, further, 'indescribable' (BN 438). *Except* as in *particular* and *concrete situations*, original Freedom, Nothingness, and the being of phenomena will not, cannot, and are not defined or described in *Being and Nothingness* or *Nausea* - or, for that matter in any other text. The existence of Freedom, Nothingness, Being and self will have to be shown: this by necessity excludes such a possibility from those writings and texts that would be characterisable as 'scientific', 'prose': only language as a double semantic, with *le sens*, language that takes words and texts as images or things in themselves, only language as art has the potential to show that which is beyond ordinary discourse. This in itself has further, far reaching implications, as will be seen in the following chapters.

§2.4 CONVERGENCE: SEMANTICS TO SELF

In the preceding account of the ineffable and the linguistic possibility of showing, convergence, as will have been noticed, is not especially found in the *details* and stages of the respective positions. In fact, a few important details aside, the crucial points of convergence to be maintained are no more - but certainly no less - than a shared belief that certain specific matters are ineffable, and are so (in some cases) for similar reasons, but that - again for similar reasons - they can be shown, and that, to look ahead, the ineffable and showing rest respectively on a conception of the self and aesthetic experience. In its extent, this will be more than could ever have expected between the two archetypal representatives of The Divide. And indeed, it is this shared vision of the lingua-self, and its aesthetic determination, that motivates the present inquiry. However, while now considering the issue of convergence, it is worth noting that as far as The Divide *does* exist, as approach or method (cf. Introduction), this ensures differences in detail in certain areas of the respective accounts of the problematic.

Wittgenstein's canon of ineffabilia *and* the linguistic possibility of showing result, for example, from the inherent logical constraints of language as he sees it. Obviously, his discoveries at least appear to be the result of a study of language, and its relation to the world. While for Sartre, on the other hand, the ineffable and the possibility of showing entails because words fail to signify - the necessary background, history, etc. can not be referred to. Similarly, Sartre's discoveries seem to be the result of a study of consciousness, and its relation to the world. Given these two approaches are from opposite directions it is perhaps no surprise that their accounts of the ineffable bear little similarity in the working out of their details. Clearly, lack of detail does not entail lack of depth: the details in construction of analogue and digital watches differ; the profound similarity is found in the principles on which they are assembled and in their joint purpose. Nonetheless, I share the concern that such a vision (which is what, self-confessedly, each philosopher - and this dissertation - takes to be most important) should be

supported by as much detail as possible. Indeed, in the *following* two chapters on self and on showing at the aesthetic level, the above lack of convergence in details will to an extent be compensated for by the stating of many points of convergence which are locked together in their details and which, when linked to the generic convergence of the whole, offer a particularly startling - and trans-divide - vision of the (aesthetic) self. Presently, this section elaborates specific key points of convergence on saying—showing as they have emerged within the fundamental premises of generic convergence.

This convergence section is in fact in three parts. First, some comments on the concept of - 'Scholastic' - definition which was referred to in the discussion of Sartre. The main point of this discussion is to preface the key points of convergence with some comments on the philosophical background to the claim of linguistic inadequacy in Sartre's (and possibly also Wittgenstein's) early philosophy. The second part of this section will summarise some of the results from the lengthy and detailed section on Sartre and the ineffable (it is not needful to summarise Wittgenstein's position which *is* what was offered above). Finally, in part three of this section, some of the key points will be expanded upon - as matters of convergence with Wittgenstein - and done so in the limiting context of the move from the initial linguistic dimension to the self and the aesthetic dimension.

♦ **Background to the ineffable: Problem of real definition**

Most philosophical theories with a commitment to linguistic inadequacy and its possible transcendence originate in an alliance with a branch of one or both of two key conceptions: the dual semantic structure of language and the problem of definition (and therefore description). As to the former, it is becoming apparent that neither Wittgenstein nor Sartre is an exception. For both, the semantic structure of language is seen as bipolar. This idea of a second non-literal meaning that is seen as capable of presenting the ineffable is accepted not only by Sartre and Wittgenstein but by many contemporary philosophers, including Max Black, Paul Ricoeur and, it should be especially noted, Mikel Dufrenne, who offers a systematic aesthetics founded on those

phenomenological and ontological principles which originate in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Moreover, there is a relation between the dual semantic concept and that of the second traditional source of the ineffable, that of definition. The highly complex relation between a dual semantic and the concept of dual-definition does not itself concern us. Nonetheless, reference to the concept of definition helps to explain what does concern us: Sartre's *prima facie* odd adherence to a dual semantic.

It is an old tradition in philosophy that lives and states, in various formulations, that the definition of a word is a two-part process. The Scholastic formulation is for good reasons most notable in its influence. A correct definition of a word or phrase is seen as logically equivalent to that word or phrase. The possibility of definition would then be characterised as either 'nominal' or 'real'. The former explicated a meaning in accordance with established and pre-existing usage; while the real definition would be of the structure common to all the objects to which the word or phrase could be applied. Such a structure has over the years had various formulations - essence, logical form, necessary relation. Common throughout has been the tendency to see such a 'real' definition as impossible, usually because either (a) there is no essence, pluralism, or (b) the 'essence' is seen as 'underlying', noumenon, or thing in itself and hence being beyond human understanding; (often it is seen as the very precondition of such understanding). The tradition insists that the impossibility of giving a real definition logically entails the impossibility of giving a full or adequate description - as was seen with Sartre.

For Wittgenstein and Sartre *the* essence as precondition will be, one supposes, either 'God or Nothing' (i.e. Freedom or the subject). And if with Leibniz it is accepted that 'every idea is analysed perfectly only when it is demonstrated *a priori* that it is possible', then similarly it follows that 'if we give some definition from which it does not appear [then] ... we cannot trust the demonstrations', that, 'to have at the outset perfect definitions of these ideas is difficult'. Thus we are forced 'in the meantime [to] employ nominal definitions of them; that is, we shall analyse the idea of a thing into other ideas through which it can be conceived, even though we cannot proceed as far as the primary ideas'. Similarly, remarks Leibniz, although Hobbes saw

that all truths could in principle be demonstrated from definitions. 'he believed that all definitions are arbitrary and nominal'³⁴.

An important work in this field, falling between scholastic and recent work in logic and semantics, is *The Port Royal Logic* of 1662. In this work, Antoine Arnauld, his works as well known to Sartre as they were to Descartes, devotes a chapter to 'Nominal and Real Definitions'. Again, a sharp distinction is drawn between the poles: 'Real definitions are in marked contrast to nominal definitions since in nominal definitions we arbitrarily assign to a given sound any idea we please by means of words we already understand'³⁵. Real definitions are not arbitrary; they 'necessarily fall into error': they must be proved and cannot be assumed. Real definitions would guarantee the truths of ultimate premises, but their certainty, much sought by philosophers, is claimed by Arnauld to be invalid:

Philosophers offer many real definitions, but claim for them the unassailability of nominal definitions, even though the proposed definition be false, capturing neither our natural ideas or things nor the true nature of things.³⁶

The Scholastic identity between nominal definition and particularity, and real definition and universality, and the identification of the latter with essence or 'the true nature of things', is the crux of Sartre's adherence to the concept (cf. above). In Sartrean terms, as was seen, when referring to Freedom the word signifies but lack *sens* - all the more so in that we are not here dealing with a concept: as to the word "'freedom" [it] is dangerous if it is to imply that the word refers to a concept'. Moreover, the word 'Freedom' refers to a common structure, essence. A real definition would be of the structure common to all the objects to which the word or phrase could be applied. Such a structure is often understood in terms of essence - any definition of an essence is necessarily without meaning. No definition nor therefore description of Freedom is possible except at the level of concrete particularity.

Typical of such essences for Wittgenstein would be what he calls 'the laws of

³⁴ Cf. Leibniz, *Of Universal Synthesis and Analysis* (1973), pp10-17. Parkinson (ed.)

³⁵ 'Real Definitions', *The Light of Reason* (1973), Chapter 5, pp270. M.Hollis (ed.).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp271

nature'(6.371f). Such laws may include that which is seen as responsible for *the* relation between objects of experience. This leads to the question: 'What of Wittgenstein and the problem of definition, is there any equivalence with Sartre's historically explainable position?'

As is well-known, Wittgenstein rejected the Mechanistic explanation of the universe, the belief that all events occur according to Newtonian mechanics (due for example to the displacement in space of material particles). The possibility that the laws of nature are ineffable pertains because these laws, according to Wittgenstein, are non-contingent, necessary for our experience and, therefore, as part of the form of reality, an essence, 'cannot be said: it makes itself manifest' (6.36). What is important to the present concerns, because of the entailed links to Sartre and definition, is that Wittgenstein sees the latter, scientific laws, as being some kind of *essence* (See M. Black 1964, p236). Logical form, on the other hand, is clearly seen as an essence in at least the specific - Sartrean - sense of it being a structure common to all of a particular kind, in this case, names and objects. And it is known from what Wittgenstein further says that both scientific laws and logical form are beyond the sayable. Now, even given these circumstances, it may seem that it is stretching a point to say that Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning and the limits of saying (logical form and essence) entails the impossibility of giving a *real definition* - though such a situation is certainly firmly suggested. But in any case, the limits of saying depend not only on logical form but ultimately upon the nature Wittgenstein assigns to names as primitive signs and their relation to reality (see above §2.2). And on Tractarian names Wittgenstein is explicit: 'A name cannot be dissected any further by means of definition: it is a primitive sign', moreover, 'Nor can any sign that has meaning independently and on its own', such that, 'Names *cannot* be anatomised by means of definition' (3.26 & 3.261).

Whether Wittgenstein's position is defined in terms of the impossibility of real definition *or* the impossibility of an elementary proposition representing the structure which it is in the first place dependent upon for representation, the result is the same: (a) (given the picture theory of meaning) real definition is obviously impossible and, (b) the realm of the ineffable persists regardless, is maintained and strengthened by, the problem of real definition, as will further be

suggested below. Of course, it would take much work to argue convincingly for a Tractatarian commitment to definition along the Scholastic lines assigned to Sartre, such a scenario of comparative detail would be a bonus in the present circumstances but its lack will not weaken the main claims. Nevertheless, *the possibility* if not the likelihood remains convincing ... and hypnotic to both philosophers.

♦ **Summary of Sartre's position**

The claim that Sartre has something to say on language and that this includes a notion of the ineffable and the possibility of (aesthetic) showing, has required a lengthy discussion. Before proceeding to draw points of convergence with Wittgenstein it will be well to summarise some of the key points.

The Ineffable. *Nausea* introduces the idea that a subjectivity experiences the world as an assemblage of meanings (including especially of course the *lack* of meaning: meaning must have *a priori* priority over lack if it is to be experienced as lacking). The *relation* between these objects, that which holds them together as the world, as my world, is constituted by and is dependent upon a subject(ivity). This idea is elaborated upon in *What is Literature?*, where Sartre speaks of *the relation* that holds, necessarily, such that external reality is experienced as *my* world. The relation is thus the pre-condition of signification. Soon it was becoming clear that ultimately this relation, the pre-condition of signification, is to be identified with the self.

In the essay *Departure and Return*, written in-between *Being and Nothingness* and *What is Literature?*, Sartre stresses the central role of the self as the foundation and source of signification and, therefore, as something to be understood as the 'silent human reality'. This central idea had found its greatest elaboration in *Being and Nothingness*, where the subject is spoken of as 'original freedom', the 'foundation of essence'. J. Fell helped us to understand this central notion of the 'silent human reality' with his account of the Sartrean subject, the original subject, in terms of the logical operations (of synthesis etc.) of consciousness which are the pre-

condition of the conceptual and significative language. Fells' discussion re-introduces the human subject and helps us to see the connection between freedom as both a foundation and a precondition of universals. Freedom is ineffable because (a) it is foundational and therefore an 'essence' or universal and, (b), freedom, the *pour soi*, is, as a complex of logical operations which constitute the activity of consciousness, the very precondition of language and its commitment to universals. Sartre, it is clear, grounds his ontology in metaphysics, with epistemology, in a transcendental consciousness (negation) of logical operations.

Both Being and Original Freedom were found to be pre-conceptual, and could only be grasped, if at all, pre-reflectively. Where language is concerned, pre-reflective is pre-significative; a semantic equivalence with Being and Original Freedom would have to be at one with the 'history' of the signifying signs; but ontology is temporal, the present-at-hand is, as in Heidegger, lacking. Being appears historically, its revelation is variable; such revelation will be further variable as Being cannot be determined on the basis of matter alone. it is also thought-determined. the notion of Being (for-itself) as operative intentionality (see below, §4) entails that the meaning of the elements of Being (in-itself) is determined by Being (for-itself); moreover, a point expressed well by Fell.

Analytic thinking as an ontological method is to be used with great circumspection (literally). The nature of the thing as found in ordinary experience - as a formal whole - is to be respected and regarded as the essential meaning of the thing. Analysis cannot construct the thing out of its elementary factors, but must regard the elements as aspects *of the thing*. The thing, that is, is to be regarded fundamentally as a whole rather than as simply an additional composite (Fell, 1979, pp363).

The failure of - temporally and epochally determined - significative language to place the Original Freedom of the self as Nothingness in the world is further explained, it was maintained in the discussion of *Being and Nothingness*, by reintroducing Fell's discussion of the particular and the universal, also adding further substance to a claim of this chapter, that it is Sartre's adherence (tacit or otherwise) to a (Scholastic) dual theory of definition which contributes to his commitment to the ineffable, the problem of giving a real as opposed to a nominal definition.

Showing. The possibility of showing, of transcending the ineffable through a second semantic

pole. was also introduced in *Nausea*. This early formulation of showing is portrayed in terms of a 'new insight' born out of the failure of significative language. The ineffable as the world, my world (i.e. essence as relation between objects that constitute the world of the subject's experience), is caused by a failure in significative language (saying) that is overcome by a second sense, *la sens*, which shows what cannot be said. It is in *What is Literature?* that Sartre speaks at length about this semantic distinction. The distinction is, at least generically and in practice, between language as prose. The former is identifiable as denotative, discursive, and instrumental, while denoting or referring its object it implies no further attributes; it is the ideal language of logic and science. Poetic discourse, on the other hand, is typified by metaphor, symbol, and myth, it is identifiable as connotative and non-instrumental, it *suggests* of its object of reference further attributes; it is the ideal language of fiction and story-telling. Furthermore, Sartre refers to an art object as that which embodies its second - non-literal - meaning as something expressive. That language can present an actual reality or essence, the relation between objects, to an individual consciousness, but that this, quo-incommunicable, must be conveyed through the *suggestive* powers of language: showing (cf. above. §2.2iii).

Besides articulation of this crucial semantic distinction, *What is Literature?* outlines what is a key link between the ineffable and the self. Sartre refers to a subject as freedom that is not to be understood in terms of the particular and the personal (realm of nominal definition), but in terms of the universal (requiring real definition), where, importantly, prose is to be identified with the former, poetry with the latter. In the interview with Verstraeten, it was seen that Sartre develops this distinction by introducing, on top of language as scientific (prose) and language as literature (poetry), that of language as philosophy: which always has concealed a literary dependence on the poetic (something to be elaborated upon in the final chapter). Here the ineffable is due to, at least partly, the fact that words have 'their own history', it is this 'history' which constitutes a background (*le sens*) on top of which meaning is attained. The task of the writer/philosopher is (or therefore should be) to 'attain equivalence' between words and their background. But this it is suggested is difficult, and Sartre further suggests that concepts cannot in fact be rendered by a

language that fails to attain equivalence. This limitation and the ensuing ineffableness opens up the need, desire, and possibility for a different use of language - aesthetic or aesthetically attained, with its own determining mode of expression (§5). Our discussion of the Key Points and more especially the views expressed in *Being and Nothingness* confirms with greater detail all of the above findings.

♦ **Key points: from semantics to self**

This section will state and expand on some of the key points - as matters of convergence with Wittgenstein - and do so in the limiting and forward-moving context of the move from the initial linguistic dimension to the self and the aesthetic dimension. In effect, and for relief only, these key points of convergence are discussed under two headings, that of ontology, and that of logic and semantics. The latter division will break down into three further points of convergence: the distinction between saying and showing; the idea of a reflective and pre-conceptual mode of understanding; and the central role of the subject.

Ontology. Recall that both philosophers are committed to an ontological fact—value distinction. In each case the latter is ultimately identified with the (metaphysical)—subject (*pour soi*) while the former is equated with external reality as given (*en soi*). This reality is in turn to be identified with the factual, and the factual with the contingent. The world of facts is in both cases given, with both philosophers subscribing to a basic realism. The basic constituents of reality are, for Sartre, just those empirical objects that we perceive; for Wittgenstein, they are also ‘objects’ (of course, as was seen ‘the world’ is not given). For the present purposes, it is a question only of the effability of these objects which is of interest.

There is a difficulty, however, in that the nature and status of these Tractarian objects is completely open to differing interpretations. Two erstwhile possibilities ensue: either these enigmatic objects can be identified and a definite description can be given; or a definite description cannot be given (whether they are identifiable are not). Opinion is split, David Pears

(1987, pp105-114), for example, is in the former camp; while McGuinness and Ishiguro are in the latter. The point is that if Wittgenstein's objects are indeterminate, then on the question of the ineffable this pairs them with Sartre's perceptible objects, both being beyond real definition. If, on the other hand, the nature of the objects of the *Tractatus* is open to real definition and they are describable, then, surprisingly, Sartre's concept of linguistic inadequacy extends beyond Wittgensteins.

For Sartre, the same empirical and contingent world that is constituted by objects is alien, brute, and *nameless*, and is not, as was seen, definable or describable. There is not the luxury of a logical correlation between names and objects (note that in the picture theory what is named is a *thing*, what is described as belonging always 'to the category of facts' - cf. Stenius, 1960' pp120). So, on this point, due to the illegitimacy and non-appropriateness of adopting one interpretation of the Tractarian objects over another, all that can be said regarding the basic constituents of reality is that for Sartre their nature *is* ineffable, while for Wittgenstein their nature *may* be ineffable. Sartre's ocean of the ineffable may well be deeper and more radical than Wittgensteins. There is in this matter, however, a central ontological/ineffable two-part point on which interpretation does not obtrude, and on which it can be said that both philosophers unambiguously agree. Firstly, the resulting combination of these objects is what constitutes external reality as the world, my world, as a scheme of relations or natural law. Secondly, a description of *the relation* is seen as impossible. As far as the *Tractatus* is concerned, the empirical and contingent world is one of relations that are pictured where the very possibility of picturing, 'the form of reality', 'logical form' or the logical relation, common ground between world and language, is itself beyond picturing. As to Sartre, his position has been seen as 'An expression of revolt against ... linguistic idealism'. His world is that of 'the real rather than the ideal, because it is *grounded in* an inarticulable actuality, i.e., a region beyond all denomination and classification' (Fell, 1979, pp270). For Sartre, the scheme of relations that constitute external reality *as a world* are of course dependent upon the *pour soi*, upon a subjectivity. Thus the self is invoked, as it is for similar reasons (below) in the *Tractatus*. In short, for both philosophers the

ineffable is grounded in their ontology. it extends to ontological descriptions, and encompasses the self which *is* the relation between language and world.

Logic and Semantics. The semantic status of a proposition is, for Sartre, a matter of signification and *sens*; for Wittgenstein it is a matter of meaning (*bedeutung*) and sense (*sinn*). There is a clear parallel between the status of these two sets of terms (as I noted in the conclusion to the account of Wittgenstein, §2.2). To take signification and meaning first, they both have a given - referential - relation to the world. A proposition is said to have meaning or signify when its' names denote particular objects. Both Sartre's *sens* and Wittgenstein's *sinn*, on the other hand, are best distinguished from signification and meaning by the following three interconnected features: they are not 'given' - they do not say (signify or refer), and they make showing possible. making signs into symbols: they introduce a pre-conceptual - pre-reflective - mode of understanding: they invoke, and depend upon, a subject. As the claim to convergence on this issue is significant, some comment on each of the three points is required.

Meaning (*bedeutung*) and signification obtain in relation to the basic constituents of reality - objects, combinations of which are facts (above); it is to these which names refer, and it is due to this referring relation, the signifying pole of a language that propositions can be claimed to have meaning (*bedeutung*) as is essential to 'saying' in the *Tractatus*. The ineffable is all that lies outside this remit: it includes Value, aesthetic and ethical. Also included is the world taken as a 'whole' (Wittgenstein) or 'totality' (Sartre), for neither Sartre nor Wittgenstein is *the world* a fact, a referable object or set of objects. *The world* will have to be shown. This is achieved through *sens* and *sinn*. Thus, the saying—showing distinction in each philosopher finds the world as a whole or totality to be amongst that which is not given and cannot be spoken about, but which, through *sens* and *sinn* is shown. The essential point to be taken forward to the final chapter, is that meaning, ethical (and in this case existential) meaning, is in both cases equated with the world as a whole or totality, where this is achieved through the combination of the given meaning with that of *sens* or *sinn*.

For Sartre, *sens* involves what he calls “*compréhension*”, which is a pre-conceptual faculty for grasping objects and relationships between objects as synthetic wholes. This comprehension is a matter of (logical) acts of synthesis. Logical operations, in the form of mental acts that distinguish and synthesise, are the precondition of saying in *Being and Nothingness* (above). It is then, a pre-reflective and pre-conceptual mode of understanding: the necessary background to thought and language. Where Wittgenstein is concerned, logical form plays a similar role to that of Sartre’s logical operations: it is the logical precondition of *sinn*, sense. It is the concept of the subject as intentional, as we shall see, that underpins Wittgenstein’s similar adherence to a link between the ineffable and the possibility of showing as an epistemological possibility: grasping the meaning of self and world as a totality or whole. Furthermore, in both logical form and logical operations we are again, as with ontology, referred to the subject.

Indeed, as far as intentionality is concerned, the semantics of both philosophers depend ultimately upon it. As was indicated, the picture theory of meaning requires the intentionality of a self. If this is borne to mind when turning to Sartre’s account of language, then two generic points are immediately apparent. That on Sartre’s view meaningful discourse does *not, pace* Wittgenstein, necessarily involve isomorphic representation and picturing; but that, nonetheless, there can in fact be no meaningful language without the intentionality of the *pour soi*. In Sartre’s account the intentionality (of the pre-reflective cogito) is necessary to change ‘dead’ signs to symbols, to make meaningful discourse possible. In Wittgenstein’s account the intentionality (of the metaphysical subject) is necessary to change signs to symbols. In both accounts then, the possibility of meaningful discourse is dependent upon the intentionality of self.

The crucial point which this convergence section (and this chapter) is leading to is that both Sartre’s *sens* and Wittgenstein’s *sinn* are dependent upon a self as signifier - a bi-polar self. For Sartre, it was noted, and a point to be elaborated below, the self is manifested in particular and concrete situations (the ego): we can speak of it as the ‘I’. And the ‘I’, the personal or the ‘singular’ is in the world and can be denominated, defined and spoken of in propositional language. Prose (signs as signifiers) can express the whole process of negating - present-at-hand -

surpassing, the concrete. But the source of the 'I', original freedom, is, so it would seem, perpetually beyond language. It is (a) the foundation or background to language and (b) as background, (historical), universal. Original Freedom has no experiential nor linguistic reference; its reality is the pre-condition of the sentences that *would* be used to refer to it. Freedom - original, not as manifested in the concreteness of situations - is pre-reflective and is beyond language as sign/signification ('prose' in *What is Literature?*). But Freedom is not beyond image/*sens* ('poetry' in *What is Literature?*). Sign - signifier is equated with the natural or perceptual attitude; while materiality—*sens* is equated with imaginative attitude. Original freedom is not in the world and cannot be defined and described. But poetry (through *la sens*) is capable of expressing the pre-reflective moment - which is also one of 'totality' (below). It is only in language as *la sens* that the universal singular - 'man' - is expressed. As far as propositional language is concerned, the self is 'indefinable', 'unnameable' and 'indescribable' (BN 438). And so too, as will be seen, in the *Tractatus*, as one part of Wittgenstein's bi-polar self, the psychological self, is an object in the world which may be referred to by language, while the other part of the self, the metaphysical subject, is, as with Sartre's original freedom, both the background to the possibility of language and also as such universal - though not, as will be seen, due to historical factors. But nonetheless, as was claimed at the conclusion of §2.2 and as will be elucidated at §5, Wittgenstein's highly technical account of the saying—showing distinction similarly underpins a generic affirmation of poetic language as its *operettas mundi*.

A Conclusion. Already then, a conclusion of the final chapter can be stated. *Nausea* is written by and is about a character who has a name and a title: Roquentin the Historian, and these, the particular or the concrete, are signified, have meaning, and are spoken of at length in the novel. But note the crucial point in the novel: Roquentin's realisation that his self cannot in fact be identified with the designation 'historian' results in the experience of nausea. Except as in particular and concrete situations - as an ego and psychological subject - original Freedom and metaphysical subject is not signified by language, it therefore will not, cannot, and is not

described. not anywhere. including *Being and Nothingness*, *Nausea*, or *Tractatus*.

The existence of the self. of Value. will have to be shown: potentially a nauseating revelation. To combine this with a philosophical picture of the world requires a very particular conception of philosophy as aesthetics. It is within this framework that the philosopher recreates his or her self while vanquishing the real problem of philosophy: the riddle of life, the absurdity of existence. Meaning must be created and can only be shown. The issue is a problematic of self, it is also a Romantic ethics of the ineffable, constituted in terms of the self's aesthetic reinvention through a lingua-aesthetic deed, paradigmmed in *Nausea* and *Tractatus*. Attention now befalls the self and aesthetic - poetic - reinvention.

§3
THE SELF: I, *MOI* - *AUGE*?

The I or ego is the dark point in consciousness, just as on the retina the precise point of entry of the optic nerve is blind, the brain itself is wholly insensible, the body of the sun is dark, and the eye sees everything except itself.

(Schopenhauer, The world as Will and Representation, Voll.II, pp491).

Where *in* the world is the metaphysical subject to be found? You will say this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do *not* see the eye. And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye. [sic]

(Tractatus 5.633).

The eye is the point to which all the objective lines converge. Thus the perceptive field refers to a centre objectively defined by that reference and located *in the very field* which is orientated around it. Only we do *not* see this centre as the structure of the perceptive field considered; *we are the centre*. ...That my eye should see itself is by nature impossible.[sic]

(Being and Nothingness, pp317 & pp359)

§3

After the preliminary remarks, §3.1 is in two parts, each expository, and each devoted to a philosopher, Sartre and Wittgenstein respectively. Such an exposition is of value in itself, as there is scant interpretative authority on either Wittgenstein's or Sartre's early accounts of the self. Equally, the exposition is necessary for both the problematic of the lingua-aesthetic self and the comparative study; each ultimately depends upon these exposed foundations: the present chapter will be drawn on in the remainder of the thesis. Indeed, the benefits of this exposition are immediately and heavily drawn on in the next section (§3.2) which details four key aspects of comparison between the two accounts of the self: that it is bi-polar, eliminated, a no-thing (non-substantive) and non-encounterable. Aside from their value to the convergent theme of the thesis, these points of contact are central to the problematic of self. Furthermore (as with the saying—showing distinction), they maintain the possibility of aesthetics, and do so by making accessible a fifth and final point of convergence: the (multi-dimensional account of the) self as modalities, as Value, the subject of the following chapter.

§3:1 TWO SENSES OF SELF¹

Phenomenologically disposed philosophers have sought a self that is neither naturalistic and contingent nor pure and transcendent. 'The question', as Merleau-Ponty has it,

is that of man's relationship to his natural or social surroundings. There are two classical views: one treats man as the result of the physical, physiological, and sociological influences which shape him from the outside and make him one thing among many; the other consists in recognising an a-cosmic freedom in him, insofar as he is spirit and represents to himself the very causes which supposedly act upon him. On the one hand, man

¹ In what follows, the phrase '(metaphysical)-subject' will be used when *simultaneously* referring to Wittgenstein's 'metaphysical subject' and Sartre's self as subject (i.e. as not ego).

is a part of the world; on the other, he is the constituting consciousness of the world. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 71f).

‘Neither view’, he continues, ‘is satisfactory’.

Like Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein and Sartre sought and proposed a self between the two classical views. However, *the* tension that arises from positing a self that is both eliminated from the world existing at the limit or boundary of (linguistic) experience and one that is individual and embodied is not a tension that will directly occupy our problematic, apart from the preliminary section, Fact—Value. Equally, although some account of the embodied empirical pole of self must be offered, this only in so far as it crucially helps to ‘place’ the eliminated non-substantive pole of self. It is the self as no-thing with which the inquiry is primarily concerned: though clearly the problematic, the limits of language and the possibility of an aesthetic relation all depend upon their embodied ‘factual’ situation .

(i) Preliminary: I and ‘I’, contingent—transcendent, Fact—Value?

For all the dominance of a ‘self’ in Sartre’s philosophy, the concept *per se* has received surprisingly scant attention by scholars. Most often, it has had to take back seat to itself as ‘freedom’, as ‘bad faith’, as an ethically or politically engaged ‘human reality’. Too little has been said about The Self, it lacks both expository and (in a strict sense) interpretative authority. Similarly, Wittgenstein’s early account of the self has had scant attention - even when compared to the ethical as opposed to the logical and linguistic doctrines of the *Tractatus*. Its opacity and perceived subservience to logic and language making this less surprising.

Proposing an account of the self presupposes in the first place such an entity. Existentialists like Sartre have good reason to want to avoid such a presupposition². To predicate from this subject is to allow language to imply, or even to posit, something definable and describable, an essence or substance of sorts. The very claim that a description reveals the nature of The Self is to

² D.E.Cooper (1991), Chapter 6.

be avoided. Although such terminology - 'self' - can hardly be avoided, as in one sense Sartre more than amply demonstrates, nonetheless, it would be a mistake to think that Sartre when speaking of 'self' is falling into the trap, as he sees it, of presupposing the existence of some underlying essence or substantive subject. According to Sartre, the mistake which leads to this trap *is usually made*. The roots of this particular philosophical presupposition is identified with the common philosophical use of that billowing little word "I" (§3.2iv).

Of central importance for Sartre is that any such presupposition - to an underlying substance or essence that defines what humans are or do - is a clear example of bad faith; part of the more general attempt by agents to avoid responsibility for their actions, by dislocating those actions from a supposed 'true inner self'. The 'true' self, if we wish to persist with such a designation, perhaps under the spell of its historic and subjective stage management, the true self is the being-for-itself as nothingness (*le néant*). It is original consciousness, consciousness without object, a pure, active, intentional, meaningful (operative), unreflected subjectivity; a nonsubstantial and therefore non-referent existence, definable only in terms of either its past or in terms of its absent-present-at-hand, that is, its existence as possibilities. If *this* concept is to be apprehended for what it is, then it will have to be kept clear of the philo-historical associations inherent in the language of 'self' and 'I'.

It is not so clear in reading the *Tractatus* or the *Notebooks* that Wittgenstein is either as concerned about the dangers of presupposing the existence of an underlying and defining human substance, or (therefore) as eager to avoid a certain use of language when referring to the self. His attack, however, on the use of "I" (very apparent in the mid and later works) is paralleled in its concern, I would suggest, to that of Sartre's noted above. That is, the reader must be on his or her guard against confusing the use of "I" with a predicative subject. Neither in the *Tractatus* nor the *Notebooks* does Wittgenstein speak simply of 'the self' - for, as with the early works of Sartre no such philo-historical (substantive, essential) thing exists.

As Wittgenstein *is* set against the idea of an underlying substantive entity, this, as will be seen, implicitly defines his approach, aligning it with Sartre's. Wittgenstein splits the notion of

self into two, with the first part named as either 'psychological' or 'soul'. But moreover, the second part of the self, the 'true self' (non substantive), is variously 'metaphysical', 'ethical', 'transcendental', 'ego' or 'philosophical'. Partly, as with a similar diversity of terms in Sartre, this is to draw attention to its various modalities (§4); but moreover, the self will be seen *to be* just these modalities; through which it brings Value, aesthetic and ethical, into the world.

♦ (Fact—)Value

The setting in the early philosophy of Sartre and Wittgenstein of Value against Fact, pervasive to the present thesis, is not to be determinate. 'There really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self' (5.641). The 'sense' in which the self does exist is as Value, as selfhood, as modalities of selfhood. This is found to lie ultimately in a concept of the self as a 'relational attitude' (§4). This is the self that is *involved* in, but not designated by, an attitude to the world - whether natural or aesthetic; it is to be understood as coextensive with a 'psychological', designating—signifying (§2) aspect, as having, in a fuller sense, an existence in the empirical or factual world (§4—§5 *passim*).

Although it is clear that at the time of the *Tractatus* and the *Notebooks* Wittgenstein does not resolve this point of tension between the empirical (Fact) and the metaphysical (Value), he insists that 'the will must have a foothold in the world' (cf. §3.1iii). Sartre is more successful - the self does have a foothold in the world, it is *situated* - indeed, it is in a full sense situated. Thus although the self (Value) is set apart from Being (Fact), Being is experienced as the 'the present-at-hand': the given is never free of human significance. The two realms, fact—value, are not pure and independent. There is a reciprocity between Being and self:

Value is affected with the double character, which moralists have very inadequately explained, of both being unconditionally and not being' (BN 92).

Value cannot be equated, reduced to empirical desires, it also being outside the world (*Tractatus* 6.41). It is the self, however, (as value: lack) that chooses or creates values. In so doing, the self chooses its world: as Wittgenstein said (quoted above): there are two Godheads, the world and my independent I. In choosing, the (historically) situated self projects itself toward a future, toward a

lack, the fundamental lack being the Being of God: absolute value. As Sartre says in *Being and Nothingness*, in the section ‘The For-Itself and the Being of Value’,

Now we can ascertain more exactly what is the being of the self: it is value. ... Thus the being of value qua value is the being of what does not have being. *Value then appears inapprehensible*. To take it as being is to risk totally misunderstanding its unreality and to make of it, as sociologists do, a requirement of fact among other facts. (BN 93 - my emphasis).

For Sartre, as for Wittgenstein, ‘human reality is that by which value arrives in the world’, where ‘value is given as a beyond of the acts confronted, as the *limit*, for example, of the infinite progression of noble acts. Value is beyond being’ (BN 93). In short, 3 key points on the Fact—Value relation can be noted. Firstly, body is situated consciousness, consciousness as a concrete reality (cf. sub-section under §3.1ii). Secondly, experience is always within nature. Thirdly, the self is an active mode of regarding the world, it is in a synthesis with Being, with objects, the Wittgenstarian position recalls clearly that of Kant’s transcendental idealism, as to some extent we shall see.

It is the transcendent pole of the bi-polar self which, though not in the realm of saying, nevertheless finds itself in the realm of showing. It is this very sense of self that emerged in the previous chapter and which shall dominate the inquiry. But, the crux of this preliminary, this is neither to forget nor ignore those crucial aspects that *situate* the self as a relation, that reciprocate value with fact as they contribute to our problematic. Equally, and granting saying—showing, we must not forget what Wittgenstein’s and Sartre’s own lives show (cf. Introduction). In both cases we shall find a remarkable orientation toward self-transformation, this through a completely new approach to a way of living, to a constant preoccupation with renunciation and salvation (very much in accord with Pascal and Kierkegaard³). We are dealing with showing as a principle at once theoretical and practical, formal and existential, with renunciation uniting these poles⁴. But

³ The debt of both philosophers to Kierkegaard is unquestionable (Introduction and §4.2). As to Pascal, besides Wittgenstein’s scattered remarks, there is, for a professed atheist, quite an extraordinary amount of references to him thought throughout Sartre’s *oeuvre*.

⁴ To take the most obvious example, of material possession: neither philosopher ever owned private property; both give away most of their money, keeping only what they needed to get by on.

the 'Existential' call to self-transformation announces itself as much in and through the work, in a concept of language and in a concept of self.

(ii) Sartre: Self & structures of consciousness: subject and ego.

If in the beginning there is the word, and if this word is to designate, define or describe, and if we are to attempt to designate, define or describe Sartre's self, then in the beginning there is a tripartite structure. The self of prereflective consciousness; the self as ego; the self as value. Also, relatedly, there is a self as embodied consciousness. Furthermore, one must, with Sartre, offer some comment on reflection.

♦ The Self as Subject⁵

(Or the Cogito; or prereflective consciousness; that is, non-thetic or non-positional consciousness). Not the cogito of Descartes. Prereflective consciousness makes reflection - and thus knowledge - possible, and is to be understood, therefore, as the precondition for the Cartesian Cogito. Sartre's cogito can be defined as that which is aware that it is aware that it is not the object it is aware of. In broad terms, non-positional consciousness is self-consciousness. It is thus non-positional in the sense that it is not consciousness *of* an object, but rather it is the necessary implicit consciousness that accompanies other - positional - types of consciousness. This entails, as Sartre wishes, that every type of consciousness is a self-consciousness, consciousness is always aware of itself as consciousness of something and of not therefore being that something. Sartre characteristically offers homely existential examples to illustrate his ideas, such as someone counting cigarettes while conversing, or we might think of the process of

⁵ The next few exegetical paragraphs owe a debt to Hazel Barnes' article *Sartre's Concept of the Self* in K. Hoeller (ed.) (1993). Although it has been a convenience to follow Hazel Barnes, in that her broad characterisation fits the purpose here, nevertheless matters are not as straight-forward as she too often has them. Importantly, the relation between the different modes of reflection and (non)-positional consciousness is more complex than acknowledged: reflection on the ego, for example, can also be non-positional. Also, it is disputable whether the prereflective consciousness can be identified with non-positional consciousness. Catalano (1977, pp98f) for one, states that prereflective consciousness is both immediately consciousness-of-an-object and an awareness, where every awareness is non-positional.

driving a car (of which we are always, ideally, prereflectively aware) while at the same time we reflectively think and do many other things. For Sartre, any act of consciousness includes both a consciousness of the object and a self - prereflective - non-positional consciousness.

Prereflective consciousness is completely devoid of *personal* psychic qualities; it is the condition of consciousness, not its differentiating nature. It is non-personal in that there is no sense of 'I' or 'me' involved. Nonetheless, it is still individuated in the sense that it is pure intentionality directed towards an object, and as such it is not devoid of individual psychic or emotional qualities.

This individuated non-personal self-consciousness is radically separated from the ego and, thus, psychological determinism. It will be seen that it is on the plain of prereflectivity that both the intimation and the realisation of the ethical takes place, it is the prereflective consciousness that will make the original choice, the fundamental project. (It is at the level of prereflective consciousness that each and every choice is made).

Prereflective consciousness is often referred to by Sartre as 'value'. For sure, it is the source of actions and the source of value, of ethical meaning (§4 and §5). The (prereflective) subject can never be regarded as an object (or as a 'fact' in the world), it is both a nothingness (a possibility) and the source or precondition of the ego. Sartre's cogito is the foundation of consciousness, of thought, of language and thus knowledge and understanding. Difficulties will be encountered if asked how we can conceptualise or have knowledge of or speak meaningfully of that which would appear to be the precondition of all understanding. As a nothing, as potential only (in *relation* to world), with no past (history), this structure of consciousness finds itself as the source of the mental act, as *the* signifier, not the signified; it cannot be spoken of, and will have to be shown.

♦ **The Self as Ego (impure and pure reflection; embodied)**

(Or reflective consciousness; that is, **thetic** or **positional** consciousness). The ego is not located in consciousness, it is external to consciousness, and is not materially immanent to

consciousness. There is, says Sartre, 'nothing under the words, behind the images. For 'finally everything is outside, everything, even including ourselves' (IN 125).

When consciousness reflects back upon earlier acts of consciousness, i.e., when the original prereflective consciousness is 'objectified' by the reflective consciousness, it takes on qualities which are 'inseparable from the particular accumulation of particular interactions with the world' (Barnes, 1993 pp41ff), it begins to impose a unity upon those experiences, both past and future (future is as it must be, 'virtual'). This ego is coextensive with all of a self's psyche, not a given part (as in Freud). It is not the original prereflective consciousness, it is all of the objects of the reflective consciousness.

The ego is then, the bundle of psychological traits and characteristics, acts and reactions, which is identified with a personality. Unlike the prereflective consciousness it is personal, a distinctive enduring self. This 'I' with which a self associates its experiences is in fact no more than a construct of consciousness which is experienced at the level of impure reflection. This ego is not the cause of actions nor a fixed structure which can guide them. The ego is produced by consciousness, and is not part of the structure of consciousness. It is created - at the level of impure reflection - *to give consciousness an outside which is identical to itself*. The ego is thus an obstacle to authentic choice: freedom and responsibility are identified with consciousness, not 'being' and not the ego. It is in bad faith that one identifies freedom with the ego.

The existence of the ego is thus purely 'ideal': it is seen by Sartre as a formal unity imposed upon past and future intentional acts by a present reflective consciousness.⁶ It is the locus classicus of temptation, evasion, and bad faith. It is imposed by consciousness and in turn imposes restrictions - which can be modified. As Sartre says in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, the ego is at the horizon of our choices, this 'I which appears on the horizon of the I think is not given as the producer of conscious spontaneity. Consciousness produces itself facing the *I* and goes toward it, goes to rejoin it. That is all one can say' (TE 92).

⁶ There is a difference depending upon whether it is the future or the past, see Barnes in Hoeller (ed.) (1993)

The ego, in the world, is of the same ontological status as other objects, as the world of *en soi*. As such, it is also a (potential) object of knowledge, for both the self and the other. This structure of consciousness can be regarded as what it is: an object (of impure reflection). It is, in a superb phrase by Barnes, the 'core of one's personal biography'.

If Sartre were to write a novel (in the first person) called 'The world as I found it', and if by analogy we say that the prereflective cogito (the original choice) is the author of this novel, then *in* this novel the first-person narrator would be the ego. But the ego is neither fiction nor substance. It is a bundle of socio-historical psychological states⁷. As an object in the world, it can be signified by language, it is in the realm of saying.

Impure Reflection is a concept that is essential to Sartre's distinction between consciousness and ego. It is in impure reflection that consciousness is posited as an object, the ego, (and thus closely connected to its facticity). Impure reflection reduces consciousness to a series of psychic states and acts which constitute the self as ego. The self objectifies itself, sees itself as part of Being, as objects in the world, it becomes an object, (with its facticity). This involves overriding the free spontaneity of the prereflective consciousness in a guilty act of bad faith with the contingent world (*en soi*).

Impure reflection can be thought of in terms of ordinary introspection; it is the process by which we recall past events, and with which we analyse and assess our psychic life - or that of others. It is what is involved in our trying to understand ourselves or others - perhaps typified in the therapist, the biographer, and the novelist (Sartre often cites Freud, his own biographies and Proust). Thus, unlike consciousness, which is orientated towards the future, impure reflection extrapolates and constructs from the past. It is also, besides that which apprehends, that which constitutes - and that which is constituted is the ego: the totality of states. In short, impure reflection organises reflected consciousness into a series of (psychic) states or acts; it *objectifies*

⁷ In Buddhism the ego is the residue of past deeds: the liberation from the ego would free one from all forms of 'selfness' (i.e. one's Karma, the accretion of former thoughts and deeds).

reflected consciousness in an attempt to affirm identity (BN 163). Hence, impure reflection can be a welcome refuge from the anguished freedom which is at the heart of consciousness: it avoids the revelation of this freedom by deceiving us that we have a fixed identity. 'Impure reflection is an abortive effort on the part of the for-itself to be another while *remaining itself* (BN 161)'.

The object of impure reflection, that which is grasped, the reflected, is not, however, the original consciousness; rather, where a subject is sought an object is found. The original consciousness is not a personalised self and impure reflection can not reflect upon its original source; in impure reflection what is reflected upon is the ego. If then, the cogito or original consciousness is to be apprehended, fixed by significative language, encountered, it will not be so by impure reflection.

Finally, as far as Sartre is concerned, it is not a question of asking 'what sort of self am I?', for the self that is identified with 'I' is not the real self but a psychological construct - and thus the subject matter for psychology (exactly as in Wittgenstein - below). The proper question asked by Sartre's position begs a philosophical and not a psychological approach (again, a point made by Wittgenstein): 'what is the nature of 'my'⁸ real self, and what sort of an 'I' has consciousness created?'

Pure Reflection. Pure reflection is the original structure of impure reflection, it is an internal modification of the prereflective consciousness (there is a corollary between pure reflection and the cogito, just as there is a similar corollary between impure reflection and the self as ego). This reflection *is* positional, but the reflected (*reflechi*) that is posited by the reflection (*reflexif*) is no more than a quasi-object, for it is not posited as external: it remains always 'intra-subjective'.

Pure reflection surpasses the psychic ego and objectified consciousness by dwelling on non-positional consciousness. It seeks the subject, as does impure reflection, but whereas the latter

⁸ The prereflective consciousness should not be referred to by personal pronouns - but their avoidance in a work such as this would result in a tedium which neither a reader nor an author could tolerate. Moreover, to assume that such indicators do in any case refer to a self is *exactly* the mistake that Sartre and Wittgenstein are at pains to countenance. (Cf. opening to this chapter and opening to §3.2iii)

finds a real (psychological) object the former finds a quasi, intra-subjective object in terms of a 'sense of subject': this is the *recognition* of 'oneself' as independent from one's ego.

Pure reflection as *prima-recognition*, that is, of the first awareness of an outside world and of being-for-others. Pure reflection reveals to consciousness the apparent paradox that it is a self that *is not*, that consciousness is in fact a pursuit of selfhood. Nonetheless, although it is possible to reflect on, say, the memory of a non-reflective experience (i.e. fear of ...), it is not possible to reflect on the *original* prereflective conscious act in itself and at the time of making it. Pure reflection reveals the limited understanding of the freedom from ego that the prereflective consciousness has. (The ego may well remain present at the level of pure reflection, but it will only be 'on the horizon' - TE 92).

If life appears meaningless due to a lack of an ethic (§5), the resulting feeling of absurdity will not be overcome in reflection as ordinarily understood. Determination will involve the difficult act of seeing one's projects in the world as that of a boundary or limit (§4 and §5), and not as a thing or object. It is an aesthetic attitude that will make this a possibility.

The Self as Embodied Consciousness. And again the specific issue of the self as fact(—Value). It has oft been said that Sartre's ontological position is incomprehensible; it is certainly complex and *prima facie* deserves greater attention than it has received (by Sartrean scholars). Sartre tells us that his ontology is a phenomenological description (cf. §2.3iii BN), between consciousness as a no-thing and the being that it is dependent upon. This is usually interpreted along the following leading lines. Being exists and is given to perception (realism), consciousness is the source of all determination (idealism), and thus, it is claimed, on this basis, an unfortunate Neo-Cartesianism. Sartre's ontological division is not, however, between consciousness and being; it is between two regions of being: for-itself and in-itself. The former is distinguished from the latter by its existence as a negating activity, as a *relation* (§4.2).

Consciousness cannot exist, however, without being, and the body is the mediator between consciousness and being: it is both for-itself and in-itself. The body is the fact (facticity) of a

consciousness in the world. 'Being-for-itself must be wholly body, and it must be wholly consciousness; it cannot be united with a body' (BN 404). Think here of emotional behaviour. Sartre says that all such behaviour is to be purposeful, so that the body is active and not passive in the self's interaction with the world. By effecting changes in the body a person modifies their relation to the world. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* the body is seen as that which supports the illusion of 'I'. It encourages a person, in the prereflective mode, to think of themselves in terms of a unified 'I': "I say, 'I' am breaking up sticks, and I see and feel the object 'body' engaged in breaking sticks. The body thus serves as the visible and tangible symbol for the I" (TE 90).

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre identifies the body with three (ontological) dimensions: body for the other, body known by the other, and body as for-itself. The former is meant to indicate the fact, as Sartre sees it, that a person (will usually) experience another's' body as a consciousness, as an expression of that consciousness and not as part of the inert matter of the world. Nonetheless, there will be times when another consciousness will treat or view my body as a pure object: this is the 'body as known by the other'. Of more concern to the present study is the third dimension of the body, as for-itself. The body is consciousness in the sense that the world is mediated to consciousness through the body, that without body there would be no facticity. This is not however, some kind of causal relationship. There is a prereflective, non-thetic awareness of body that is part of the structure of consciousness: the two can not be differentiated; our consciousness of the body is prereflective. Neither can they be reduced to one or the other. Thus, unlike with the other two dimensions, consciousness is not *of* body. The heat from the fire that burns my arm is also a pain-consciousness, the two are only separated in reflection.

The body is, then, to make an important point, a consciousness' point of reference on the world. My own (prereflective) experience of my body (as consciousness) does not - and cannot - disclose it to me as an object in the world. In so far as my body provides me with a point of view on the world, it is impossible for me to take a point of view on it. Thus, a consciousness' point of

view on the world is. *in a sense*, within the world. But this does not, Sartre correctly notes, and echoing Wittgenstein's Tractarian position ('an extensionless point ...'), give a sufficient condition for identifying *my* body with my point of view. Within the structures of consciousness, Sartre has made it clear (above) that although the original conscious *relation* to the world is individuated it is not personal and does not involve the 'I'. 'The point of view can approach the body to the point of almost being dissolved in it, as we see, for example, in the case of glasses, pince-nez, monocles, etc., which become, so to speak, a supplementary sense organ' (BN 320).

Ultimately the self is 'nothing' but a self-relating self-awareness (§4.2). And

when we say that the for-itself is-in-the-world, that consciousness is consciousness of the world, we must be careful to remember that the world exists confronting consciousness as an indefinite multiplicity of reciprocal relations which consciousness surveys without perspective and contemplates without a point of view. (BN 306).

Conclusion. The 'true' self, foundational, is original freedom: it is a structure of consciousness; it is beyond the limits of those structures, it is beyond both modes of reflection. There is a sense in which it exists in the world, though this does not include it 'as the body'.

That my eye should see itself is by nature impossible. ... it would be possible to conceive of a system of visual organs such that it would allow one eye to see the other. But the seen eye would be seen as a thing [i.e. 'object' or 'ego'], not as a being of reference' (BN 358).

The 'I' is the limit or boundary of experience. For the problematic of self, determination involves the difficult act of seeing one's projects in the world as that of a boundary or limit (§4 and §5), and not as a thing or object. This is a feat beyond the structures of consciousness - at least in its natural (relational) attitude to the world. Moreover, original freedom is identified with value, with ethical meaning, and thus centrally with the problematic. For a solution to the problematic, or at least the possibility of a solution, the inquiry will have to focus elsewhere (beyond basic structures, reflection, body) to those modalities of the cogito which constitute it as value, and thus to the possibility of an aesthetic as opposed to a natural attitude to the world.

(iii) Wittgenstein: Self as Psychological, Metaphysical.⁹

The focus of the present explication of self will be the direct references, the 5.6s, near the end of the *Tractatus*. Nonetheless, the entries from the *Notebooks* shall be used where they are helpful - this is not a sleight of hand. The genesis of the *Tractatus* is to be found documented in those wartime notebooks of Wittgenstein's which have survived, those, inconclusive, from the years 1914-1916. In what follows, there are points on which the *Notebooks* are fairly heavily relied upon. Now there is a danger here: by the time of the *Tractatus*, some of the remarks in the *Notebooks* are rejected, some of the views revised. But the *Notebooks* are never quoted from unless the remark is continuous with the *Tractatus*. Also, as regards the self, ethics and aesthetics, such comments fall into the later entries of the final notebook and are, in general, very consistent with their counterparts in the *Tractatus*. The advantage of the notebook entries over the *Tractatus* is that they offer argument and detail - and therefore, arguably, clarity - to a degree completely absent in the *Tractatus*. There is of course a good (aesthetic) reason for the omission of argument and detail in the *Tractatus* ... on which see below, especially §5.

♦ The Self as Psychological.

The first direct mention of the self in the *Tractatus* is at 5.542. 'There is no such thing as the soul — the subject, etc.— as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day. Indeed a composite soul would no longer be a soul'. That which is conceived of in psychology is a composition of psychical characteristics. It would appear that Wittgenstein is saying (with Hume) that no subject can be found and that no subject *could* be found, only a bundle of psychic characteristics and experiences. This is sometimes referred to as the 'human soul', but it is not a unitary self or subject, it is a collection of mental episodes. These will include 'thoughts', thus in

⁹ It needs to be stressed that Wittgenstein's early concept of self and its related doctrines, including that of the self's relation to aesthetic experience, owe a considerable debt to Schopenhauer. It may be a bonus that there is now a considerable body of secondary literature on Schopenhauer-Wittgenstein (see bibliography). Besides which, two texts have brief but excellent pointers, P.S.M. Hacker's *Insight and Illusion* (1986) and P.Gardeners *Schopenhauer* (1963).

response to a question from Russell: 'does a thought (*Gedanke*) consist of words?', Wittgenstein says 'No. But of psychical constituents that have the same sort of relation to reality as words'. As to the nature of these constituents Wittgenstein 'does not know'. However, 'the kind of relation of the constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out' (NB 130 and 131). As such it is the appropriate subject-matter for psychology - exactly as Sartre had said of the ego. But such a study is superficial, not least because it cannot deal with the real subject. Another term we could adopt for the psychological subject is 'empirical ego'. This is useful for both its allusion to Sartre's ego as well as its indicating the relation this self is to have to propositions and the Tractarian theory of meaning.

Wittgenstein's direct references to the self are immediately preceded by an analysis of propositional attitudes, in particular psychological propositions (at 5.541). There are three aspects of this much discussed proposition which are important to the present dissertation. Firstly, following directly on from Wittgenstein's analysis, there arises out of the ashes of propositional language the metaphysical subject. Secondly, the analysis ties in with this metaphysical subject the idea that it is complex, not a substance, and not referable to by names - and that therefore its existence can be shown. Thirdly, also tied in with Wittgenstein's analysis, his discussion of psychological propositions invokes the necessity of an intentionality - which, when considered with the later parts of the *Tractatus*, will itself be seen to be identified with the metaphysical subject.

Wittgenstein begins his discussion of psychological propositions by arguing that prior analysis of such propositions by Russell and Moore was, as with a psychological approach, 'superficial'¹⁰.

Particularly with certain forms of proposition in psychology, such that '*A* believes that *p* is the case' and '*A* has the thought *p*', etc. For if these are considered superficially, it looks as if the proposition *p* stood in some kind of relation to an object *A*. (And in modern theory of knowledge (Russell, Moore, etc.) these propositions have actually been construed in this way.) (5.541).

¹⁰ For an illuminating and more detailed account of Wittgenstein on this topic and its relation to the self see P.M.S.Hacker (1986).

Wittgenstein's main objection to this view 'paralysed' Russell. Russell had in fact argued that in such propositions as '*A* believes *p*', *A* stood in some relation to the proposition *p* and further, that this relation was a mental attitude of *A* towards a *p* that exists - whether or not *p* is believed. That, in short, there was a correlation between object (mind, soul) and proposition. Wittgenstein sets out to tear this dual relation theory apart. He recognised that due to his commitment to the doctrine of extensionality he had to find a solution to the problem caused therein by intentional verbs:

It is clear, however, that '*A* believes that *p*', '*A* has the thought *p*', and '*A* says *p*' are of the form "'*p*' says *p*": and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects. (5.542).

His solution, he claims, in the Tractarian proposition which directly comments on the last, will have significant consequences for the self and philosophy of mind: 'This shows too that there is no such thing as the soul ...' (5.5421). Wittgenstein's point is that there is no mental correlation between object and proposition (otherwise judgements could be nonsensical) and that no subject as Russell conceives it exists. It only *seems* that there is a correlation between object and proposition. In reality, a proposition is a correlation of facts brought about by 'means of the correlation of their objects' - for in the *Tractatus* facts are always composites of objects. This is the clue to the very next entry, introducing the self: 'This shows [i.e. the above analysis] that there is no such thing as the soul'. Wittgenstein believes that his analysis has revealed the *complexity* of the soul. The possibility of say-ing depends upon the elements of the sayable - the thinkable (see below) correlating with what is being said by 'the method of projection'. Thus, while Russell had taken the object '*A*' to be a unitary subject related to a proposition, '*A* believes *p*'; Wittgenstein's analysis reveals '*A*' as a fact - i.e. as an assemblage of elements that pictures a (possible) fact *p*. In a similar Tractarian context, genuine proper names refer to simple indivisible objects, which constitute facts and make propositions perspicuous; while a non-genuine proper name in a proposition, that of a unitary subject, say, 'Tony Blair', hides the logical multiplicity involved. Once elucidated, it is clear, so the account goes, that the name 'Tony Blair' stands for a complex of objects, a state of affairs, and does not refer to a unitary subject. In short,

experience does not encounter, because it does not exist, claims Wittgenstein, a unitary subject which will constitute the meaning in ‘*A* believes *p*’. We are left with a Humian composite empirical self, a bundle of experiences and characteristics, a psyche that psychology can deal with. *If* there is a unitary subject beyond the experiences, then it is also, as adjudged by the ontological and logico-linguistic framework of the *Tractatus*, beyond the sayable pole of a proposition.

Moreover, this composite empirical ego includes what we may want to call the ‘thinking subject’. ‘A logical picture of facts is a thought’ (3.), and, in a clear passage from a letter to Russell, quoted in part above, and written in August 1919 when the *Tractatus* was complete.

I don’t know what the constituents of thought are but I know that it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of language. Again the kind of relation of the constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out. (NB 130).

There is no thinking soul - there is no substance thinking thought. The mental configurations of for example thoughts and beliefs constitute the *possibility* of propositional depiction. That a proposition actually *does* depict depends upon the sense (*sinn*) giving to it by the meta-psychological will which is to be identified, as will be seen, with the metaphysical subject, with its activity.

Long before the *Investigations* Wittgenstein’s starting point and target is the Cartesian self. As the psychological (thinking) subject is composite it falls within the empirical reality that is representable in language. We can thus speak meaningfully of the ‘empirical subject’. It is in the world, among the facts, can be referred to by elementary propositions, is verifiable, and, what is more, has a necessary connection to the human body: a fact amongst other facts. ‘A stone, the body of a beast, the body of a man, my body, all stand on the same level’ (NB 12.10.16, p84).

This latter point does not entail, however, that, a la Schopenhauer, the body is a phenomenal objectification of noumenal will. The thing-in-itself, the essence, is the metaphysical subject, the existence of which can only be shown. Only in a philosophically trivial sense will we say that actions show the existence of the metaphysical subject. *Acts* of will are psychological phenomena; philosophy cannot use them to penetrate to the thing-in-itself.

Nonetheless, the metaphysical subject can be shown, and is the source of showing, in a deeply philosophical way. It is the condition of showing and indeed the condition of ethical, via aesthetic, responsibility. Although the ethical will (i.e. the metaphysical subject) is not and cannot be an efficient cause *in* the world, it is the transcendental ground of thought and action. It is, it will be seen, part of the *form* of the world as a whole, the limit of the world. In this way, to make clear the nature of language by drawing the limits to what can be said by language is to make clear the nature of ethics. This is the project of the *Tractatus*, whether it succeeds or not, and the metaphysical subject is central.

♦ **The Metaphysical Subject.**

When referring to the non-psychological self Wittgenstein varies his term of reference between 'metaphysical subject', 'ego', and 'I' and 'the philosophical self'. It may already be clear, at least *prima facie*, that Wittgenstein's psychological subject resembles Sartre's 'ego'. To avoid any confusion where Wittgenstein is concerned, when referring to the psychological and the metaphysical subject the term 'empirical ego' will be adopted for the former.

Such a supposed enigmatic entity as a metaphysical subject begs three ruling questions *What* is it, *where* is it, and *why* have it? Let us attempt such an approach. Forthwith it is clear *what* it is not. By contrast to the empirical ego the metaphysical subject is, obviously, neither physical or psychological. Wittgenstein says that it is independent of the world of facts. It is not a part of the world. It is independent of the empirical ego. It is not the subject for psychology (above) - it is Wittgenstein informs us the subject-matter for philosophy. In actual fact, and this is crucial to the present thesis, it will be seen, that the metaphysical subject is not the subject-matter for any old philosophy, but only the particular philosophy that is recommended by the *Tractatus*.

Thus there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. [5.641; and see 6.53]. The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world -- not a part of it. (5.641).

It is this identification of the metaphysical subject with limits (and a particular kind of philosophy) that will eventually lead us to aesthetics and an understanding of the *Tractatus* as an aesthetic deed.

Still, this does not really answer the question ‘what is it?’ How should the undoubtedly enigmatic metaphysical subject be characterised? There is little doubt that Wittgenstein thought of it in terms of ‘soul’ - though not the superficial soul of psychology (5.641) and not the Cartesian - or Rationalist - ‘thinking thing’ (5.631), which for Wittgenstein is reducible to the former. A more fruitful procedure may be to ask ‘*where* in the world can we expect to find the metaphysical subject?’ But still we encounter difficulties: Wittgenstein argues for the non-encounterability of the metaphysical subject.

Whatever it is, and consistent with the doctrines of the *Tractatus*, the metaphysical subject is not placed *in* the world; it is not encountered as an object of experience. In fact, along with logical form, the metaphysical subject is conceived to be a presupposition - in this case, of experience. Here Wittgenstein’s account is strikingly similar to Schopenhauer’s, even in the use of metaphor.

Schopenhauer speaks of the *knowing* subject (as does Wittgenstein in the *Notebooks*), the transcendental ego, as ‘a presupposition of all experience’ (WWR II, pp15). It lies outside space and time and is the source of experience. It is ‘the eye (that) sees everything except itself’ (ibid., pp491). And Wittgenstein:

The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world. Where *in* the world is a metaphysical subject to be found? You [Schopenhauer ?] will say that this is exactly the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do *not* see the eye. And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye. (5.632; 5.633)

The metaphysical subject is an inner limit to the world. It is that part of consciousness which is said to be identical with itself. That is, it is both the source of experience and the experience of the world. ‘Only from the consciousness of the *uniqueness of my life* arises religion, science, and art. (NB 1.8.16, pp79)). ‘The world and life are one’ (5.621). ‘I am my world (the microcosm)’ (5.63). ‘The world is *my* world’ (5.641).

The metaphysical subject is no kind of entity or thing at all. It is a no-thing. What it is, is a characteristic of experience *as a whole*. 'The [metaphysical] subject does not belong to the world; rather, it is a limit of the world', 'I am my world' (5.632, 5.63). This (non-psychological) characteristic of experience is not to be understood in terms of ownership; the metaphysical subject can not be an owner: it is the presupposition of the experience with which it is identified. In fact, the self as constituting the limits of one's world as a bounded whole is to be understood in terms of a sort of *mineness*, and involving self-understanding (in terms of ethical meaning). The *mineness* must be understood in a special way, as a programmatic notion, as 'will': will in *relation* to itself to the world. The metaphysical subject is a relatum.

In fact, the best way to proceed with the inquiry into the nature of the metaphysical subject is to direct the leading questions - what, where, why - toward the concept of 'will'. Firstly, however, and while still addressing the nature of the metaphysical subject, the method is to harvest the above exegesis and interpretation for the first crop of comparative fruits specific to the self.

§3.2 THE MISSING SUBJECT: FOUR COMPARATIVE ASPECTS

The above has endeavoured to give some account of certain central aspects of Sartre's and Wittgenstein's early concept of self. It is hoped that exegetical interpretation is rewarded in what follows. In this the first of two comparative sections on the self (the second being constituted by the remainder of the dissertation), four key areas of contact shall be identified: the self as bi-polar, the self as a no-thing, the self as eliminated, and the self as non-encounterable.

(i) Self as bi-polar

The first thing to state is that there is, for both philosophers, two senses in which the self is bi-polar: it is so in relation to itself and it is so in relation to world. The separation from the

world is of less interest and is in any case better discussed in the section on non-encounterability (below).

That both philosophers conceive of the self as being somehow bi-polar in terms of a self-relation should by now be clear. We saw that for Wittgenstein there is on the one hand the empirical ego and on the other hand the metaphysical subject. The empirical ego is characterised as psychological: a composition of psychical characteristics. Wittgenstein claims that only a bundle of psychic characteristics and mental attitudes and experiences are to be found when we look for a unitary self or subject. And indeed, when we do look for such an object it is there in the world, an object among objects. Such an entity is the empirical ego. By contrast to the empirical ego the metaphysical subject is neither physical or psychological: it is independent of the world of facts and 'independent' of the empirical ego - it appears, at this early stage, to be a characteristic of experience as a whole.

Sartre's bi-polar self is between ego and subject. As with Wittgenstein's empirical ego, Sartre's ego is seen to be independent of the (metaphysical)-subject. Sartre's ego is seen to be an object of the same ontological status as other objects in the world. And as with Wittgenstein's, Sartre's ego is defined in terms of a bundle of psychic traits and characteristics, mental attitudes and experiences. In both accounts it is this psychological ego which a self identifies itself with as an 'I'. For Sartre, this ego is not part of the structures of consciousness, but is a product of those structures, it is an ideal in that it is a formal unity, but this unified 'I' is spurious, a construct of consciousness. For Wittgenstein too, the ego is not a unitary self or subject, it is a collection of mental episodes. Thus Wittgenstein's metaphysical subject and empirical ego are very close to Sartre's subject and ego - with both braces divided along similar lines.

It must be conceded that it may be going too far to claim that Wittgenstein also saw this false unity as an ideal (i.e. unified 'I') created by consciousness (the metaphysical subject), nonetheless, as we shall see when we come to discuss the metaphysical subject as 'will', any such counterclaim may also be going too far. Moreover, though this issue is forever destined to stagnate in indefinable pools of interpretation, the claim that the metaphysical subject creates an

ideal unified 'I' will prove, I believe, as good as any counterclaim, as it fits like a jigsaw piece into the *Tractatus* and offers a workable and useful picture.

In conclusion, what defines the metaphysical or foundational pole of self from the empirical, in both philosophers, is that the former is non-substantive, the presupposition of experience, individual (but not personal), identical with itself as the source of action/experience in consciousness and, finally, it exists as a willing relation to the world (§4).

(ii) Subject as Eliminated.

That the subject is eliminated entails in the first place that the self is bi-polar and, in the second and third place, that it is a no-thing and non-encounterable - but that the subject is a no-thing and non-encounterable reciprocally entails that the subject is eliminated. Thus there is no real reason to place the account of eliminated self prior to self as a no-thing and its non-encounterability ('thought' constantly forces such arbitrary decisions upon us and philosophical discussion). It is only hoped that there is some benefit in the chosen order of material. Whatever, a central conclusion of this section reciprocates one part of the two-part conclusion to the section on non-encounterability. That is, and this is the point that we must take with us, the *elimination* of the subject *from the world* entails that it is also *non-encounterable* in the world.

Via detailed analysis, and with the whole weight of a rigorous Tractarian system behind it, Wittgenstein argues that there is a self over and above the empirical ego which rather than being in the world is in some sense the presupposition of that world. The metaphysical subject has been eliminated *from the world of experience*: it is the presupposition of experience. The metaphysical subject is an inner limit to the world. It is that part of consciousness that is said to be identical with itself. That is, it is both the source of experience and the experience of the world. 'The world and life are one' (5.621). 'I am my world (the microcosm)' (5.63). 'The world is *my* world' (5.641).

If I wrote a book called *The World as I found it*, I should have to include a report on my body, ... etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an

important sense there is no subject, for it alone could not be mentioned in that book.
(5.631)

‘The metaphysical subject, the limit of the world -- [is] not a part of it’ (5.641).

Sartre also eliminates the subject - subjectivity itself is reduced to *empty consciousness*; ‘I am not my interiority; ‘consciousness is ...total emptiness (since the entire world is outside it)’ (BN, ppxxxii). Whatever is true of a self is not - and cannot be - privately true, for the ‘I’ is a presence of consciousness to situation.

In fact, with Sartre there are two modes of self eliminated from the world. Fascinatingly, each corresponds to one of the two key aspects of Wittgenstein’s single eliminated subject. For Sartre, these two modes are: the self as (prereflective) subject and the self as value. Recall that the former is the original act of consciousness, it is, as with the metaphysical subject, the presupposition of experience. This so in the sense that (a) it is, as intentionality (see below), the source of experience, and (b) it accompanies all experience of the world. As with the metaphysical subject, it is an inner limit to the world. And like the metaphysical subject Sartre’s subject is the source of experience as well as the experience itself: i.e. it is the condition of consciousness.

The world has not created the Me; the Me has not created the world. These are two objects for absolute impersonal consciousness, and it is by virtue of this consciousness that they are connected. This absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the ‘I’, no longer has anything of the *subject*. It is no longer a collection of representations. It is quite simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence. (TE 105/6)

Recall also that pure reflection is an internal modification of the (prereflective) subject. Pure reflection reveals to consciousness that it is, paradoxically, a self which it is not. That consciousness is not identifiable with the ego or the world. Consciousness is free and exists as a pursuit of self. This pursuit of self is termed, we saw, the self as value. The self as value bears resemblance to Wittgenstein’s eliminated metaphysical subject in the following way: it is not in the world, it is a limit to the world. It is an on-going process, or striving, that pursues an unrealisable ideal: selfhood. The goal of consciousness is selfhood, this is the value, ideal, unreal, and unrealisable, that the self pursues. It is, by necessity, eliminated from the world of objects. Thus, the two senses in which Wittgenstein’s metaphysical subject is eliminated from the world,

as a presupposition of experience and as not being part of the world because it is a limit to it, are mirrored in two of the structures of Sartre's self: as prereflective and as value.

Because of its later importance, it should in fact be stressed now that the elimination of the self of value, as with its non-encounterability and its ontological status as a no-thing, is, for both philosophers, and as with their semantics (§2), connected to *limits*. Wittgenstein: 'The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world (5.633)'. Sartre: 'by definition it [the self] is an ideal, a limit' (BN 103).

(III) Subject as a No-Thing¹¹

As a preliminary point, a comment on terminology. It may be thought that the Continental use of the terms 'nothing' and 'nothingness' can alone arouse passion in otherwise indifferent anglo-linguistic analytic philosophy. This would perhaps be a fortunate, but still an unnecessary state of affairs. In particular, it seems that the criticism of Sartre for deploying such terms has reached the status of eternal recurrence. Of near legendary status in such circles is the early attack made on Sartre by A.J.Ayer in 1945.¹² Ayer accused Sartre's use of 'nothing' for consciousness as at best mysterious but actually subterfuge or meaningless nonsense. To be sure, any new designation hoping to grow into a rigid designator must begin life in anonymity, perhaps as apparent nonsense, as lacking, in Sartrian terms, the necessary - signifying - background for *sens*, as well as struggling to assert its newly created referential status. But that *is* the point: consciousness as 'nothing' or a 'nothingness' has no old hackneyed tradition; the purpose behind its introduction (as with many terms in the Continental tradition) is to avoid a tradition of assumptions and presuppositions: what is required we are being told is a new way of thinking, only then will old issues be clarified, solutions made possible.

¹¹ Kathleen Wider's paper *A Nothing About Which Something Can Be Said*, (1991) was brought to my attention at the time of writing. The paper shares some of the insights of the present section - and allowed me to develop some points of detail.

¹² A.J. Ayer, 'Novelist-Philosophers: V. Jean-Paul Sartre', *Horizon*, 12, July 1945.

If the above point was not clear enough, the use of 'nothing' for consciousness is intended to assert what is perhaps a mysterious doctrine, though one common to both traditions, that consciousness is *not* a substance; that consciousness exists as intentionality and that this entails that consciousness, the very structure of consciousness, is always a lack (or 'incomplete', as Ayer would no doubt prefer) requiring an object. There is no way of speaking about consciousness *except* in relation to an object (internal or external); prior to this relation consciousness is indeed empty, or nothing: that is, *passim* this dissertation, until the activity we may term original consciousness is so characterised there is no way of referring to it, representing it, or speaking of it, directly. It seems to me that both of the above points are eminently not mysterious and both have complete sense (though the former can be taken too far). Sadly, as with other battles across the divide, the inception of the Anglophers attack is a prejudice, and not, unidealistically, the clash of free spirits for the liberty of wisdom and truth. Ayer is happy to target the nothingness of Sartre while lauding, for example, the 'emptiness' and 'nonentity' of Moore¹³.

The nature of the 'no-thing' subject which Sartre and Wittgenstein required, and which is eliminated from world and introspection, is to be understood as not being a substance, thing, or entity of any kind: 'the *self* on principle can not inhabit consciousness' (BN 103). What this shall eventually amount to is an account of self existing in the sense of operative intentionality, with, in Wittgenstein's case 'will' and in Sartre's case intentionality itself having precedence. But before proceeding along these lines some comments pertaining to the specific point of convergence on the non-substantial subject are in order.

Drawing on the exegesis at §3.1, it is to be recalled that Sartre begins his account of consciousness by separating what exists, being, into two: consciousness (*pour soi*) and world (*en soi*). Consciousness itself is then bi-polar: ego - the subject as value. To avoid dualism and maintain the translucency of consciousness which he so desires, Sartre argues that what separates consciousness from itself is nothing, no-thing. More precisely, and with a nod to the next chapter

¹³ G. Moore 'The Refutation of Idealism' for some startling comparisons to the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* - not the least of which is Moore's characterisation of consciousness as a 'nonentity', with direct acquaintance being impossible, we find 'mere emptiness'.

marked by my emphasis, 'the self ... indicates a *relation* between the subject and himself, ... the self does not designate being, either as subject or predicate' (BN 76). Of this self, or non-self, we are saying, non solipsistically, that it

is not an ego and is without content, without a meaning to define it, there is surely no name that characterises a particular self, no word that will serve as the predicate noun or adjective indicating who the self is. Thus, Sartre does not introduce words for the self. It has no experiential meaning; likewise no linguistic meaning. The true self (that is, unreflected consciousness) ... is empty and without words (Silverman, 1987, pp174).

Sartre's view that consciousness itself is a nothingness, a no-thing, is central to our study. There are at least two important and related reasons why consciousness itself is characterised as a no-thing. Sartre conceives of consciousness as a lack of being, as non-being; it receives its determination from the outside world, from the presence of objects. He is keen of course to separate consciousness from material objects of experience. It is well established that Sartre accepted (with modifications) the Husserlian idea of intentionality. But a crucial point of departure is Sartre's claim that *being* does not belong to consciousness, that as Wider has it 'consciousness is constitutive of the *being* of its objects' (Wider, 1992, pp325). Sartre argues that if this were the case we would have to distinguish objects by saying that they are non-being. Objects have being (substance) while consciousness is non-being. Hence, the fundamental ontological distinction between *etre pour soi* and *etre en soi*, with consciousness emerging as a negation of *etre*. We have seen that in *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre argues against the existence of a Cartesian ego, this to the extent that in *Being and Nothingness* he says that consciousness is no substance at all, consciousness 'is total emptiness (since the entire world is outside it)' (BN xxxii)¹⁴. Consciousness and objects are distinct. Indeed, as early as 1939 Sartre states that 'consciousness has no "within", it is nothing but the outside of itself and it is this absolute flight, this refusal to be substance which constitutes it as consciousness. Consciousness is utterly empty, existing only in its awareness of itself and world, we are thus

delivered from the "internal life", in vain would we seek the caresses and fondlings of our intimate selves ... since everything is finally outside, everything, even ourselves. Outside, in the world, among others. It is not in some hiding place that we will discover ourselves; it is on the road, in the town, in the midst of the crowd. (I pp5)

¹⁴ Sartre's externalism has, as with Wittgenstein's, been noted. See especially Dennett's *Mental Content*.

Although the external world of objects exists whether persons are conscious of it or not, the *en soi* requires consciousness in order to exist *as a world*, as an organised and meaningful complex¹⁵. As to consciousness *and world* (as opposed to consciousness and external objects), without the one there can be no other: 'Without the world there is no selfness, no person; without the person there is no world' (BN 157). Consciousness needs the world of objects for its existence. But this world of objects (including the ego) is always outside consciousness. The world *as the world* exists only through consciousness but, as we saw, this does not entail an inner substance. Rather, the world (as a meaningful complex) exists as an immediate spontaneous act or process. Consciousness itself remains empty, a no-thing. But what can this mean?

What is the character of this 'process' that defines consciousness? Sartre argues that consciousness is a relation or 'presence' to the world. It is the presupposition and limit of its experience. Although it is dependent upon objects for its existence, it exists at a *distance*¹⁶ from them. Therefore, crucially, 'What is present to me is what is not me' (BN 192). Consciousness is not and cannot be identical to its object - if it was it could not be consciousness *of* that object. Consciousness is nothing, has no content: a desire or an emotion, as with other mental events, is an object *for* consciousness. Consciousness is nothing other than what it is consciousness of, being or substance, but at the same time consciousness is not what it is consciousness of: for it must be a presence to being. Sartre's claim involves the idea that consciousness is not subject to the Law of Identity. To speak of consciousness as 'nothing' is a way of freeing it from the (mechanistic) world of causal relations. If consciousness coincided with itself it would not then be consciousness, it would be an object.

The second principal factor in Sartre's characterisation of consciousness as a no-thing, and implicitly introduced in the first, consists in the claim that consciousness is intentional. Sartre sees intentionality as the most fundamental feature of consciousness. It was stated above, that

¹⁵ To pursue this would take us to the heart of Sartre's unusual idealist-realist position. But this is not the place to enter the complex debate as to whether and when Sartre's philosophy was ever anti-realist or idealist - whether or not and when he ever was a transcendental idealist, though clearly, the present thesis supports the latter interpretation.

¹⁶ The importance of 'distance' is to be elaborated upon in the final chapter.

Sartre disagreed with Husserl's claim that *being* does not belong to consciousness, that consciousness is constitutive of the *being* of its objects. If this were the case, claims Sartre, then we would have to distinguish objects from the being of consciousness by saying that they are non-being. But consciousness is always orientated towards a being other than itself. The great merit of Husserl's intentionality, says Sartre, was that it destroyed the idea of immanence (I 4). This so because 'consciousness-of' refers to something beyond. That this is the case frees consciousness by expelling it of things (*chooses*). (Actually this is not what Husserl says: the intended object is constituted by consciousness and is not independent of it). For Sartre, the preposition 'of' establishes an 'ontological proof': that 'the referent of intention is independent of consciousness' (Spiegelberg, 1961, Ipp488). Consciousness is not a substance of any kind, essentially it is empty, a nothing.

Wittgenstein's account of the self in the *Tractatus* 5.6's is in its own way as startling as Sartre's. For Wittgenstein the metaphysical subject is a necessary condition for the existence of *the world*. However, as with Sartre, objects themselves exist regardless of the self: it is *the world* that depends upon the metaphysical subject. This necessary condition for the world is characterised as a limit or boundary. 'The metaphysical subject, the limit of the world - not a part of it' (5.641). Thus, as Wittgenstein says, 'I am my world', the world is *my* world, and so therefore I am, in a sense, *the* world. 'The world is *my* world. The world and life are one. I am the world (the microcosm)' (5.62, 5.621, 5.63). But still 'I' remains a formal precondition for the possibility of the world, a limit, and so I am no-thing but the (limit to the) world. 'On the one side *nothing* is left over, and on the other side, as unique, *the world* (NB 85)'.

The metaphysical subject would seem then to be a structure or mode of experience *as a whole*. This (non-psychological) characteristic of experience is not to be understood in terms of ownership; the metaphysical subject can not be an 'owner': it is the presupposition and limit of the experience with which it is identified. This characteristic of experience must be understood in a special way (above), and although I shall claim that it is best characterised as a kind of *mineness* or *relation*, it is still to be understood, as we shall see in the following section, in the

context of Tractarian 'will', as a programmatic notion. Thus understood, it will be seen that this sense of *mineness* has nothing to do with, nor does it entail, an inner substance or entity. For Wittgenstein, 'The world is all that is the case', and we can give a complete description of the world, entailing as it would all true and meaningful propositions. Such a complete description of the world is what natural science aims at. But even if such an ideal were attained, and a book was written that described the world, there would be something left out of the description. Namely, there would be a no-thing left out of the description, 'for *in an important sense* there is no subject: that is to say, of it alone in this book mention could not be made. ... The subject ... is a limit of the world' (5.631 and 5.632 - my emphasis). As with Sartre, Wittgenstein's self remains empty, a no-nothing set over and against the boundaries of the world.

(iv) Subject as Non-encounterable.

This aspect of the self, logically entailed from what has preceded, forces the issue of the problematic: if the lingua-self is to determine itself, and if, as is the case for both Sartre and Wittgenstein, this requires self-understanding in terms of an ethical insight (*ethical meaning* - §5), then in achieving this, if it is to be achieved, then at some level it is the non-encounterability of the self that will eventually have to be overcome. In this section the discussion is limited to the clarification of the - convergent - reasons for this non-encounterability, leaving the actual possibility of encounterability and determination to the final chapter.

It is already clear from some of the above material on the subject as bi-polar and eliminated, existing only as a limit, that, and this is an important point of comparison, that the (metaphysical)-subject is the source of introspection, the precondition of all reflection. It is not, and cannot therefore be encountered, *in the world*: I objectively confront every object. But not the I' (NB 11.8.16). The I not being an object, the I being that which points toward or intends objects, the *auge* being the signifier and not the signified, the I cannot be encountered in the world or in introspection.

Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein can be seen to be putting forward a portmanteau-argument supportive of non-encounterability, we shall call it 'the argument from contingency and experience'. The above discussion of Wittgenstein's analysis of psychological propositions stated the foundational core of this argument. In his account of psychological propositions the conclusion is that the 'I' can only refer to a composite and empirical ego, similar to Hume's 'bundle'. Wittgenstein removed the 'I' that referred to a supposedly unified entity¹⁷. The 'I' as some sort of unified substance, soul-like thing, is not, it is concluded, experienced in introspection. The 'real' I, the metaphysical subject, is the presupposition of these experiences. All experience is contingent, the metaphysical subject is not part of *that*, not encountered in experience. Whatever is experienced could of course be otherwise (both Wittgenstein's metaphysical subject and Sartre's subject necessarily avoid any kind of psychological determinism).

The subject does not belong to the world ... And nothing *in the visual field* allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye ... This is connected with the fact that no part of our experience is at the same time a priori. Whatever we see could be other than it is. Whatever we could describe at all could be other than it is. There is no a priori order of things. (5.632, 5.633, 5.634).

If there is a subject other than the empirical ego then (a) 'The I is not an object' (NB 7.8.16) and (b) it does not consist of simple objects and is not composite. 'A composite soul would no longer be a soul (5.5421)'. Thus, such a non-composite entity, if it existed, would necessarily be beyond the sayable.

Here Wittgenstein is invoking a whole Tractarian ontology and theory of meaning. As was seen in the previous chapter, what is sayable is always that which is contingent - i.e. a fact. Such facts are derived from states of affairs which are concatenations of simple objects. Such concatenations are representable by elementary propositions. Basically, a state of affairs is something that is empirically verifiable. Such things are necessarily composite. The empirical ego is so conceived as composite - a fact in the world. A necessary requirement, that we may

¹⁷ He maintained this position throughout the mid (*Blue and Brown Books*, pp67f) and later works, its essence is found in the *Investigations*. The 'I' is a word that acts as an instrument, no fact corresponds to it, it does not point to an inner thing, it is that thing. ' "I" is not the name of a person' (PI 410).

speak of the contingent empirical world (and the ego), is the existence of its fundamental constituents: simple objects. Now, nobody, except perhaps God and Wittgenstein, knows what these simple objects are. They are unanalysable and unsayable. What is known is that they are at the very least the precondition of meaningful language: this may well be because they are the precondition of the world. If there is to be any meaning at all in our language then a name must avoid an infinite regress and at some point refer to an absolutely simple object (see §2.2). It might help, or it may be that we are meant to think of them in terms of monads. It may also be consistent to think of the metaphysical subject as a monad of sorts: simple, necessary, unanalysable, unsayable and a precondition for experience. But no matter how we conceive of the metaphysical subject, it is clear that it is not thought of as being composite and is not, in an essential sense, in the world. That it is necessary and *not contingent* ensures that the unanalysable and unsayable metaphysical subject is the pre-condition of *experience*, and not therefore encounterable in the experience of the world.

The metaphysical subject cannot be encountered in experience, introspection, or by the use of the first-person pronoun - or, it might seem to follow, by language at all. At least, this would certainly appear to be the case. Nonetheless, the question and hence the problematic persist until the final chapter: 'can this obstacle to self-understanding be transcended, can the eye experience itself¹⁸, would it thus determine itself?

Sartre. In his philosophic *oeuvre* Sartre does not spend a great deal of time discussing the uses of the first-person pronoun, such a method is counter-intuitive to a certain philosophical temperament. Nonetheless, by a different analysis, which is not negligent of the importance of the first-person pronoun,¹⁹ he comes to similar conclusions to those of Wittgenstein - that the cardinal mistake is to confuse any use of "I" with its having to refer to a substantive subject in the

¹⁸ 'Can the eye see itself' erroneously suggests the primacy of an epistemological relation. See §5.3i.

¹⁹ See *The Transcendence of the Ego* part I. Also, see Phyllis Morris's 'Analytical approach' to *Sartre's Concept of a Person* (1975), Chapter 4.

world (§3.1i). Such a conclusion finds expression throughout Sartre's *oeuvre*. In *The Transcendence of the Ego* for example:

The "I" is the ego as the unity of actions. The *me* is the ego as the unity of states and qualities. The distinction that one makes between these two aspects of one and the same reality seems to us simply functional, not to say grammatical (TE 60).

In *Being and Nothingness* it is 'the "I" which they wrongly take to be an inhabitant of consciousness' (BN 103). In *Saint Genet*, 'For nobody may say the simple words: I am I. The best and freest of men may say: I exist. Which is already too much. For the others, I suggest they use such formulas: "I am Himself" or "I am so and so *in person*"' (SG 83).

Although for Sartre the body (as consciousness) is the point of view we have on the world, it is not we saw an additional object in the world that we experience. Our original point of view on the world is (the body as the) subject: prereflective consciousness. This is non-personal and is radically separated from the ego: It is the locus of experience. Although it is individuated there is within this mode of reflection no sense of 'I' (see the exegesis above at §3.1iii). Thus, 'the transcendental field becomes impersonal; or, if you like, "pre-personal", *without an I*' (TE 36). The idea of a consciousness that can be grasped as unitary is redundant. It is not a case of 'I am conscious of this chair', rather, 'there is consciousness of this chair' (TE 53). Prereflective consciousness is directed upon objects of awareness; the 'I' is 'only consciousness of the object and non-positional consciousness of it-self'. There is 'No *I*' in the unreflected [i.e. prereflective] consciousness' (TE 47).

Convergence (forward to Selfhood). The convergence between Sartre and Wittgenstein on the non-encounterability of the self in introspection now opens up before us. In comparison to the account of Wittgenstein, we can now quote Sartre to the following effect.

The eye is the point to which all the objective lines converge. Thus the perceptive field refers to a centre objectively defined by that reference and located *in the very field* which is orientated around it. Only we do not see this centre as the structure of the perceptive field considered; *we are the centre*. (BN 317)

'I' does not refer to a soul-like substance or thing 'the being of human reality is originally not a substance ... the for-itself is *nothing* and is separated from the in-itself by nothing'. (BN 575)

& 362). What the first-person pronoun does refer to is a bundle of psychic qualities or events, a unity of, and such a unity that is experienced in the world as a personality; not ever to be mistaken, however, for a person. 'What confers personal existence on a being is not the possession of an Ego — which is only the *sign* of the personality' (BN 103). It is the empirical ego that is encountered in the world and in introspection, and is the subject of psychology: 'the empirical psychologist, while defining man by his desires, remains the victim of the illusion of substance' (BN 557). The ego is for sure a 'sign' of a person, but this person remains no-thing. And while Sartre agrees with Wittgenstein that experience is contingent, it could *always* be otherwise, Sartre also concurs with Wittgenstein's Kantian point that the subject's relation to experience is a priori. Experience is always *my* experience, my visual field is *my* visual field:

The perceptive field refers to a centre objectivity defined by that reference and located in the very field which is orientated around it. Only we do not see this centre as the structure of the perceptive field considered; *we are* the centre (BN 317).

Moreover, as experience is mediated through impure reflection, and as the original structure of impure reflection is pure reflection, and as this seeks but fails to apprehend the subject (finding only a *sense* of the subject, quasi, intra-subjective), then neither can introspection encounter the subject: 'the self cannot be apprehended as a real existent; the subject can not *be* self' (BN 76).

The subject, or the prereflective cogito, is not, and cannot be, as with the metaphysical subject, encountered in introspection or experience. The consciousness that does the reflecting, the (metaphysical)-subject, can't itself be introspected. For both philosophers there is no 'I' as consciousness; the foundation of consciousness and the possibility of introspection would seem to be beyond language and beyond meaning. In the search for itself the self, by necessity, uses its own experience in the hope of being that experience. It appears at this stage, that the act or process of attaining self-understanding (ethical meaning), is a self-negating act or process.

Surely, however, even if it were accepted that the self is bi-polar, eliminated, a no-thing, is non-encounterable, even so, there *must* remain *a sense* in which the self does exist; *a sense* in which the self is in the world and in introspection. There may also therefore, be a means of encountering the self.

If I were to write a book 'the world as I found it', where in this book, in the experience of writing this book, in the experiences in between, would the I be encountered? Where in the world or introspection is the 'I'? If the 'I' is the pre-condition of language how can it determine itself at the linguistic level, how can it be apprehended through language? Certainly, neither name referral nor propositional representation have much to offer in such a problematic of self.

The approach now, after identifying both the foundations and the key - convergent - aspects of the self (and its linguistic dimension in §2), is to seek a solution to the problematic by proceeding with those modalities of self that constitute it as value, as an attitude, and as structurally related to ethics and showing as an aesthetic principle.

§4
MODALITIES OF SELFHOOD:
SELF AS VALUE

To act is to modify the shape of the world
(Being and Nothingness, pp433)

If good or evil willing affects the world it can only effect the
boundaries of the world
(Wittgenstein, Notebooks, pp73)

§4

This chapter deals with the self as selfhood: the qualities of self in virtue of which, for Sartre and Wittgenstein, salvation is possible. That which is the synthesis of the modalities of identity (not of course, and as in Ricoeur, an unchanging core of personal identity). Such a concept involves a multi-dimensional account of the self as value, including such modalities as operational intentionality (§4.1), relatum and programmatic (§4.2), and attitude (§4.3). Such section divisions are potentially misleading and are for convenience of inquiry only, as it is a single (though complex) aspect of self. This notwithstanding, the modalities of self mark a significant development in the problematic: the self is value (ethical and aesthetic), it relates to the world in terms of a natural attitude: the solution (in §5) being a conversion to an aesthetic attitude.

§4.1 OPERATIVE INTENTIONALITY

The necessary introduction into the discussion of intentionality and will causes some difficulties. It is my contention that both concepts exist and play a fundamental role in the early works of Sartre and Wittgenstein. However, although Wittgenstein speaks much of will (especially in the *Notebooks*) he does not directly address the topic of intentionality¹. Sartre, on the other hand, has much to say on intentionality, but relatively little on will. Nonetheless, the

¹ Although I have, in an analysis of both belief propositions (above) and will (below) supported my claim to intentionality in the *Tractatus*, and although for some time I thought myself solipsistic in holding such a view, I can now bring in further support by referring the reader to the article by Rosenberg, *Intentionality and Self in the Tractatus* (cf. below, §4.2) and, with interpretative reservations, to P.M.S. Hacker's recent volume, *Wittgenstein, Mind and Will* (1996) pp19-26. It is unfortunate that Hacker, unlike Rosenberg, misses the fundamental extent and significance of the structures surrounding propositional intentionality in the *Tractatus*. It is due to this over exclusive reading that Hacker misconstrues the notion, finally dismissing it with a very unfortunate turn of expression: 'the metaphysical subject merely enfoldes an enigma consequent on our own misunderstanding within a mystery of our own making' (pp26).

picture theory of meaning requires the intentionality of a self, and that this intentionality is close in conception to Sartre's (Husserlian based) account. Similarly, I believe that Sartre's little discussed concept of will is close in conception to Wittgenstein's (at times Kantian) account of will. And further, that Sartre's will must be understood within his concept of intentionality; as must Wittgenstein's account of intentionality be understood within the context of his concept of will. Due to the nature of this will and its structural relationship with intentionality, the resulting account of the self is, for both philosophers, and in its primary metaphysical sense a matter of *operative* intentionality.²

In speaking of the self as operative intentionality the following is intended. That of course there *is*, as there must be, *a sense* in which the self as a no-thing exists. The self exists as a relatum both to itself and to the world and does so as a method or means of engaging with the world so as to procure a certain effect, as a means of altering the way the subject sees - and therefore experiences - the world. The basic structure of this relation is intentionality.

(i) Intentionality - and Will (Sartre)

For Sartre, we turn to the discussion of will that is to be found in *Being and Nothingness*, Pt.4, in the first chapter 'Being and Doing: Freedom'. Also, for further enlightenment, the discussion of will that is found in the notes which in both date and content prefigure much of *Being and Nothingness*, and which are published in English as the *War Diaries* (1939). Between them, these two discussions offer the most detailed account of Sartre's concept of the will.

By now we are familiar with the idea that consciousness is empty, non-substantive. It is to be understood as a kind of movement, a transcending towards world. Intentionality is the constitutive state of consciousness: an image or a perception is always of something. There is no

² This term recalls Merleau-Ponty (and Husserl) - I believe in fact that the similarity here may go beyond the mere terminological - hence my adoption of it. See Merleau-Ponty [1962] xviii

inner mental image, only 'consciousness of...' - that is, a *relation* between consciousness and its object.

For Sartre, consciousness is also pragmatic, that is purposeful; every act of consciousness is an attempt to do something.

To act is to modify the *shape* of the world; it is to arrange means in view of an end; it is to produce an organised instrumental complex such that by a series of concatenations and connections the modification effected on one of the links causes modifications throughout the whole series and finally produces the anticipated result. ... We should observe first that an action is on principle *intentional* (BN 433).

Consciousness is free; it therefore chooses. This brings consciousness into the world, into the realm of 'doing' and 'having' (cf. §2.3iii BN). Whatever the projects or fundamental project of the for-itself, *doing* and *having* are wrought in terms of conscious intentionality toward a future. Is this, or does it involve, an act of will? A provisional answer would be yes, but not in the Nietzschean sense: 'We must not confuse our necessity of choosing with the will to power. The choice can be effected in resignation or uneasiness; it can be a flight, in can be realised in bad faith' (BN 472). Nor, Sartre warns us, should we confuse his account of the will with the traditional Scholastic framed debate: no doubt he would be happy to call that The Sisyphus Approach: it is pointless, self-defeating to assume a causal relation between thought and action and then ask if one determines the other. Nonetheless, Sartre himself *is*, as with traditional approaches, at pains to avoid any form of determinism in the realm of consciousness. He argues at length that the original source of our actions, 'original freedom', is not a prelude to action, but rather the foundation for action. He further states that as far as action itself is concerned there are two determinants, *motif* and *mobile*.

Motif is usually translated as 'cause' (cf. Barnes' translation of BN, especially pp435), this is not only very confusing for English readers, it is also misleading (a point often overlooked but noted by Peter Caws [1979]). The English 'motive' is better, as by itself a *motif* cannot cause an action but is reason for action: action assumes or demands freedom. *Mobile* has similarly (and equally confusingly) been translated as 'motive'. The English 'motivation' is better, as Sartre refers to *mobile* as a 'subjective fact' (BN 446), while Barnes, in a footnote, perceptively refers to

its meaning as 'an inner subjective fact or *attitude*' (BN 435 - my emphasis). Henceforth I thus alter Barnes' translation of these terms in *Being and Nothingness* to suit this clearer and less misleading formulation.

In order for a motive (*motif*) to result in action requires, at the outset, that the motive is recognised for what it is. This to be sure is the minimal role of motivation (*mobile*), that of recognising or discovering a motive: 'The motivation is nothing other than the apprehension of the motive' (BN 449). Motive and motivation 'are correlative', and, with the final third of their structure, the act, form 'the three indissoluble terms of the thrust of a free and living consciousness which projects itself towards its possibilities and makes itself defined by these possibilities' (*ibid.*).

There is, as there must be, an 'intentional structure', an 'ensemble of my projects' (*ibid.*) which gives meaning to the drive-intention-act complex - otherwise we 'can only end up rendering the act absurd' (BN 437). This is the actual process or drive of consciousness, what in common parlance is referred to by Sartre as 'original freedom'. It is to be understood as 'spontaneity' or negation.

By original freedom, of course, we should not understand a freedom which would be *prior* to the voluntary or passionate act but rather a foundation which is strictly contemporary with the will or passion and which these *manifest* each in its own way (BN 444)

Freedom *is* consciousness, its state, whether in fact this be constituted as 'will or passion'.

'Passion' is emotion, an 'emotional reaction'. For Sartre, this is clearly less desirable than a willed response, for although the goal may be the same in both cases, i.e. the positing of 'a supreme end the value of life', the difference is that in the latter case this is only 'implicit' while as will it is both 'better understood and explicitly posited' (BN 443). Passion and will are not opposed in Sartre's philosophy; and although neither are to be identified with original freedom, both are seen as 'contemporary' with that freedom, as modalities of the original drive. In fact, both are seen as a matter of 'subjective *attitude* in relation to a transcendent end'.

As to these two modalities of the original freedom, will and passion, Sartre states clearly that 'The difference here depends on the choice of means and on the degree of reflection and of making explicit, not on the end' (ibid.). Moreover,

The will in fact is posited as a reflective decision in relation to certain ends. But it does not create these ends. It is rather a mode of being in *relation* to them: it decrees that the pursuit of these ends will be reflective and deliberate. (BN 443 - my emphasis).

The pursuit of ends - or value - by the will is preferable, such ends 'being more clearly conceived' than if by the emotions. But when the will intervenes, as being-in-the-world, 'as the thrust of the engaged consciousness' (BN 450), such will is posited as a decision *already* taken; at inception 'the chips are down' (BN 451). What this means is that although 'the will is in essence reflective, its goal is not so much to decide what end is to be attained; ... the profound intention of the will bears rather on the *method* of attaining this end already posited (ibid.). Will, emotion, motive and motivation, and indeed reason, all arise and have meaning in the original choice of the for-itself. Will is a manifestation, a projection of the for-itself's original project. The end has been posited by original freedom. The for-itself must choose itself as passionate or calm, as desiring body or disinterested intellect. This free choice at once precedes all deliberation and gives the context to all deliberations. The will is reflective; the original free choice is unreflective. In actual fact, as we know, the original choice is the pre-reflective cogito seen as that which is a project towards an end or goal. Therefore, the original fundamental freedom of the for-itself is, ultimately, its very reality as a project in *relation* to the world (in-itself) and others. In short, the motive(s) for *doing* (and *having*) is discovered in the pre-reflective cogito (via an existential psychoanalysis); while the reasons for acting are what are revealed by reflecting on the world, or situation, as given, and in consequence of the motives behind one's motivations: the prior condition is thus, as we shall shortly see, self-consciousness.

As consciousness, *pour soi*, the self is always in a situation, out of which its motives are drawn. But its motives and motivations are not determined or even provided by the situation, the will is not given: 'If the will is to be autonomous, then it is impossible for us to consider it as a *given* psychic fact' (BN 442). And of course we cannot, claims Sartre, grant autonomy to the

will and not the passions: 'And does not passion have its own ends which are recognised precisely at the same moment at which it posits them as non-existent' (BN 443). The situation will only have the meaning that the self chooses to give it. But then how are we to understand the activity of original choice? So far we know that it does not derive from deliberation but that it is intentional. In fact, Sartre has said that the activity of choice is 'the original *relation* which the for-itself chooses with its facticity and with the world'.

But this original *relation* is nothing other than the for-itself's being-in-the-world in as much as this being-in-the-world is a choice - that is, we have reached the original type of nihilation by which the for-itself must be its own nothingness. [And, as we have come to expect] No interpretation of this can be attempted ... (BN 457).

Choice, freedom, is the *relation* of the self to both itself (as facticity - i.e. ego) and the world. Although embedded in a situation (objectivity), the meaning of the situation (subjectivity) will depend upon the fundamental choice, or project, that each self makes. 'The for-itself is the being by which "there is" a world. Better yet, it can be revealed only to a for-itself which chooses itself in this or that particular way' (BN 447). Thus, an act of will is neither the original 'will to power' nor does it change the situation, the facts (facticity); rather, it alters how the world appears, how the world is seen, and thus how the world has meaning for the self. It is, then, intimately connected to morality: to the way a person chooses to live their life. This can only be a matter of determination, the problematic of self. How the world is seen, what meaning it is given in relation to the self is crucial to the pursuit of ends, to value, to ultimate value, to the fundamental project, and thus to the problematic of self and the question of determination.

Iris Murdoch, with a refined artists perception, has called Sartre's freedom 'the experience of accurate vision' (Murdoch, 1953, pp67). Freedom is not something to be proved, but is, as with Kant, and with intentionality and will, a postulate of action. Will is the disposition of freedom. Thus, as Sartre writes in the *War Diaries*, 'Will and perception are inseparable. ... Of course, as Kant clearly saw [the] Will must be willed. Otherwise my will to go to Paris would be involuntary' (WD 34). What we have is a 'Transcendent voluntary intentionality: the willed willing is a willing *of X*' (ibid.). For will can only exist as will 'by escaping from itself, by leaping out of itself towards the future. It is [a la Heidegger] a project' (*entwurf*) (WD 38).

In summary, we can say that the will for Sartre is a means (a mode of consciousness, similar, only superior and therefore preferable to, the passions), by which the self confers meaning on the given, on the otherwise docile world. The will thus has the power within it, is condemned to have this power, of being responsible for altering the meaning of the world. The will 'Mustn't be understood as an empty psychological desire, but as the transcendental structure of human reality' (WD 110). So that, in essence, 'I *am* what I *will*' (WD 41). And as such, the will is 'A total and existential modification of human reality' (WD 60).

Will is either identifiable with, or a modality of, Value - a point of interpretation that need not concern us further: suffice that we are clear on the following points. Will is identifiable with the freedom that Sartre calls for good reasons Value (it is certainly not a fact, and it is certainly not in the world). Its ontological status is the same as its foundation, the prereflective cogito, it is a *relation*. Will is 'the relationship between consciousness and its own possibles' (WD 39). Will is in fact a relationship of the subject to it-self and the world. It is this (subjective) relation that constitutes meaning (in the sense most readily identified with 'existential meaning', - i.e. as that which is in opposition to the absurd). The search for meaning is constituted in terms of the self as a *relatum*, a willing relation, that is to be understood, within the final context of a programmatic notion and 'attitude', as operative intentionality. The will, by all accounts the ethical will, alters how the world appears, and thus has meaning for the self.

(ii) Will - and Intentionality (Wittgenstein)

Firstly, this section requires some (further) remarks on the claimed link of the picture theory to intentionality³. Secondly, Wittgenstein's account of the self as non-substantive, non-encounterable etc., leads him, via similar considerations on intentionality and will, to the same conclusions found in Sartre's account. Namely, that will is (a) not empirical, but value - ethical;

³ Aside from the importance of this claim to our account of the lingua-aesthetic self, its discussion, here and previously at §2.2 and §3.2ii, maintains that important indirect claim of the thesis, that the *Tractatus* is (as was intended by its author) a unified whole.

(b) identified with the cogito or metaphysical subject; (c) a programmatic relationship between self and world; (d) the source of (ethical) meaning; (e) an attitude - wherein, building on the aesthetic structure of will (essentially 'disinterestedness', §5), the direct possibility of converting from the natural to the aesthetic attitude.

♦**Intentionality: from propositions to subject**

Sartre's position regarding the intentionality of consciousness is common to that found in the Anglo-American tradition.⁴ Wittgenstein's later commitment to intentionality is fairly uncontroversial, though it has received less discussion⁵. However, this is not the case with the early Wittgenstein, where any relation between the *Tractatus* and intentionality remains predominantly unnoticed or generally neglected.

That the picture theory of meaning implies or is committed to, besides isomorphic representation, an intentional relation (and by implication a self), is not, due to the complexities involved, quickly or easily established. Indeed, it is impossible within the limits of the present dissertation to firmly establish such a thesis. But some such progress can, and must, be made. The present brief and direct attempt at such progress is supported by much of the material on Wittgenstein in this dissertation (including the bi-polar account of self in relation to the saying—showing distinction, and the final claim of the dissertation that the *Tractatus* is intended as an aesthetic deed). Moreover, the above discussion of psychological propositions (§3.2ii) which will be drawn on offers direct support to the following thesis: that the picture theory requires the intentionality of a subject.

It is a feature of the *Tractatus*, and perhaps it is a commonplace, that the conditions which make language a means of asking questions about the world also make possible answers to these

⁴ See, for example, *Sartre*, by the respected Sartrean scholar Anthony Manser (1966, pp67).

⁵ As in other specific areas there is plenty of evidence in support of continuity between early and late work - certainly, there is plenty of affinity between early and mid periods: 'If we say "from outside intention cannot be recognised as intention etc." We don't want to say that meaning is a special experience, but that it isn't anything that happens to us, but something that we do, otherwise it would be just dead. (The subject - we want to say - does not here drop out of the experience but is so much involved in it that the experience cannot be described)'. *Philosophical Grammar*, Blackwell, 1974, pp156.

questions. And once we accept that language is *eo ipso* the bedfellow of objective reality, names-objects, and that this objective sphere is distinct from the sphere of the human subject and value, objects given but the world as experienced, then if in our language we wish to avoid non-sense, we will cease to use a certain - propositional - kind of language to ask certain questions of the subject and value, these being the source of representation (above, §2.2).

The picture theory model of language implies the universal and the particular, the impersonal and the personal. There is language (4.002). Language is universal and given (logical and pictorial form) *and* personal, creative and intentional (application and use). A propositional picture can represent anything that has the same structure or pictorial form as itself (2.71). Pictorial form is the *possibility* of *sinn* (2.221). That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it ... like a measure [where] only the end points of the graduating lines actually touch the object that is measured (2.1511-2, 2.15121). Again, 'The method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition' (3.11). In order to signify, have sense *and* meaning (above, §2.2), a proposition is applied, used. A sign becomes a symbol by the way an intelligent being uses it: 'A sign is what can be perceived of a symbol' (3.32). So that, 'In order to recognise a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense' (3.326).

Language is not only isomorphic representation, it is also intentional. Propositions are written or spoken by an individual. In particular, we saw (cf. above, §2.2ii), that belief sentences entail and indeed require the intentionality of a subject. Recall that *Tractatus* 5.542 states that 'It is clear, however, that "*A* believes that *p*", "*A* has the thought *p*", and "*A* says *p*" are of the form "*p*' says *p*". The meaning in such 'picturing' mental acts as believing, thinking, saying, reduces to the fact that language is intentional. In order to speak of 'x' we require, first, an isomorphic representation of 'x', next, a picture of 'x': it is the intentionality of a subject that makes the isomorphism into a picture. The pictorial relationship acts as the feelers of a picture's elements (2.1515). Language projects reality (2.1512) and a picture agrees with or fails to agree with reality (2.21). Hence, 'What signs fail to express, their *application* shows' (3.262 - my emphasis).

The central point being made here is not such that it contravenes a traditional reading of the *Tractatus*: the formal relationship between language and world remains fundamental. What is being suggested through the introduction of intentionality is an additional (and necessary) dimension to this relationship. Moreover, it is important to stress that in the *Tractatus* the intentionality of language resides, at least *in one sense*, within language itself. 'Only the end points of the graduating lines actually *touch* the object that is to be measured. So the picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture' (2.1513 and 2.1314). What makes a picture depict is not something external to the picture, rather it is something internal, and this is the inherent intentionality of language - which, crucially Wittgenstein identifies with the metaphysical subject⁶.

Here it is useful to us to state a *possible* difference between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. Both works lay great emphasis upon the role of use and application as far as the meaning of propositions is concerned. But with the *Investigations* this is constituted in terms of language games - that is, a subject (situated in the world) playing a particular language game for a particular purpose or end. In the *Tractatus*, however, there is, seemingly, and this it has rightly been said is fairly amazing for a work concerned with language, there is no subject that thinks or entertains ideas: the psychological self is not the user of language, but is rather a set of signs. Signs are identified with the empirical self, with facts, they are composite, stateable - but, on their own, without sense. *Sinn*, which is in or behind the empirical self, is the use or application of signs, which then become symbols. The use and application of signs, the intentionality of language, is the metaphysical subject, with which Wittgenstein also must identify subjectivity. Subjectivity is a pre-condition of experience; here Wittgenstein's position resembles that of Kant and Sartre, in that he is committed to transcendental idealism or, what with reference to Sartre has been termed 'existential idealism'. The structures of language are the limits of language (and at the same time thinking). Intentionality is responsible for the world being intelligible as *the*

⁶ A case *could* be made for a further identification with logical form, with fascinating though presently peripheral consequences.

world. In the following section we shall see that it is at these limits that we find the metaphysical subject. 'The limits of language (of the only language *I* understand) mean the limits of *my* world' (O 5.62 - my emphasis).

A proposition is a picture of a state of affairs. Propositions constitute isomorphic representation in so far as they picture facts. Thus the world as the proposition is phenomenal, accidental and, as far as non-relative value is concerned, neutral: without sense. The relation between subject and proposition (i.e. fact) is always of the same kind: I discover truth or falsity of a proposition by relating it to a state of affairs. Hence, it 'is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics' (6.42). For ethics is concerned with what is not the case (fact). If all the questions of natural science were answered a complete description of the (phenomenal) world would ensue. But exactly what this world *means*, is something which depends upon the subject - and, for Wittgenstein, God 'What do I know about God and the meaning of life? ... The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God'(NB 72/3). Ethics, value, is in the sphere of subjectivity, and therefore it must be grounded in the human subject. This subject is, we must always remind ourselves, to be identified with limits 'the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world' (5.641).

Conclusion. Wittgenstein's subject can leave traditional readers behind. The account of language offered in the *Tractatus* requires the intentionality of a metaphysical subject for the following five reasons. One, as that with which the dead signs can be associated, via use and application, becoming symbols and hence vehicles of meaning. Two, as that which compares pictures to reality, and determines their truth or falsity - without verification, a proposition cannot of course be said to be either true or false. Three, as a grounding for subjectivity and the realm of value - for what is most important, which is not in the world, and which is called the *mystiche*. For all these an empirical subject will never do. Fourthly, we recall a central theme, and note that in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein has conceived a fundamental difference between what can be experienced, defined or described and stated without non-sense, and what is the precondition for the possibility

of experience, what cannot be defined but can only be shown. The metaphysical subject is required in order to make it possible that those things which cannot be said can nonetheless show themselves. The metaphysical subject is the precondition of meaningful language. Thus, as we shall shortly see (§5), there is the constitution of the world by the intentional subject. Fifthly, and finally, it is the formal existence of the metaphysical subject that guarantees the once disputed unity of the *Tractatus*.

♦From Subject to will

We now proceed with the idea that the intentionality of the metaphysical subject is to be identified with will. Besides the intrinsic interest of this further development, such an analysis will permit the comparison to Sartre that is required for the final moves to the aesthetics of the last chapter. In what follows much will be made of a concept of will that is characterised by Wittgenstein as being 'ethical'. This would be odd, as the present thesis is concerned with the self and aesthetic experience, if it were not for the final (ethical) purport of the problematic that directs the inquiry. Relatedly, there is the view that ethics and aesthetics have fundamental similarities - or are even identical in certain respects. Sartre held some such view, as did Wittgenstein at the time of the *Tractatus*. For the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, 'Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same' (6.421). This does not have to be agreed with - but it must be recalled that when Wittgenstein is speaking of ethics he is at the same time referring to aesthetics (for the nature of this structural relation see below, §5).

There are only (or as many as?) five direct references to will in the *Tractatus* - though it is much discussed and greatly anguished over in the *Notebooks*. My claim shall be that the concept of 'will' is very important in the *Tractatus*: it is identifiable with the metaphysical subject and thus the subject as value - and is therefore part of the requirement for sense (*sinn*) in the picture theory.

When Wittgenstein speaks of will he invokes his concept of the bi-polar self. 'The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which

psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject' (5.641). Wittgenstein insists on making a clear distinction between will as ethical and will as phenomenon. 'It is impossible to speak about the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes. And the will as a phenomenon is of interest only to psychology' (6.423).

To say that there is a 'will as phenomenon' that is 'of interest only to psychology' is to place this will in the same situation as the empirical ego. Such a will would be something that could be described in a behavioural or experimental way. It would consist of psychical elements, such that it is revealed in the world through the voluntary movements and performed acts of the body. It would therefore, be that which can be represented, pictured, that which can be spoken of, and therefore described. As a fact in the world, a state of affairs, it has no value, at least not in the higher, non-relative mystical, sense with which Wittgenstein is concerned. (In the later *Lecture on Ethics* Wittgenstein used as an example of the distinction between relative and absolute value that of what we mean by referring to 'A good tennis player' and simply the 'good').

Conversely, Wittgenstein speaks of 'the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes. What is this 'ethical will'? The *Notebooks* will be of assistance here. In an early entry pertaining to the will, the ethical will, we are told that it is that which is the bearer of reward or punishment: 'I will call 'will' first and foremost the bearer of good and evil':

Let us imagine a man who could use none of his limbs and hence could, in the ordinary sense, not exercise his will. He could, however, *think and want* [Wittgenstein's emphasis] and communicate his thoughts to someone else. Could therefore do good and evil through the other man. Then it is clear that ethics would have validity for him, too, and that he in the ethical sense is the bearer of a will. [NB, 21.7.16. p76]

In this passage, as elsewhere, Wittgenstein emphasises the word 'want'. At this time, July 1916, he equates 'willing' with 'wanting' (or 'wishing'). This results in a tension between an inner mental state, with stoical overtones, of the will accepting the world as its lot, and an activism, with the will 'penetrating' and affecting the world. However, as time and contemplation proceed in their analogue the *Notebooks*, the two concepts are eventually distinguished, and the tension brought to ease. To will comes to be seen as an activity, while wanting now embraces the stoical

notion of not wanting. Thus, ideally, and this is important to what follows: ethical reward would be found in *willing* the good without *wanting* reward.

Towards the end of 1916, Wittgenstein says: 'Now at last the connection between ethics and the world has to be made clear' (NB 10.9.16); then, three weeks later:

The will seems always to have to relate to an idea. We cannot imagine, e.g., having carried out an act of will without having detected that we have carried it out. Otherwise there might arise such a question as whether it had yet been *completely* carried out. It is clear, so to speak, that we need a foothold for the will in the world. The will is an *attitude* of the subject to the world. (NB 4.11.16; p86-7)

When Wittgenstein speaks of the ethical will, he is not, we know, speaking of a psychological phenomenon. It is important that we will the good and not the bad. This willing the good is a matter of how one views the world: the *attitude* one adopts. Willing is methodological - that is, programmatic. Thus, in the second direct reference to will in the *Tractatus*

If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts -- not what can be expressed by means of language. In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. (6.43)

In the *Notebooks*, this entry is elaborated upon by the further comment: 'In short [good or evil willing] must make the world a wholly different one. As if by accession or loss of meaning (5.7.16)'. Wittgenstein is saying that the exercise of the ethical will has no effect on the world of facts, on the representational world, on the world which is 'the totality of facts' and which surrounds the willing subject as phenomena. What is effected by the ethical will is the meaning of the world *as a whole for an individual*. (i.e. its ethical meaning). Whereas each willing subject is surrounded by the totality of facts, each individual as ethical subject exists differently among those facts. Thus, the ethical meaning of the world will increase ('wax') or decrease ('wane') according to the ethical subjects *attitude* towards the facts - and part of what is required, we shall see, is that the subject *sees* the world as a whole.

This whole process is, crucially, and as with Sartre and the will, a matter of *relation*. Both in terms of individual inwardness and with the world. Ethical reward, what Wittgenstein calls a good or happy life, resides in the subjects relation to (a) his self (i.e. a matter of inwardness) and (b) the world. A good or happy (non-anxious) life is strived for in the terms set by the self

existing as a relation. The project is that of striving for what Wittgenstein calls a 'harmonious life'.

Many remarks in the *Notebooks* endorse the notion of ethical reward being equated with the good and this in turn being equated with being happy. For example,

I am either happy or unhappy, that is all. It can be said: good or evil do not exist.
For example: it makes me unhappy to think that I have offended such and such a man. Is that my conscience? Conscience is the voice of God. (NB, 8.7.16).

And so, the imperative is unavoidable: 'I keep on coming back to this! simply the happy life is good, the unhappy bad' (NB 30.7.16). Ethical reward is a particular type of happiness - which is equated with the good, which is in effect, good willing. Hence, 'The world of the happy [i.e. 'good'] man is a different one from that of the unhappy man' (6.43). It is abundantly clear that Wittgenstein was never a hedonist in life (even if we stretch a point and claim that he may have been in his work), in the philosophical sense of identifying pleasure with moral motivation. The state of mind that Wittgenstein is in fact thinking of when he speaks of 'happy', is one of *contentment*. A state of well being dependent upon a conscience willing the good. Winch, in his essay on *Wittgenstein's Early Treatment Of Will* (1968), reminds us that the attitude of the happy person would be 'one based on the recognition that the appearance of power created by the will *qua* phenomenon is an illusion'. He compares it to the 'patience' of Kierkegaard in *Purity of Heart*. A state of mind in which one wills the good. This may well be a useful observation, to which R.J.Cavilier (1980) also has a claim. Cavilier further states, that

this *attitude* of the *willing subject* towards the world is an attitude we can characterise as an *ethical relationship* and can be approximated most closely by Kierkegaard's person who is 'pure of heart' and wills only to do the good. Such 'purity of heart' is solely a matter of the individuals personal appropriation of the ethical principle 'to do good'. (pp84)

The ethical will alters how the world appears, and thus has meaning for the self.

The reference to Kierkegaard and 'the ethical *relationship*' provides an appropriate opportunity to link the present sections on the operative self in a conclusion that will introduce the self as a relatum - for this concept, as found in Wittgenstein and Sartre, has a clear, and most likely conscious precedent in a work of Kierkegaard's.

(iii) *Convergence: Operative self*

We have seen that in both Wittgenstein and Sartre the self - as metaphysical subject and prereflective cogito - develops into a self that is to be understood as existing, ontologically, as *intentionality*. The (metaphysical)-subject exists as intentionality, but does so as a *willing relation* to the world. As such, it finds itself committed to existing as a means of engaging with the world so as to procure a certain effect. To say that the self is operative is to say it exists as a means of altering the way the subject sees - and therefore experiences - the world. Whereas, for Wittgenstein, the will as phenomena must be identified with the existence of the empirical subject, the ethical will must be identified with the metaphysical subject. This makes the metaphysical subject that which is the source of value: ethical reward and punishment is a matter of will - just as it is with Sartre. The ontological status of Wittgenstein's will is the same as its foundation the metaphysical subject: a relation (just as the ontological status of Sartre's will was the same as its foundation the prereflective cogito: a *relation*). It is this (subjective) relation - a *willing relation* - that constitutes meaning, in the sense most readily identified with 'existential meaning', i.e. as that which is in opposition to the absurd, that which solves Wittgenstein's 'riddle' of existence.

In fact, Wittgenstein's concept of ethical will introduces a cluster of important points that again move the enquiry forward and that again bear similarity to Sartre's position. The first thing to state is a point of divergence: there is no bi-polar account of will found in the writings of Sartre. However, consideration of Sartre's position has still led to important matters of convergence. Although *prima facie* there is no bi-polar account of will there is a clear distinction between the will and the 'passions'. Will is differentiated from the passions in that it is said to be both 'better understood and explicitly posited' (BN 443). Will is a means (a mode of consciousness, similar, only superior and therefore preferable to, the passions), by which the self alters the meaning of the given, the world. Sartre states that 'The difference here [between will

and passion] depends on the choice of means and on the degree of reflection and of making explicit, not on the end' (ibid.). Moreover,

The will in fact is posited as a reflective decision in relation to certain ends. But it does not create these ends. It is rather a mode of being in *relation* to them: it decrees that the pursuit of these ends will be reflective and deliberate. (ibid. - my emphasis).

'The will is in essence reflective, its goal is not so much to decide what end is to be attained; ... the profound intention of the will bears rather on the *method* of attaining this end already posited' (ibid.). The end has been posited by original freedom. This free choice at once precedes all deliberation and gives the context to all deliberations. The will is reflective; the original free choice is unreflective.

Thus we can see that Sartre's will, like Wittgenstein's ethical will, is, as an intentional structure of consciousness, structurally identifiable with the self. It is not, as Wittgenstein's will is not, to be directly identified with 'effecting the given world of facts'; it is not *en soi* (a thing) nor contingent. It is not, as is Sartre's passions and Wittgenstein's phenomenal will, psychological: the will is metaphysical, it 'Mustn't be understood as an empty psychological desire, but as the transcendental structure of human reality' (WD 110). Again, as with Wittgenstein's ethical will, Sartre's will is a relation, both between itself and the world and between ego and subject: 'the relationship between consciousness and its own possibles' (WD 39). It is to be understood as a method or means for placing acts in a context, that is, a way of altering how the world - as (we shall see) a totality - appears for the subject. It is what introduces, creates value. Finally, though this point has not yet been put forward (see below §5), it can also be identified with the *philosophical* self - indeed, it must be so identified. We can best pursue this point of comparison - the sense in which the self does exist, as a *relatum* - by pursuing the notion through the modalities of 'program' and, especially, 'attitude'.

§4.2 RELATUM – PROGRAMMATIC SELF

In both the last section and in the exegesis of the last chapter there has been persistent reference to the nature of the non-substantive self as a *relatum*. It is in this sense of relation that

we can say the self exists in the mode of 'attitude'. Because of the central importance of this concept, the need for critical clarification calls upon us.

Self as a Relation - an historical context. The notion of a relation or relations, as opposed to dualism's, proliferates in the present century, in both scientific and philosophical thought. In science, the great influence has been set by the work of Heisenberg. A point not lost on Sartre:

The progress of science has led to rejecting this notion of absolute objectivity. What Broglie is led to call "experience" is a system of univocal relations from which the observer is not excluded. If microphysics can regenerate the observer into the heart of the scientific system, this is not by virtue of pure subjectivity – this meaning would have no more meaning than that of pure objectivity – *but as an original relation to the world*, as a place, as that toward which *all envisaged relations are orientated*. Thus, for example, Heisenberg ... (BN 307 – my emphasis).

Besides the modern dominance of such a view of self as a relation there is in the history of philosophy many variations on the notion.⁷ Indeed, the originality of the present *reading* of Sartre and Wittgenstein extends no further than *that*. Thus it is to be noted (as found in P. Morris [1975]) that Aristotle includes perception, knowledge, and attitudes among relations, and adds "the significance of all these is explained by a reference to something else [self—world] and in no other way" [*Categories*, 7.6b 24]' (pp18). Also, that Sartre shares his view of the self as a relation with William James, G.E. Moore⁸ and, likely, Brentano. But the philosophers whose philo-historical roles are most important to both Sartre and Wittgenstein are, pace Morris, those in the Existential tradition: Kierkegaard, Hegel, Heidegger and Buber. Those views on self as a relation in Hegel and Heidegger - *and* the later Wittgenstein - are given extensive treatment in Tugendhat's fine work on self-consciousness and self-relation, *Self-consciousness and Self Determination* (1986).

Martin Buber, in his mantra like *I and Thou*, has 'In the beginning is the relation' (1970, pp69). 'The world of experience belongs to the basic word I–It. The basic word I–You establishes

⁷ There is a brief but clear contemporary discussion of some weaknesses in the view in E.J. Lowe 'Substance and Selfhood', *Philosophy* 66, 1991

⁸ Cf. respectively 'Does Consciousness Exist' in *Essays in Radical Empiricism and a Pluralistic Universe* and 'The refutation of Idealism' in selected essays.

the world of relation' (56) ... The relation to the You is unmediated' (62), and this, *the* relation, prior to knowledge and memory, is a plunge 'from particularity into wholeness' (ibid.). Prior also to language, the relation is the eternal origin of art, a form is encountered that wants to become 'a work through him'; the form cannot be experienced or described 'and yet, I see it, radiant in the splendour of the confrontation ... not as a thing ... but as what is present'. This presence is the actual relation, 'it acts on me as I act on it' (61), thus it is discovery, it is creation.

Whereas Buber stresses the part of art in the self as a relation, Kierkegaard stresses the part of ethics. The latter's philosophical position on the self as a relation will be consulted below, for elucidation. It is to that and Sartre and Wittgenstein that we now turn, certain that the concept of self as a relation which they offer is no *en singular* anomaly, that in fact, the history of philosophy will reveal that any convergence between them on this matter is to be expected, as a view of self as a relation was in the air they both breathed, and has indeed dominated both sides of 'the divide' this century.

Self as Relation: Sartre—Wittgenstein. In the account (above) of Sartre's early self it emerged that '[Man and the world are relative beings], and the principle of their being *is* the relation', that, 'the first relation proceeds from human reality to the world' (BN 308). The self as operative intentionality (will) has made it clear that the reason for insisting that consciousness is a relation is that consciousness is intentional. Throughout *Being and Nothingness* it is made clear that all consciousness, intentional as it is, has the structure of lack, of incompleteness with respect to some particular object or state of affairs. There is of course a difference as to whether the object of consciousness is physical or mental, these being two distinguishable relations. Such a distinction also allows for the (Sartrean) fact that the intended object need not, if it is mental, actually exist, a unicorn is still the object the consciousness of which guarantees the difference between itself and the subject that 'thinks' it: internal conscious relations do not necessitate a physically existing object. And further, the fundamental relation is not between consciousness and world, but between consciousness and itself, the foundation of which is 'lack'. 'There is a type of negation

which establishes an internal relation ... of all internal relations, the one which penetrates most deeply into being ... is *lack*' (BN 86). All consciousness is self-consciousness, where this internal relation is posited reciprocally to the object of consciousness which characterises the intending act of consciousness⁹: 'The being which is related to the intuition of human reality is always that to which *some thing is lacking—i.e., the existing*' (BN 86). And so 'the being of human reality is originally not a substance but a lived relation' (BN 575).

Similarly, as was seen, Wittgenstein's account is built around the following premise: 'The will seems always to have to *relate* to an idea. ... The will is an *attitude* of the subject to the world. (NB 4.11.16; p86-7). In actual fact the concept of 'relation' plays a significant role in the *Tractatus*. Although what follows is concerned solely with the relational function regarding the self, it is appropriate that we here note the deep interrelated source of such a view (not least, it lends support to the *passim* claim to Tractatarian continuity between logic, language, self and aesthetics). In this, due to the authors - linguistic - approach, I can do no better than quote from an instructive article, *Intentionality and Self in the Tractatus*.¹⁰ The author (Rosenberg) throws into relief an underlying principle which holds together our main theme, the connection between the *Tractatus*' dipartite ontology, relations, showing and self. Thus, commenting on Wittgenstein's account of the relation between propositions and facts—objects,

Genuine relations relate objects and objects only. ...Relation-expressions relate names. Names denote objects. Facts are not nameable. And, so, no genuine relation can relate objects and facts. Yet objects and facts do stand in relations - objects, for example, *enter into* facts - and so we are brought to the threshold of a second theme of ineffability in Wittgenstein.

A relation, so-called, between object and fact or between fact and fact cannot be a genuine relation. For Wittgenstein it is what he calls variously a *formal* relation, a *pseudo* relation, a *structural* relation, or an *internal* relation. And formal relations belong to the realm of what can be shown. "What can be shown, cannot be said" (4.1212) (Rosenberg, 1968, pp345).

⁹The relation between these relations is of great importance to exposition/understanding of the self *per se* - but is not essential to the present inquiry. Without belittling the complexity or importance of the question we can note, and support for this will be offered indirectly, that the inner relation must be more fundamental than the outer, though not therefore primary: both are primary, drawing on cultural/social factors of external relation.

¹⁰ Jay F. Rosenberg, 'Intentionality and Self in the *Tractatus*', *Nous*, Vol.2, 1968.

Rosenberg then refers us to propositions 4.121 and the following 4.125: ‘The existence of an internal relation between possible situations [facts] expresses itself in language by means of an internal relation by means of the proposition representing them’. Now, on the face of it there is some similarity between Wittgenstein’s concept of self and Hume’s bundled self (cf. §3). Only Wittgenstein’s account includes the answer to the central problem of what holds all impressions etc. together *as* a bundle. Broadly characterising for present purposes Hume’s impressions, experiences, etc. as ‘facts’, Rosenberg’s analysis revealed that for Wittgenstein ‘there are relations between facts, and, thus, if the self is a bundle of facts, there can be a relation which holds it together *as* a bundle. But since the relations obtain among *facts*, they cannot be genuine relations but must be, one and all, *formal*, relations’ (ibid., pp349). He then shows that, for Wittgenstein at least, a (propositional) point of view ‘is marked off not by varying personal indices but rather by internal relations among a set of propositions (i.e. “facts”)’.

This being the case,

The binding of facts into a single bundle which constitutes a person is accomplished by those facts all being internally related to one another in such a way that the set of formal relations marks off and is jointly constitutive of a single point of view’ (ibid., pp353).

This has important consequences, ones that Wittgenstein is fully expectant of, including the single point of view of solipsism, ‘I am my world’ (5.63). Also, clearly, these formal relations can only be shown (no wonder Hume had to give up, the self can indeed only be shown). Similarly, returning the analysis to the self—world relation, this too can only be shown, by the formal relations which pertain between facts that constitute the self and facts that constitute others. Thus, in the most fundamental of senses, the self is, for Wittgenstein, a *relatum*; and it is just this fact, logically, ontologically, and semantically embedded, that ties the self to the ineffable and the possibility that it can be shown.

In saying that the self becomes or *is* the self in its cognitive activities *as a relation* to itself and the world we mean no more, hopefully, than Kierkegaard in the infamous opening pages to *The Sickness unto Death*, from which, in the hope of elucidation, the opening two paragraphs.

The human being is a spirit. But what is a spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates to itself, or that in the relation which is its relating to itself. The self is not the relation but the relation’s relating to itself. A human being is the synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and

necessity. In short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two terms. Looked at in this way a human being is not yet a self.

In a relation between two things the relation is the third term in the form of a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation, and in the relation to that relation; this is what it is from the point of view of soul for soul and body to be in relation. If, on the other hand, the relation relates to itself, then this relation is the positive third, and this is the self. (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp43)

It is clear from this, I think, that the self is a relation *which relates to itself*, by which first of all we mean, as with Wittgenstein and Sartre, that it is not a substance, an entity or thing. Kierkegaard calls it spirit - a term that is congenial to Wittgenstein but nauseous to Sartre. Terminology aside, this self is a relation, a synthesis between that which is infinite, eternal, necessary, and finite, temporal, free. The edifying factors in the first set of terms indicate the presence and omniscience of God (and do so for all three philosophers). Indeed, the former trinity of terms, it has been noted, 'represents a goal of human endeavour, a fundamental goal, on a par with Sartre's 'useless passion'¹¹. As Kierkegaard says in another work, 'consciousness exists only according to its possibility'¹².

The self exists as a relation between its situationedness (history, place, etc.) and its ideal of selfhood. The self is not identified with consciousness, but with the activity of consciousness (intentionality and will): 'consciousness in its inmost nature is a relation to a transcendent being' (BN xxxvi). Hence, if the self is, as Kierkegaard says, a relation to itself, then the self is consciousness related to itself, i.e. its consciousness of itself: self-consciousness. Naturally, in such a synthesis, self-consciousness cannot, for Kierkegaard and Sartre at least, be divorced from consciousness of world (nor, I am sure, for Wittgenstein: 'The world and life are one' [5.621]), self-consciousness is always accompanying the world, self-consciousness requiring, pace Hegel, a relationship to concrete actuality: here then, the attempt noted (above) by Merleau-Ponty to place the self between the two classical views.

¹¹ A. Hannay, in his Introduction to *Kierkegaard* (1989), pp22

¹² Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (1985), pp170 - amongst a fascinating inquiry into this concept of self as relation.

Here is Sartre, using the language of Hegel to paraphrase the view of Kierkegaard to put forward his own view.

Being, as we have said, is the in-itself-for-itself, consciousness becomes substance, substance becomes the cause of itself, the Man-God. Thus the being of human reality is originally not a substance but a lived relation. The limiting terms of the relation are first the original In-itself, fixed in its contingency and facticity, its essential characteristic being that it is, that it exists; and second, the In-itself-for-itself or value, which exists as the Ideal of the contingent In-itself and which is characterised as beyond all contingency and all existence. (BN 575)

In order that the self, as (a self-consciousness) relation, can progress from the 'negative' to the 'positive' set of terms, from contingency to necessity (the 'beyond' of Sartre), from its 'natural' situation to its 'Ideal', requires that the self is aware of the positive aspect. This will entail - for all three philosophers - self-knowledge: in terms of ethical meaning (*passim*)¹³. Self-knowledge is of one-self as a synthesis of the two possibilities. This is necessary in Kierkegaard that the self avoid the despair that is brought on by 'the biggest danger, that of losing oneself'¹⁴. To lose oneself is to be ignorant of the presence of God which is oneself as the synthesis one is. The search for self-knowledge - ethical meaning, central to choice in Kierkegaard, is integral to choice and the problematic of self in Wittgenstein and Sartre.

While attempting to enlighten the account of the relational self through some comments by Kierkegaard, I have naturally enough introduced the Kierkegaardian (and Wittgensteinian) ethical dimension. This is appropriate as the emphasis will increasingly fall on the ethical (and aesthetic) as we proceed with 'programmatic' and 'attitude' into the final chapter.

♦ Programmatic self

By programmatic I mean only that the operational self conforms itself, as a relation to both it-self and the world, to a systematic and pre-established pattern conforming to its foundation: the cogito or the metaphysical subject (see §3.2). It exists as a relation to both itself and the world,

¹³ The nature of this Kierkegaardian synthesis which structures the self as a relation is by its very constitution ethical. The constant process of choice and striving and the demand on - ethical - self-knowledge all bear down on an ethical existence - again, no different to what we are finding in Wittgenstein and Sartre.

¹⁴ Kierkegaard (1989), pp62

and, as will, it is a *method* that alters how the world - as a whole - appears for the subject. Sartre's will, like Wittgenstein's ethical will, is, as an intentional structure of consciousness, structurally identifiable with the self, constituting it as a methodological structure of consciousness.

The self so constituted as programmatic is, as stated, also creative: a way of bestowing sense (*sinn*) - and hence value - on an otherwise neutrally given world. The world is already given (to intentionality), and lacks in that primitive experience sense-and-meaning. For both philosophers, value is a matter of subjectivity, of choosing - willing - a particular project as is suggested by one's attitude to the world as a whole or totality.

But then, is there a right or preferable way to see oneself and the world? such that, say, acts can be placed in a context that has meaning - and what does this mean? And if so, what would it involve that we can see the self, our self, and the world in this way? And moreover, what would be the advantage for the self - or for that matter, what reason is there to will any particular project? Finally, what, *originally*, must be the *nature* or natural state of the programmatic self - i.e. prior to seeing the world in a particular or 'right' way. It is to these issues we now turn.

§4.3 ATTITUDE (NATURAL)

It has been stressed that the operational self is programmatic. The main claim of this section is that the way to understand the formal principle of the self as programmatic is as 'attitude': central to the problematic is a particular attitude that each philosopher commends - the aesthetic attitude ('attitude' is of course familiar to aesthetics, and it is this traditional concept that will be drawn on). The use of attitude in the *Tractatus* and the *Notebooks* is less complex and less diverse than in Sartre's works, and can be stated fairly concisely - moreover, in essentials it agrees with the 'hybrid' concept that is being designated as Sartre's (early) position. Thus as a matter of method the Tractarian version shall be used to summarise those points of convergence with Sartre that we shall take forward to the final chapter.

Sartre. 'Attitude' meant originally something like our 'disposition' or 'fitness'. By the mid 19th century it had acquired, in France, Germany and Britain, variants of meaning that were being technically employed; these included the following two. (a) A posture of the body proper to something or the implying of some action or mental state, and, (b), an (habitual) mode of regarding anything¹⁵.

It would be perverse to call Sartre an attitudinarian - but only for the singular reason that he does not study attitudes for themselves. However, the role of attitude in Sartre's philosophy is extremely complex and far reaching (as I shall attempt to indicate), especially in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre believes, in fact, that both Philosophy's and his own perennial concern, that of the subject-object relation, is as all problems existential are, a matter of relations *as attitudes*¹⁶. And as one diligent scholar has noticed, 'Ontology is only possible in relation to the human being. Being and human thought and attitude are inextricably interrelated and covariant' (Fell, 1979, pp362).

The problem of *Being and Nothingness* is, in fact, 'the relation of man with the world'. The inquiry undertaken will lead to the 'heart of being' and will, therefore, require 'a single pattern which can serve us as a guiding thread in our inquiry'. And indeed, the author of *Being and Nothingness* himself, 'this man that *I am*', must, he tells us, be apprehended as standing 'before being in an attitude of interrogation'. The inquiry will be 'not simply the objective totality of the words printed on this page, [for] it is indifferent to the symbols which express it. In a word, it is a human attitude filled with meaning' (BN 4). Therefore, Sartre continues in this the first chapter, the first question to consider before we proceed with the inquiry will be 'What does this attitude

¹⁵ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

¹⁶ The notion of 'attitude' may indeed be familiar to existentialist philosophy since Husserl; but in Bergson we find the idea that in concentrating on internal experience only, in abandoning practical orientations, in adopting an attitude of disinterested contemplation, we perceive pure *durée*. Note that it is just this disinterested attitude that we will be ultimately concerned with, and note Bergson's 'superficial' and 'profound' self in comparison to the dual account offered above, and note also (§2, fn.15) how in Bergson symbols are used to convey *indirectly* states of mind or soul. Finally, note that Bergson, and not any or one of 'The Three H's' was the first philosopher that Sartre give serious study to; first loves never leave us, though we may run to all corners of id and ego.

reveal to us?' (BN 4). The answer, of course, is Nothingness, which is 'the original condition of the questioning attitude' and, 'more generally of all philosophical or scientific inquiry' (BN 11).

At the outset of *Being and Nothingness* then, the reader is made aware that in the process of reading (s)he is engaged in a *relationship* with 'a human *attitude* filled with meaning'; with the printed words, symbols, acting as a mere mediator. Similarly, the reader himself, as a relation to the text, is an attitude in relation to the text (see also, §2.3iv).

What then, to continue, *is* the connection between attitude and the self as a relation? Sartre, with an almost inexhaustible amount of terms and expressions that appear to beg the question but which actually belie the difficulty of signifying the signifier, refers to the attitudinal-self variously as, for example, the cogito, nothingness, original spontaneity, original negation, or as that which is 'to nihilate' (*neantiser*) or as a 'nihilation' (*neantisation*). This does not help, perhaps, but the problem is one that this whole dissertation is sympathetic to: whatever it is, the self is Not, and will not be pinned down by ordinary language - this much we know for certain to be Sartre's position (*passim*). At this juncture, two further points of certainty regarding the self can be (re)stated, the second being our point of arrival. Firstly, that whatever the self as a not is, it is best understood as a relation, existing both to it-self and to the world: 'The for-itself is the foundation of all negativity and of all relation. *The for-itself is a relation*'. (BN 362). Its existence consists in directing negations both outward toward the world and inward toward it-self. Secondly, that such 'directing' is a matter of attitude: 'The human being is not only the being by whom *néгатités* are disclosed in the world: he is also the one who can take negative attitudes with respect to himself' (BN 47). *Néгатités* are types of human activities-experiences that contain negativity as part of their structure (i.e. involving lack, absence, destruction). Naturally, for Sartre, such *néгатités* permeate human experience, but note that humans can 'also ...take negative attitudes'. This suggests that the ensemble of desires, passions and will that freely and spontaneously constitutes itself as a motivation (*mobile*), and which (we recall - above §4.2i) is apprehended in the motif (*motif*), and which together with the act forms 'the three indissoluble terms of ...consciousness'.

this suggests that they are part of a synthesis, a modality of which is just those negative attitudes which appear to either determine or give existential meaning to being-in-the world.

However, whatever the self as synthesis is, it cannot be, and is in fact neither determined nor given: we are still dealing with a freedom. What is given and determinate is the relation: between a negation or freedom (subjectivity) and a situation. *The directing of negations is what we call an 'attitude', and this is, as we would expect, chosen.* Naturally, this being the case, a description of all attitudes ('active' or directed relations) to both self and world would be an impossible or endless task - they being 'too diverse'. Therefore, as to the 'attitudes of negation toward the self', rather than study these 'internal negations' in general, Sartre prefers 'to examine one ... attitude which is essential to human reality and which' in fact, is such that it is that consciousness which 'instead of directing its negation outward turns it toward itself. This attitude, it seems to me, is *bad faith*' (BN 47f). Because of its reflexive importance bad faith is seen as a basic attitude. As far as the relation between self and world is concerned the basic relation would seem to be 'conflict'. Conflict is the original relation with Others, and for this reason it exists either in good faith or in bad faith, for the for-itself must constantly use its freedom to continue in any sub-relation with the Other. Two 'basic attitudes' to the world are possible - this much is in fact stated on the contents page of *Being and Nothingness*. For Part Three, Chapter 3 is, we are told, concerned with 'Concrete Relations with Others'. Sartre offers what turn out to be the two basic (and opposed) directed-relations with the other: 'I. First Attitude towards the Other'. 'II. Second Attitude toward the Other'. As to these two basic attitudes, it is, Sartre says at the opening of the actual section, 'arbitrary to begin with the one as with the other' (BN 364): for each attitude is the very being of the for-itself in its original upsurge as a nihilation and as a relation. Moreover, to account for some of the diversity in our 'concrete relations with the Other' each relation is then further sub-divided ('Love, Language, Masochism'; 'Indifference, Desire, Hate, Sadism'). From these foundational (freely chosen) attitudes psychological states of consciousness follow. The foundational relations to self and world are, however,

not simple specifications of the fundamental relation. Although each one of them includes within it the original relation with the Other as its essential structure and its foundation,

they are entirely new modes of being on the part of the for-itself. In fact they represent the various attitudes of the for-itself in a world where there are Others. (BN 361)

It was noted above that no matter whether the self, in a given situation, is said to be either reflective (will) or passionate (emotional), either position taken to the world remains a 'subjective attitude', and this 'in relation to a transcendent end' - i.e. the fundamental project.

Here then, with the modality of self as attitude, the programmatic aspect of self becomes clearer. Operational intentionality is as a willing relation to the world. Certain relations are more fundamental than others - that of bad faith, that of conflict. They are foundational - by which we mean, partly, that they must be understood as metaphysical (psychological states of consciousness follow from these attitudes). This certainly suggests that they are 'given' - and thus introduces the possibility that they are determinate. But, as stated, this last move does not suit Sartre, so that the self becomes programmatic in a complete sense: the relation between subjectivity and situation constitutes a pre-established foundational relation which, however, must be appropriated by the self. The constituting or realising of such appropriation is what we call an attitude. It is the attitude of the subject that carries ethical meaning into the world.

Wittgenstein. 'My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul', so says Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The role of attitude in the *Tractatus* and *Notebooks* is, as stated, less complex than it is in Sartre's philosophy. Indeed, Wittgenstein's position is so straightforward that when earlier we spoke of the metaphysical subject and its identification to ethical will we also encountered his notion that this, the metaphysical subject, the ethical will, is, with attitude, to be understood as a synthesis.

In confronting the problem of the nature of the self as a relation, to it-self and between its (ethical) self and the world, Wittgenstein says, on September 10th 1916, that 'Now at last the connection between ethics and the world has to be made clear'. After further deliberation the solution appears three weeks later.

The will seems always to have to relate to an idea. We cannot imagine, e.g., having carried out an act of will without having detected that we have carried it out. Otherwise there might arise such a question as whether it had yet been *completely* carried out. It is

clear, so to speak, that we need a foothold for the will in the world. The will is an *attitude* of the subject to the world. (NB, 4.11.16; p86-7).

The ethical will (i.e. the metaphysical subject) is not, we know, a psychological phenomenon. Willing is a matter of how one views the world: the *attitude* one adopts¹⁷. Willing is methodological - that is, programmatic. It is concerned, as the above statement clearly shows, with the relation between the subject and the world. 'I am placed in [the world] like my eye in its visual field' (NB 73, 11.6.16). Such that, 'The situation is not simply that I everywhere notice where I see anything, but I always find myself at a particular point of my visual space, so my visual space has as it were a shape'¹⁸ (NB 86, 17.10.16). The willing or metaphysical subject shapes the world, and does so by adopting a certain attitude toward it. 'The subject is the willing subject' and 'The will is an attitude [*Stellungnahme*] of the subject to the world' (NB 87, 4.11.16).

Conclusion. The account of the self that can only be shown, the self as value, as operative, programmatic, this account of self has centered on a convergent concept of will. This will was found to be identified with the (metaphysical)-subject, to be the source of (ethical) meaning and, as attitude, it offers the direct possibility of converting from the natural to the aesthetic attitude and thus providing the problematic with its solution. It is to these final - now aesthetic - issues that attention is now directed.

¹⁷ Although much of Wittgenstein's treatment of will and self as noumenal/phenomena derives from Schopenhauer, including the 'eye' and 'ladder' analogies, this concept of *attitude* is not, as far as I know, found in Schopenhauer. But interestingly, as Brian McGuinness has shown in his *The Mysticism of the Tractatus* (1966), the idea is almost certainly borrowed - or was conceived with - Russell, who expresses it in his *Mysticism and Logic*. It is believed that Wittgenstein at least read this work in 1912-13 (cf. Introduction).

¹⁸ And Schopenhauer: 'The I or the ego is the dark point in consciousness, just as on the retina the precise point of entry of the optic nerve is blind ... and the eye sees everything except itself' (WWR, II, pp491).

§5
**Dis-Solving the Absurd Riddle?:- The Aesthetic:
Determination and Deed**

It is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world
are eternally justified.

(Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, 5)

As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still bearable for us, Art
furnishes us with the good conscience to be able to turn ourselves
into such a phenomenon.

(Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 107)

Aesthetically the miracle is that the world exists. That there is
what there is. There is certainly something in the conception that
the end of art is the beautiful. And the beautiful is what makes
happy. ... The happy life is justified, of itself, it is the only right life.

(Wittgenstein, Notebooks)

The sole purpose of an absurd existence was indefinitely to
produce works of art that escaped it. That was its sole
justification ... It was really a morality of salvation through art.

(Sartre, War Diaries)

One thing is needful - to 'give style' to one's character - a great
and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths
and weaknesses of their natures and then fit them into an artistic
plan until everyone of them appears as art and reason and even
weakness delights the eye.

(Nietzsche, The Gay Science).

§5

A special wrenching-free from ordinary reference is required to make reference itself the subject of discourse. (Danto, *Sartre*)

The present chapter moves the emphasis onto the aesthetic dimension of showing, and completes the problematic. The first two sections of this chapter are transitional, taking the inquiry to the aesthetic and opening the way for our conclusions. To facilitate this shift in emphasis the links between 'showing' and 'showing as aesthetic principle' are clarified (at §5.1) and by the following means. (a) Summary of the key points of the problematic framework. (b) Statement on 'absurd riddle' (the ethical dimension of the problematic). Next (at §5.2), the pre-condition to the solution is given: the convergent thesis that ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.

The solution itself is considered at §5.3, in two parts. Firstly, *aesthetic determination*: the self resolving the problematic of it-self by choosing itself (a relation) as an aesthetic attitude. Here the attitudinal self is discussed through the aesthetic concepts of disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*. Secondly, *aesthetic deeds*: self and the *disclosure* of the solution. Here the works *Tractatus* and *Nausea* are discussed as the paradigms of the early philosophy, and as the conclusion to the present thesis.

The thesis ends with a PostScript. §5.4, which comments upon (a) Sartre's potential ambivalence with, and Wittgenstein's embracement of, the aesthetic solution and, following on from this, (b), the most important critical consequence of the problematic of the lingua-aesthetic-self and determination: that as a solution to the ethical meaninglessness of life, it actually fails, at least it fails theoretically, as it is found to rest, as Sartre saw clearly, on a logical flaw, in that it is based on an inherent self-deception. Still, it will be concluded, as a concrete and existential solution to the moral dilemma of self, the aesthetic approach can - or must on pain of absurdity -

be seen to work, as is clear from the final positions of Wittgenstein and indeed Sartre himself.

§5.1 PROBLEMATIC STATED: SELF, SHOWING, SHOWING AS AESTHETICS

◆Two Preliminary Remarks

It is neither possible nor desirable to give an account of either Sartre's or Wittgenstein's (early) Aesthetics. Such an account would have to be inclusive, besides the artist, spectator and the art object, the ontological and semantic commitments of the system that supports the aesthetic would have to be considered. Clearly, by the time the present work is concluded it will in fact have involved some discussion of ontology, semantics, art object etc. - but not as a unified critique of an inclusive system that supports an Aesthetic.¹ Whereas in the present work we are concerned solely with the aesthetics of showing within the problematic of the self. An effect of this concern is that it takes us, like a path, through any aesthetic that the early Sartre or Wittgenstein would have. Given the context of our discussion this is not a bad thing, but moreover, our final destination, aesthetic determination and its presentation or communication, is, I am claiming, *the* culmination of their philosophical systems, *the* use to which any early aesthetic would aspire. It is as if, as in Kant, the aesthetic is important exactly because, though it is situated within the system, it surpasses that system. As if, to mention only Wittgenstein, Sartre and Kant, these philosophers recognise the conformities of science, the schemata of logic, and the paradoxical contingency of existence, as that which imprisons human potential. But that, the aesthetic, and only the aesthetic, they claim, will open the door to Being and freedom and ethics, to the possibility of getting outside the system, that the self and not the situation may determine itself (or, as the case may be, position itself 'nowhere' for objectivity - though not pure and

¹ Sartre and Wittgenstein do have an aesthetic, though it would have to be drawn out of the philosophy. With Wittgenstein this might be difficult, for the characteristic reason that he has so little to say on traditional aesthetic topics. Where Sartre is concerned, many of his key works do discuss topics central to aesthetics (imagination, art works, artists, beauty, the world as a whole) Such discussions are found mainly in the early works, *The Psychology of Imagination*, *What is Literature?*, the *Essays on Aesthetics*, *Nausea* and the scattered passages on 'beauty' which occur throughout the writings, especially in *Being and Nothingness*. But also, there is Sartre's extensive writings on artists, on the poets Mallarme, Baudelaire, Genet, Flaubert, on painters such as Tintoretto and Lapoujade, and sculptor Giacometti.

transcendent, cf. comments especially at §3.1i). With this, our first preliminary point can be stated: central to the concept of aesthetic experience and the attempt for 'nowhere' in Wittgenstein and Sartre is a Kantian aesthetic principle, distance or disinterestedness.

The second preliminary remark is introduced by 'disinterestedness'. The following aesthetic considerations do indeed compel themselves upon a theory of art and the ineffable (as discussed above - especially §1). The identification of art with the aesthetic here given is not taken lightly (see especially §2.1). The concept of disinterestedness, of disinterested attitude pertains, traditionally and in Sartre and Wittgenstein, to the nature of aesthetic experience. Reciprocally, traditionally, and in Sartre and Wittgenstein, art is, amongst other things, something that must be experienced at a distance, bracketed. And, the further point, disinterestedness prevails in our proper - distanced - appreciation of art. Art and aesthetics can, and do in Sartre and Wittgenstein, entail each other. In the present case, this is apparent in that the aesthetic attitude reciprocates an art object, an aesthetic deed, both defined in terms of distance and disinterestedness. For Wittgenstein and Sartre, art and aesthetics are reciprocal and do, in the present problematic, entail each other.

A word of caution is here called for: there is little in either Wittgenstein's or Sartre's aesthetics as covered here which is new². What is unusual, as compared to say Plato, Kant or Dewey, is that their ontology is an aesthetic and their aesthetic is an ontology. What is new and what justifies the following discussion, is three-fold: the identification of the aesthetic attitude with the *lingua-self* and the preceding doctrines, notably 'showing; the resulting overall vision of self; the claim to another and final area of convergence between Wittgenstein and Sartre.

² Certainly, aspects of Sartre's philosophy of art are not traditional. His out and out dislike of closure - as always a closure-on-freedom - leads him to reject representation and imitation. Similarly, the contemporary attempts by philosophers of art to justify art as ideology (Lucas, Adorno, Benjamin, Mackery) must be rejected: such art would enclose, fix, or solidify or define an ideology: it would *say*; it would not *show*, be open, suggestive or expressive of freedom (*Nausea* offers many examples of this, such as the portraits of the bourgeoisie in the Municipal Gallery). In this aesthetic there is discernible, perhaps, another problem for the proposed synthesis with Marxism, and the source of the inferiority of his later plays etc. compared to his earlier work - that is: in the later works aesthetic qualities are consumed by social and political exegesis/description; the balance between saying—showing is all but lost in favour of the former: closure has been re-introduced, in this case, by Marxist ideology.

(I) FRAMEWORK — ETHICS (ABSURD-RIDDLE)

In the previous chapters the account of both language and self lead to an underlying principle, that which was termed, after Wittgenstein, 'showing'. This section will clarify those aspects of the above thesis which characterise showing as an aesthetic principle, or at least, a logical principle which entails, besides an ontological, metaphysical and linguistic aspect, an aesthetic aspect. Whether this principle should be spoken of as unitary with qualities or aspects, or pluralistic, is a point of interpretation of little present significance. The evidence suggests that showing is, in fact, a pluralistic principle, to be understood, as is the metaphysical subject, in terms of modalities. For present purposes the salient point is that at an effective level the principle *is* necessarily and sufficiently aesthetic, as the remainder of this thesis will confirm.

Framework. Here is briefly assembled the key aspects of the lingua-self framework that constitute showing as aesthetic. Language is bipolar; one pole, 'ordinary': *bedeutung*, *signification*, (representation), limited to describing Facts (including the psychological) and world of phenomena, and which cannot say anything about the world as a whole or totality: the realm of 'saying'. The second pole, 'poetic': *le sens*, *sinn*, (expression), the presupposition to the former, identified with Value and the world as a whole, and which itself cannot be represented: the realm of 'showing'. Moreover, the self is co-structurally bipolar to language: empirical and metaphysical, the latter, the 'real' i.e. foundational self, is non-substantive, identified with the world as a whole (Wittgenstein) or totality (Sartre) and is non-encounterable - both reflexively and outwardly, it does not exist in the world of (ordinary) experience. Only the empirical self is in the world, the subject of experience, and represented by language. The metaphysical subject can only be *shown* to exist. Furthermore, for Sartre, the self itself is often spoken in terms of a work of art, as (a) an 'unreality', (a *négalité*), strongly identified with the imagination (cf. comments under §2.3ii). And also, (b), and so too for Wittgenstein, the self is, foundationally,

self-creative³. (Cf. §4, especially §4.IIII and the ontological status of the self as a *relatum*). ‘Creativity’, it should be remembered, is a prominent sub-theme in *Being and Nothingness*. In the *Notebooks for an Ethics* it is less of a sub-theme: ‘Every action is creation, creation of the world, of myself, and of man’, whether the action stems from an artist or a subordinate in a factory (NE 129). Although the self-creative non-substantive (metaphysical)–subject is said not to exist in the world, there is of course ‘*a sense*’ in which the self exists, is in the world. The self is a relation, both to it-self and to the world. This we saw is a matter of operative intentionality (involving will) that is programmatic - a systematic synthesis of consciousness constituting itself as a method of altering how the world appears. This methodological structure of consciousness is understood, finally and fundamentally, as an ‘attitude’ to the world: it is this that secures the ethical–aesthetic dimension.

‘Absurd riddle’. It appears to some, to many, that life is either absurd (Sartre) or it is a riddle (Wittgenstein). An ethically meaningless life would be an absurd life, and it is just this which is identifiable with Wittgenstein’s ‘riddle’. Wittgenstein’s philosophical concern with the meaning of life is, in fact, as existential as anything in Sartre or Heidegger: though Wittgenstein’s philosophical framework and solution explicitly exclude him for speaking at any length upon it. Nonetheless, some comments are made:

What do I know about God and the meaning of life? (NB 11.6.16)
 But is it possible for one so to live that life stops being problematic? (NB 6.7.16)
 If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being so. For all happening and being so is accidental (O, 6.41)
 (Our problems are not abstract but perhaps the most concrete that there are (O, 5.5563).
 The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time
 (O, 6.4312).

Such remarks indicate what the major doctrines of the *Tractatus* imply: a concern to preserve Value, those specific values which are constitutive of the individual as, to borrow a term from Sartre, the ‘universal singular’. These values, including for Wittgenstein the will of God, are threatened by a scientific or mechanistic approach which is in fact, according to Wittgenstein,

³This echoes Nietzsche, which is no surprise. Cf. below, Conclusion I (and Introduction).

‘founded on an illusion’ (6.371). This, that ‘the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena’ (6.372)⁴. In the present age the modern system ‘makes it look as if *everything* were explained’. The *mystiche*, however, is not and cannot be explained (above, §2.2). Explanations are limited to facts and not values: ‘the only necessity is logical necessity’ (6.375) and

Even if all that we wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favour granted by fate, so to speak: for there is no *logical* connection between the will and the world, which would guarantee it, and the supposed physical connection is surely not something we could will. (6.374 – cf. also, §4.1ii).

So much for the modern system. Wittgenstein continues that although there were also problems with the ancient conception of the world, which treated ‘God and Fate’ as ‘inviolable’, the ancient conception at least had the merit of recognising ‘a clear and acknowledged terminus’: ‘the world is independent of my will’ (6.373)⁵. The terminus is drawn, it is God, and of the ‘two godheads’ it is the viable God of self ‘my independent “I” ’ over against the world. From this standpoint only will the ‘riddle’ be solved and ‘life stop being problematic’

So much has been said on Sartre’s and the existentialist’s clamour for ethical meaning in an otherwise absurd universe that it is suffice to conclude thus. That overall, life is either absurd or a riddle when, as is the natural relation to the world, no non-relative meaning can be found, where by ‘meaning’ we intend ethical value. Such meaning cannot, according to the *Tractatus* and *Nausea* (and the other early works) be found in the world. All that is in the world is contingent; ethical value, unless it were to be relative, and not then Value, would have to come from outside the world (cf. above, §4.1i-ii) - but is that possible?

The framework and the absurd riddle proffer an aesthetic ‘yes’. This because (a) the framework itself is foundationally aesthetic. (b) the absurd riddle is ethical *and* art and ethics are structurally identified (by the willing subject). And (c) The (ethical) willing subject is entailed in an aesthetic principle of disinterestedness that ultimately links the attitudinal self to aesthetic

⁴ And Schopenhauer: ‘a law of nature ... which remains as the absolutely inexplicable’ (WWR II 176).

⁵ And Schopenhauer: “natural sciences’ ... in our time ... But however great the advances which *physics* (understood in the widest sense of the ancients) may make, not the smallest step towards metaphysics will be made this way (WWR II 177).

deeds, art objects. Attention now befalls points (b) and (c) and the solution, through first of all the important precondition to this solution.

§5.2 PRECONDITION TO SOLUTION: ETHICS & AESTHETICS 'ONE & THE SAME'

The critical position of this pre-condition (to the aesthetic solution) does not concern the present thesis. For both Wittgenstein and Sartre there is a structural identity between the aesthetic attitude and ethics: founded on the principle that both are transcendental. It is *this point and* - its convergent - relation to the problematic of self that is of interest. Also, in this discussion of a *relation* between ethics and aesthetics, elaboration is best attained less directly: with the continuing of the general thesis, and especially through the discussion of attitude. Finally, the case of establishing this pre-condition has to be made more for Sartre than Wittgenstein. The latter clearly states his position, especially in the *Notebooks*, and this will be outlined in a paragraph. Sartre's position, however, on the question of a structural identity between ethics and aesthetics, is more complex, and not without ambiguities. Nonetheless, the aim is to show that there is insufficient ambiguity to effect the validity of the claim, to which we now turn.

Sartre. The reason for the assurance that Sartre identifies ethics with aesthetics is the certainty of the Sartrian starting point: that the self, the *pour soi*, that which we diagnosed as operative and programmatic (willing), is by definition, an ethical self. Indeed Sartre prefers to speak of the *moral* and not the ethical self - this, the call to moral principles, which we also find in Wittgenstein, will identify the problematic, although metaphysical, as concrete and rooted in the world.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre concludes a lengthy account of the *pour soi* with the following: 'These considerations suffice to make us admit that human reality is that by which value arrives in the world' (BN 93). Sartre criticises philosophers who hypothesise value as dependent upon being as well as those philosophers who see value as purely subjective. Value

enters the world through man - but it does not depend on man. it is unconditioned in that it is the very nature of the prereflective cogito: as that which it is in not being it. Human reality arises as a lack of identity of a 'self' with a self. In its original (prereflective) upsurge, the for-itself tends toward identification - or coincidence - with a self (and a world) and consciousness of this self. Human reality itself, for consciousness is always situated, consists in its perpetual attempting, and resulting perpetual failure, to be its original project of identity. This human reality is value. Sartre therefore identifies value with 'lack' and 'possibility': all three are aspects of the for-itself. Lack is the lack of the prereflective cogito, a fundamental internal negation. The self, as a lack, *creates* itself (perpetually) by choosing its possibilities. Lack, value and possibility constitute the self's attempt to project itself toward its projects: modalities of the self as relatum and attitude.

Such projects come into the world through 'being', that is, human reality or the original negation of the in-itself. They constitute the foundation that Sartre equates with self (above, §3.11). It is clear then, and this throughout his works, that for Sartre 'Human reality is moral because it wishes to be its own foundation' (Sartre, WD 110). Human reality is value, and it is moral value. It is also aesthetic value. It is so some of the reasons already given and that human reality exists at what Sartre calls 'the limit'. The boundary where language stops saying and starts showing is the boundary where the world coincides with the subject at the limit of language. Language begins with the 'I' as the intention behind signs and ends with the 'I' as a boundary or limit. Self is identified with whole or totality and it is this whole that can only be shown (not necessary solipsism, cf. final pages of Conclusion II). Showing is, at the most fundamental level, self-expression. This self is always, for Sartre, a moral self, and, 'as a moral agent, I considered myself unfettered by conditions'. It is this, continues Sartre, this 'intransigence, as well as my theory of contingency, that led me to adopt a morality of salvation through art' (WD 86). As such, Sartre 'did not consider it sufficient to write, I also had to be moral'. Moreover, 'this morality was a total transformation of my existence and an absolute' (WD 87). And so, 'little by little' Sartre 'equipped' himself with an 'aesthetic morality'. As to writing itself, 'although literature is one thing and morality quite a different one, at the heart of

the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative' (WL 45).

Where in the aesthetic imperative, precisely, shall we discern this moral imperative? There is of course a traditional response, one which Sartre (and Wittgenstein) are drawing on. Sartre hints at this by his use of the term 'imperative'. It may be a common place to both ethics and aesthetics that the former includes the most essential part of aesthetics: the meaning of life, the problem of how to live. In this way, both inquiries have been seen and used as responses to a particular problematic, a moral dilemma.⁶ For sure, it can readily be accepted, a claim made by both Wittgenstein and Sartre, that an artistic presentation may be the best way of making criticisms of a certain way of life, or of rendering intelligible - showing - an answer. Indeed, as to moral dilemmas, perhaps there can only ever be an answer with recourse to a broad concept of showing, one that would include presenting or displaying a solution through *action*; and surely it is just this transcending of the limits of representation and denotation to which Wittgenstein and Sartre are referring us.

What binds the ethical to the aesthetic imperative, at the limit with showing, is the self as operative intentionality and programmatic, the non-substantive self as ethical will. What the ethical will has in common with aesthetics is that both are to be understood as a whole or totality, as an attitude, an attitude that is aesthetically defined in terms of distance and its two principles: disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is the former that founds a conception of the ethical will: 'disinterestedness' is the idea of a meaningful (moral) existence through, in broad terms, the elimination of many needs and desires. With ethical will, showing, 'The world and things become inessential, become a pretext for the act which becomes its own end'. And so 'aesthetic enjoyment is a manner of apprehending the world' that is not 'directed' onto the real world, it is this that is 'the source of the celebrated disinterestedness of aesthetic experience' (WL 213 & 222).

With the self as value, as creative, as the foundation of possibilities (original choices); as

⁶ It is just this view that Stuart Hampshire argues so forcibly against. See 'Logic and Appreciation' in W. Elton (ed.) *Essays in Aesthetics and Language*, Basil Blackwell, 1967.

the ineffable presupposition to discourse; as a willing relation to the world, entailing distance, the possibility of disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*, with this, aesthetics and ethics, as a response to a moral problematic, are structurally the same in the early philosophy of Sartre.

Wittgenstein's position similarly relies on the same principle as Sartre's: the self as value, as operative and programmatic (ethical will), identifies itself with ethics and aesthetics. 'It would be possible to say (*a la* Schopenhauer): it is not the world of Idea that is either good or evil; but the willing subject' (NB 79). Wittgenstein's position has the dual merit of being transparently confirmed in the *Tractatus* on the basis of an explanation in the *Notebooks*. Thus in the *Tractatus*: 'It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same)' (6.421). And thus, as the preceding Tractarian comment makes clear, 'It is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics. Propositions can express nothing that is higher' (6.45). As aesthetics is identical with ethics and the latter is in a realm that transcends what can be said, then aesthetics is also of this 'mystical' realm. That is, 'to view the world *sub specie aeternitatis* is to view it as a whole - a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical' (6.45). Both the aesthetic and the ethical are identified with the '*mystiche*, the transcendental, and viewing the world as a whole. To be precise, as stated in the *Notebooks*: 'The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connection between art and ethics' (NB 83). Both involve (a) a self and showing at the limit. (b) This self as an attitudinal relationship to the world as a whole involving (c) Viewing the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, distance, and disinterestedness. As with Sartre, we will find (below) that this ethic and metaphysic support a self bound to moral principles, a self that although is *in a sense* eliminated from the world, nonetheless is *in a sense* situated in the world.

For both philosophers, this is a reciprocal condition: the structural identity of ethics and aesthetics as a pre-condition of the aesthetic solution entails that the aesthetic offers itself as a solution, as we shall now see.

§5.3 SOLUTION TO PROBLEMATIC OF SELF

It is all very well to claim an aesthetic solution to a perceived problematic (and we have seen a semantic and a metaphysic that rise always to the aesthetic): but how exactly is such an aesthetic supposed to work? Here then (after crucial transitional material to the ethico-aesthetic) we begin where the last chapter ended: on the modality of self that was fittingly termed 'attitude'. Only now, though still dealing with the willing or programmatic self, it is a question of the self as aesthetic attitude, and, given our lingua-self foundation, the dis-solving of the absurd riddle.

(I) PART I: (CONCLUSION I): AESTHETIC ATTITUDE (THE WORLD AS A WHOLE)

'According as he breaths in an atmosphere of sin, or in the peace of God,
so the world changes its face'.⁷

Philosophers such as Kant, Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre and Dufrenne⁸ have beheld the aesthetic attitude as a stance to the world or art object which reveals an otherwise impenetrable reality, essence, truth or Being. The aesthetic attitude is thus seen as a particular way of experiencing objects - independent of personal emotion, moral judgement, instrumental value or utility. It is sometimes conceived as heightened perceptiveness and sometimes, as in the philosophers quoted, as an exceptional cognitive relation to both works of art and the world. In so doing, it suggests a 'correct' attitude toward an object and thus relies on the presupposition that art is wholly aesthetic (not reducible to the socio-political or some other value) - a point of much dispute, though one accepted by Wittgenstein and Sartre (cf. §2.1 and opening of this §5). Post Kant, the principle most often identified with the aesthetic attitude is distance or disinterestedness. The inclusion of *sub specie aeternitatis* is rarer, but is in any case used, with distance, by both Wittgenstein and Sartre. After some remarks on these concepts *per se* the

⁷ Jean Mouroux, *The Meaning of Man*; Garden City, Doubleday, 1961, pp37.

⁸ One may see this as a continuous tradition, certainly Dufrenne's account has much in common with (besides Kant) Sartre. Although he is critical of Sartre's thesis of the unreal, he argues that aesthetic experience transcends the object to *contemplate* the truth of nature, a basis for mans relation to the real. Cf. Dufrenne (1973), pp456 and chapter 15 'Aesthetic Attitude'.

discussion will move onto first Wittgenstein and then Sartre for confirmation of their allegiance.

♦ **Disinterestedness, *Sub specie aeternitatis***

The natural attitude or relation to the world that the self finds itself in is situated, in the midst of things. By this it is meant that experience is structured within a spatio-temporal relation to other objects. This relation is constantly changing as it is correlated to the contingency of the world of facts: any value system based on this relation must then be relative. Experience is said to be identified with and is relative to the now and here. Experience is determined by a reference taken from the location and identification of a subjects body⁹. When, as in Wittgenstein and Sartre, the body is identified with the will, a point of view on the world (individual but non-personal - cf. §3.1i), then in this relation to objects there is, according to a Kantian tradition, 'interest'. That is, the nature of the relation between our will and objects is utilitarian and purposeful; the natural attitude. 'natural cognition' as Schopenhauer says, is governed by the will in relation to particular objects of experience (Wittgenstein: 'instead of "all objects" we might say: *All particular objects*' – NB 11.7.16). We can say that this relation is one of psychic self-interest; one of need, want and desire (cf. above, §4.1i/ii). The self's natural comportment to the given, the very condition of this situatedness, is said to be 'interest' governed. For Sartre at least, 'biologically determined' would not be misleading, it is our attitude that is free, that is contemporary with original freedom.

In Wittgenstein and Sartre the concept of 'interest', or lack of it, pertains to the notion of a (willing) self as attitude to the world. The reciprocal idea of suspending such interest, of suspending or bracketing desires, needs, wants, and the utilitarian direction of natural cognition is called 'disinterestedness'. Here the relation to the object or the world would be one stripped bare of practical utility. It is the elimination of the psychological mode of being, the minimisation of desires and needs. The elimination of desires thus involves replacing natural spatio-temporally

⁹ See Strawson, *Individuals*, chapter 1

determined experience, identified with the now and here, with experience which is not determined in reference to the given, to the, that is, particular objects or facts of experience. The usual 'embodied' identification of the will with the world is transcended in what is an escape from a natural, usual or active stance to the world of particular objects. In other words, rather than experience being constituted in relation to the personal and the particular, it is so in relation to a whole or totality and at a distance from the personal (though it remains individual - subjective and situated cf. §3.1i-ii).

By placing the object within its own spatio-temporal framework, it is experienced as a whole or totality *and thus*: Experience is under the aspect of eternity. To experience something *sub specie aeternitatis* is in fact to experience it as a *limited* whole or totality, as something which exists together with its own space and time. It is to lose sight of the particular, it is to condition experience by distance. This distance ensures that the will is not *in the world* in the sense (the same sense as the (metaphysical)-subject - above §3.1ii) that it is divorced from its spatio-temporal relation. The world, *sub specie aeternitatis*, is a totality or bounded whole.

The term and concept *sub specie aeternitatis* is most often associated with Spinoza¹⁰. A summary of Spinoza's position here reads like a summary of the present account. There is no self, no 'I' beyond the authority of clear and distinct ideas where these represent the self from the point of view of God, *sub specie aeternitatis*. The 'moral self' is not then an individual 'I' but rather a disinterested reasoner, a mode of God. Spinoza argues that the self must climb above the illusory perspective that sees things *sub specie durationis* to the objective and selfless perspective which is God's, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Only then will the self be truly free and only then does the possibility of selfhood exist.

In the philosophy of Sartre and Wittgenstein, and most likely in Spinoza too, both *sub specie aeternitatis* and dis-interestedness rely upon a notion of 'distance'. A distance between self and world; between desires, wants, wishes and a consciousness stilled; between a natural, situated

¹⁰ Wittgenstein was clearly impressed by Spinoza, and the similarity of titles *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* is unlikely, Moore's recommendation to Wittgenstein aside, to be coincidental.

outlook and a new outlook. The now famous essay on this topic, E. Bullough's *Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and Aesthetic Principles*, is worth mentioning for it draws attention to two points critical to the position adopted by Wittgenstein and Sartre¹¹.

Firstly, the essay states that distance has two poles, negative and positive. As to the former, distance involves an inhibitory aspect: the cutting-out of the practical, utilitarian side of things: the suspending of the natural, practical attitude. At the same time, in positive response, this opens up the possibility of an elaboration of the experience: a new, and revelatory, attitude.

Secondly, Bullough argues that distance transforms to an aesthetic experience by putting the experience of phenomena out of gear (as stated above), and does so with the *personal* self (of needs-ends – ends-needs). The claim is that in such experience the *objective* takes precedence. Even the essentially subjective affections of the experience are interpreted as characteristic of the phenomena of experience and not, therefore, as modes of our, personal, being. In short, whereas distance is the requirement for the view from nowhere, such a view is indeed a theoretical possibility when conceived in terms of a subject in an aesthetic relation to the world.

It is a point worth making, that this notion of aesthetic experience as disinterested works as an explanatory tool - perhaps the best there is - for much that goes on in the artworld today. That is, in such a stance toward an object, *any* object could be the source of an aesthetic experience. As long as the object is distanced from its usual spatio-temporal framework, that which constitutes it as having utility of purpose and thus exists in its own spatio-time [sic] framework, as a limited whole or totality. Thus we might place a urinal in an art gallery, or a dead sheep in a glass case and, further distance, in an art gallery. The distance helps the willing subject to renounce any 'interest' - utility etc. in the object, to avoid situating it in what Sartre will call the rounds of means-end – end-means. It is this disinterestedness that facilitates an aesthetic experience (of whatever character and import). That said, it is another matter whether we *want* to include ordinary (and natural) objects into the artworld. Similarly, although disinterestedness avoids any

¹¹ It is believed in fact that Bullough's essay had a direct influence on the Tractarian Wittgenstein; it was published the year Wittgenstein went to Cambridge (1912), Bullough was then a professor in residence, and the ideas of his essay were very much "in the air". See Hodges (1990) pp14.

necessary claims to the internal qualities of an artwork, it does not preclude an aesthetic having either a weak or even strong commitment to internalism (the view that aesthetic appreciation owes nothing to anything outside of the artwork itself). Disinterestedness claims to be necessary, but not sufficient for the aesthetic attitude.

Wittgenstein is advocating as central to aesthetic attitude (and his early aesthetics) the traditional aesthetic concepts of disinterested will and *sub specie aeternitatis*. This fact, as I claim it to be, rests upon on two main factors. The avocation to worldly renunciation - resting upon a concept of self as a *willing* self, drawing thus on the discussion of the willing self in relation to wishing and wanting (above §4.1ii). Secondly, the actual identification of the willing self with the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, with the world as a whole, and thus ethical meaning, with the standpoint of God. (There may be a third factor, that of 'contemplation' as the chief characteristic of a renounced willing relation to self; this possibility is discussed in the conclusion).

Wittgenstein's aesthetic is a lingua-aesthetic vision of the self. The metaphysical subject, as programmatic, is a willing subject (§4.1ii), the ethical will is 'an attitude of the subject to the world' (NB 4.11.16). The world itself 'is independent of my will'(6.373), independent of the attitudinal self. Thus

Even if all that we were to wish for were to happen, still this would only be a favour granted by fate, so to speak: for there is no *logical* connection between the will and the world which would guarantee it' (6.374).

But if, then, 'man could not exercise his will, but had to suffer all the misery of the world' (death, destruction, loss: its apparent contingencies), what, Wittgenstein asks, 'could make him happy?' (NB 13.8.16). That is, where is meaning to be found? (§4.1ii and §5.1i).

The answer is that man *can* exercise his will to such an effect, that is, his ethical and not phenomenal will, and can therefore effect the world. The ethical will is identified with the limits of the world, and so 'If good or evil willing' is to effect the world 'it can only change the limits of the world, not the facts' ([O]6.43). The facts of course would be effected by the phenomenal will.

The world as a whole is effected by the attitudinal self. So, in order to 'be happy', one must will the world as a whole, it is in this that ethical meaning is discovered. We must then, according to Wittgenstein's position, become independent of the world:

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 11.6.16 - my emphasis).

Happiness, a good life, ethical meaning, is seen to lie in the will renouncing any influence on the world of happenings. 'The will ... can only change the limits of the world, not the facts; not the things that can be expressed in language' ([O]6.43). And so, again, 'The only life that is happy is the life that can renounce the amenities of the world' (NB 13.8.16). (Here of course we are in a whole tradition - many traditions in fact, including those of Buddhism and Christianity. As to the latter, the writings of St. Augustine were greatly admired by Wittgenstein: 'when you become such a man that no earthly thing delights you, believe me, at that very moment, at that point of time, you will behold what you desire'). A will that renounces influence on the world, that '*makes itself*' independent is a dis-interested will. It has suspended the rounds of means-end – end-means, it is not interested in the world. It has distanced itself from the world of amenities.

Willing is also, as with Sartre, a matter of inwardness. Ethical value is not found in the world, it is found - indeed, we saw, it is *created* by the self. Thus, in the second direct reference to will in the *Tractatus* we find the following.

If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts -- not what can be expressed by means of language. In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. (6.43).

The very condition of the ethical will as limit *and* having a standpoint *sub specie aeternitatis* is confirmation of a willing relation to the world that is an attitude that has converted itself from its natural disposition to an aesthetic disposition ('disinterested' will is supported by both the opening discussion of disinterest and the willing self - §4.1ii). Wittgenstein clearly states that this aesthetic relation to the world is to be contrasted with our usual or natural relation: 'There are two godheads: the world and my independent I' (NB 8.7.16). As to the latter, we identify it with the natural attitude.

The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view

sub specie aeternitatis from the outside. In such a way that they have the whole world as a background. In this view the object is seen *together with* space and time instead of *in* space and time. (NB 7.10.16).

There is a difference when the self converts from its natural relation to the world (spatio-temporal framework) to a relation *sub specie aeternitatis*.

That Wittgenstein identifies a stance to the world as *sub specie aeternitatis* is a point which we have already lent support to (it is, to begin with, 'the connection between art and ethics' - NB 7.10.16, and above, §5.2). The main point concerns temporal suffering and eternal salvation; it is the problematic, thus: 'The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time' (6.4312)¹². And so, 'If good or evil willing' is to effect the world 'it can alter only the limits of the world' (6.43). The will is 'an attitude of the subject to the world' (NB 4.11.16). The world itself 'is independent of my will'(6.373). Now, we have, 'to view the world *sub specie aeternitatis* is to view it as a whole - a limited whole (6.45). The identification of the stance *sub specie aeternitatis* with the willing subject (and therefore ethical meaning) is thus straightforward enough, and so: 'Willing 'must make the world a wholly different one. As if by accession or loss of meaning' (NB 5.7.16). The effect is that the world 'must wax and wane as a whole' (6.43).

Relating to the world *sub specie aeternitatis* is, and logically is, to take the standpoint of God. 'Ethics is transcendental. How things stand is God. The meaning of the world we can call God' (NB pp79 and 73). In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. ... That is to say: "I am doing the will of God" '. And so 'To believe in God is to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter. ... we are dependent on what we call God. ... In this sense God would simply be fate. or, what is the same thing: The world – which is independent of my will' (NB8.7.16). The self's aesthetic relation to the world is founded on two (aesthetic) principles: of disinterest and *sub specie aeternitatis*. Combined, they constitute the attitudinal self as aesthetic.

¹² And Schopenhauer, ordinary, as opposed to aesthetic consciousness, always relates to the world from particular objects, principle of which is the human body, such that considerations 'always lead back by a shorter or longer length to [one's] ...body' (WWR I, 76f).

The only clearly explicit *explanatory example* of the aesthetic attitude in the early work is that of a 'stove'. The choice of such an ultra-mundane example as a 'stove' is used by Wittgenstein to enforce the main point: that we are dealing with a change of attitude *to the objects* or facts of the world, whatever they are (avoiding any claim to intrinsic or objective aesthetic qualities putative to art objects themselves).

As a thing among things each thing is equally insignificant; as a world each one equally significant. If I have been contemplating the stove, and then am told: but now all you know is the stove, my result does indeed seem trivial. For this represents the matter as if I had studied the stove as one among the many things [i.e. objects or facts] in the world. But if I was contemplating the stove *it* was my world, and everything else colourless by contrast with it. (NB 8.10.16)

Wittgenstein then says: '(Something good about the whole, but bad in details)'. The idea here, as Wittgenstein continues to say, is that the bare present image can be taken as either - and equally as - 'the worthless momentary picture in the whole temporal world', or, as 'the true world among shadows' (NB 8.10.16). Bearing in mind that 'things acquire "significance" only through their relation to my will' (NB 15.10.16), and that the subject is the willing subject', how the bare present moment of something, anything, is taken, in this case the stove, this will depend upon 'attitude': 'The will is an attitude to the subject to the world' (NB 4.11.16). The right attitude to the world and objects is to see them as a whole. Through this will we experience 'The true world among shadows'.

Sartre is also advocating, as central to aesthetic attitude (and his early aesthetics) the Kantian aesthetic concepts of disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis* (also, the non-convergent structure of the aesthetic attitude as a negation with the posited as the unreal). As we are concerned with lingua-aesthetics, the best place from which to make our points quickly and comprehensively is his early work on language (and aesthetics), *What is Literature??*, as well as his early work on the imagination (and art), *The Psychology of Imagination*.¹³

¹³ Although Sartre's *Essays on Aesthetics* were consulted, it has not been necessary to use them. These essays, spanning many years, consider art through a discussion of the work of certain artists (Tintoretto, Giacometti, Calder and Lapoujade), and do so open-mindedly though with specific regard to Sartre's philosophic system. These artists are thus discussed in relation to class contradictions, emptiness, control and movement, and beauty (EA 8). None of these topics has direct significance on our project here. Much more important are the extended works that

In *What is Literature?* there is Sartre's distinction between prose and poetry. There is its relation to the psychological self and prose and the self and poetry (§2.3iii and §2.4). Of the latter, we can unequivocally identify it with the self as attitude, although of course the former will also be an attitude to the world, 'prose is first of all an attitude of mind' (WL11), - psychological and not metaphysical (§4.1i). Hence it will be 'the poetic attitude which considers words as things and not signs' (WL 5). Whereas in the natural attitude the 'speaker is *in a situation* in language', for the poet, 'language is a structure of the external world' (WL 6). Indeed, 'the poet is outside language ... he sees words as if he did not share the human condition'. The poetic - or aesthetic - attitude is 'on the outside': the poet

Considers words as a trap to catch a fleeing reality rather than as indicators which throw him out of himself into the midst of things. In short, all language is for him the mirror of the world' (WL 6).

The 'poet does not *utilise* the word', thus, for example, 'in each word he realises, solely by the effect of the poetic *attitude* [sic] (WL 7).

This aesthetic or poetic attitude, which Sartre has identified with language *le sens* (§2.3iii, WL) and the universal and therefore ineffable but showable, is also the attitudinal self as the precondition of meaning. (This self is programmatic, its relation to the world is a *willing* relation). This is consciousness in its natural relation to the world (§4.2-3). What characterises consciousness in its modification or conversion from the natural to the aesthetic attitude (and the claims on *le sens*) is, as with Wittgenstein, that it is dis-interested, non-utilitarian, and involves *sub specie aeternitatis* - and, an important but in itself non-convergent point, it is *unreal*.

If we wish to know 'the origin of this attitude towards language', Sartre tells us, 'the following are a few brief indications.' What follows is an extensive footnote, much of which I discussed in some detail earlier (§2.3iii, WL), the key detail now is thus: 'Poetry reverses the relationship [as compared to prose]: the world and things become inessential, become a pretext for the act which becomes its own end' (WL 23). In fact, the feeling 'that is customarily called

contribute directly to aesthetics (*What is Literature?* and *The Psychology of Imagination*), his major work *Being and Nothingness*, and of course that aesthetic deed itself, *Nausea*. It is in these major works that we witness the centrality of the doctrines which contribute to the (lingua-)aesthetic(-self).

aesthetic pleasure', but which Sartre would 'much rather call aesthetic joy', and 'which becomes one with the aesthetic consciousness'. this is 'identical, at first, with the recognition of a transcendent and absolute end, which, for a moment, suspends the utilitarian round of ends-means and means-ends' (WL 41/2).

This freedom, the self, 'is manifested to itself by a transcendent exigency'. This 'recognition of freedom by itself' the adopting of the aesthetic attitude (and the creating of an aesthetic object - next section), not only renders the absurdity of human existence as meaningful, but also as joyful¹⁴. And 'thus', continues Sartre,

aesthetic joy proceeds to this level of the consciousness which I take as recovering and internalising that which is non-ego *par excellence*, since I transform the given into an imperative and the fact into a value. ... In aesthetic joy the positional consciousness is an *image-making consciousness* of the world in its totality. (WL 42/3).

Sartre will call this 'the aesthetic modification of the human project', for, 'the world appears as the horizon of our situation, as the infinite distance which separates us from ourselves, as the synthetic totality of the given' (WL 42). (We shall shortly return to this idea of 'totality, the world as a whole).

The aesthetic attitude, that which 'transforms the given', is directed away from ego, it is concerned with value. Recall that the ego is not value, that it is a psychological *fact/object* - and can be spoken of. The concept of disinterestedness is thus invoked in the passage above when speaking of consciousness 'which is non-ego'. With this, the surest and speediest way to affirm Sartre's early adherence to an aesthetics of disinterestedness is to consider what he says in the final pages of his most important work in aesthetics, *The Psychology of Imagination*. Thus, 'To posit an image is to construct an object on the fringe of the whole of reality, which means therefore to hold the real at a *distance*. (TPI 213 - my emphasis). Sartre makes this point, not unnaturally, in relation to works of art, of which we do not as yet want to discuss. Still, the 'disinterested relation' does concern us now: 'aesthetic enjoyment ... is but a manner of

¹⁴ At the time of *What is Literature?* 'Joy' may well have been translated as 'gay' - without loss of direction. Equally, Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*. The point here is the undoubted similarity in doctrines and the loss of a most fertile adjective.

apprehending the unreal object and, far from being *directed* onto the real painting, it serves to constitute and present the imaginary object through the real canvass' (my emphasis). This, continues Sartre,

is the source of the celebrated disinterestedness of aesthetic experience. This is why Kant was able to say that it does not matter whether the object of beauty, when experienced as beautiful, is or is not objectively real; why Schopenhauer was able to speak of a sort of suspension of the will. (TPI 222)

Not that 'this comes from some mysterious way of apprehending the real'. No, as was first seen above, 'the aesthetic object is constituted and apprehended by an imaginative consciousness which posits it as unreal' (TPI 222). Aesthetic attitude and aesthetic object are in some way reciprocal (see next section), whatever the ontological status of the *real* object, and whether it be 'a bouquet of flowers or a glade', when I "contemplate" it, I am nevertheless not in a realistic attitude' (TPI 221). That is, I am at a distance, my will, as phenomena (§4.1ii), *has* been suspended.

This concept of distance naturally leads the inquiry into 'the world as a whole'. In *The Psychology of Imagination*, the first part of the two-part conclusion addresses directly its fundamental question, 'what the essential requisite is in order that a consciousness may be able to imagine'¹⁵ (TPI 212). Sartre writes that 'it must possess the possibility of positing an hypothesis of unreality'. That is, the objects of an intentional consciousness possess 'a certain trait of nothingness in relation to the whole or reality'. Unreal objects, aesthetic objects, such as 'the successive tones of a melody' are perceived 'on the foundation of a total reality *as a whole* (TPI 209). And even though, or because of that fact, 'the imaginary object can be posited as non-existent or as absent or as existing elsewhere or as not posited as existing'. Of these four possibilities, the common property includes the 'entire category of negation', with the negative act as the 'most intimate structure' of an image'. Thus, in order that we produce an image, consciousness must deny reality. Hence, 'to posit an image is to construct an object on the fringe of the whole of reality' (TPI 213). The whole of reality here is the synthetic totality of the given,

¹⁵ The importance to our thesis of central aspects of image and imaging as presented in *The Psychology of Imagination* were first noted above, §2.3ii

it 'is nothingness in relation to the whole of reality' (TPI 212). 'Thus', continues Sartre, 'the thesis of unreality has yielded us the possibility of negation as its possibility'. where this is possible 'only by the negation of the world as a whole' (TPI 214).

To posit the world *as* a world, or to negate it is one and the same thing. In this sense Heidegger can say that nothingness is the constitutive structure of existence. To be able to imagine, it is enough that consciousness be able to surpass the real in constituting it as a world ... But this surpassing cannot be brought about by just any means, and the freedom of consciousness must not be confused with the arbitrary. For an image is not purely and simply the *world-negated*, it is always the world negated from a certain point of view, namely, the one that permits the positing of an absence or the non-existence of the object presented 'as an image'. (TPI 214).

The self, the constitutive structure of existence, which is defined if at all as the very structures of consciousness (§3.1ii), and which is thus always situated to a point of view, but which goes beyond these structures in being a freedom and a nothingness, and which includes the crucial negating structure of the image in the imaginative act (§2.3ii), the self exists as a freedom and a surpassing in relation to the world as a whole: 'merely to be able to posit reality as a synthetic whole is enough to enable one to posit oneself as free from it' (TPI 214). As has been seen, this 'means therefore to hold the real at a *distance*', that is, 'to free oneself from it. in a word, to deny it' (TPI 213).

This holding the real at a distance is a matter of will and attitude and is to be distinguished from a logical distance that fixes Sartre's ontology. There is between self and world, between consciousness and its object, in the relation itself, a structure of distance. This is necessary if the signifier is to signify a signified. It has been pointed out (by Danto) that the structure of nihilation is found in that of denotation: 'a sign stands for, and so is not, the object it points out'; consciousness, 'an arrow points toward a target', its object. Danto goes further than this, 'I believe the whole high-flown apparatus of Nothingness in Sartre's thought is merely a device for speaking of the distance between sign and object'.¹⁶ The foundation of self is the structures of consciousness (§3.1ii), these structures include, besides a logical distance between subject and object, a willing relation that is the self (self-consciousness). Without this, Sartre's self would fall

¹⁶ Danto, *Sartre* (1975), pp93.

into a classical view. Cartesianism, and moreover, without the relation being constituted as willing (or operative), the concept of interest–disinterest would similarly collapse. Quite specifically, ‘The failure of communication becomes a suggestion of the incommunicable, and the thwarted project of utilising words is succeeded by the pure disinterested intuition of the word (WL 24).

As with Wittgenstein, the distance involved in the disinterested attitude is equated with the possibility of the world as a whole or totality¹⁷. This is the condition of a stance to the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the aesthetic stance required by, for example, an author–narrator, so that ‘he tells his story with detachment. ... He looks back upon it and considers it as it really was, that is, *sub specie aeternitatis*.’ (WL 105). Similarly, there will arise the question of relations with the other, and similar is the situation. In Sartre’s philosophy the Other is the incarnate cognitive certainty of one-self (§3.1i). And in *this* sense of the Other, the importance of the other in encountering oneself, the stance of the Other to one-self will be seen to be *sub specie aeternitatis*. ‘In fact the problem for me is to make myself be by acquiring the possibility of taking the Other’s point of view on myself’ (BN 365). But if in speaking of *sub specie aeternitatis* we are led to think of eternal values, then we should, a slipping Sartre will remind us, be wary. Even so, it must and is conceded: ‘It is dangerously easy to speak of eternal values; eternal values are very, very fleshless. Even freedom, if one considers it *sub specie aeternitatis*, seems to be a withered branch: for, like the sea, there is no end to it’ (WL 49). Indeed, for freedom, the self, is a modality of our being, a potential of the self as an attitudinal relation to the world. The self is ‘a movement by which one perpetually uproots and liberates oneself’ (WL 49). The aesthetic relation is as a ‘nothingness in relation to the whole of reality’ (TPI 212).

The standpoint of *sub specie aeternitatis* is the standpoint of God. This principle was naturally accepted by Wittgenstein, and so too Sartre. Again, as with Wittgenstein, the willing self is to be identified with the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, with the world as a totality or limit

¹⁷ This point of comparison has been noted before: ‘We are the boundaries of the revealed world [Wittgenstein writes, “The subject does not belong to the world but it is a limit of the world”], and the condition of its revelation’. Danto, *Sartre* (1975), pp95.

(and ethical meaning). and again this is equated with the standpoint of God. Thus, for example, in order to consider some 'admirable lines' from Rimbaud, in order that is that we adopt the aesthetic (poetic) attitude, 'we place ourselves on the other side of the human condition, on the side of God' (WL 9). Such is the mode of art, of poetry, take any person in the aesthetic attitude and 'it will withdraw him from the human condition and invite him to consider with the eyes of God a language that has been turned inside out' (WL 10). As Sartre says many times over in *Being and Nothingness*, 'Man is the being whose project is to become God.' This 'divine ineptness' is not socio-religiously or psychologically determined. No, it is rather a metaphysical principle. And 'if man possesses a pre-ontological comprehension (i.e. self-encounter) of the being of God, then

It is not the great wonders of nature nor the power of society which have conferred it upon him. God, value and supreme end of transcendence, represent the permanent *limit* in terms of which man makes known to himself what he is. To be man means to reach toward being God.' (BN 566 - my emphasis).

But this impulse toward God, the universal, the totality, is, as ever, situated or founded in the concrete and particular: 'The impulse toward God is *no less* concrete than the impulse toward a particular woman' (BN 563). Still, concrete woman, desire, or not, 'man fundamentally is the desire to be God', persists Sartre. (BN *passim*)¹⁸.

Sartre has been taken to be a religious prophet by some¹⁹. A thinker or a mystic that is looking forward to a God or a Value that is coming to be, to a time distant from 'the darkness of our own times' as Wittgenstein has it. Simone de Beauvoir has said that Sartre studied the mystics during the early thirties. Mysticism is replete with the idea of opposition and synthesis, especially the radical opposites of 'fullness and emptiness', All and Nothing, Wittgenstein's 'God and the independent "I"', opposites which must be resolved. As in Master Eckhart, where God and I are one, where the "I", self-relating, is the unmoved mover that moves all things. In Christianity, 'fullness and emptiness', the fullness of God, the divine kenosis or self-emptying -

¹⁸ Attention has been drawn throughout to this important point: that the universal standpoint does not preclude a situated self - an unacceptable position. This issue is tangential to the problematic from the metaphysical standpoint, still, it is considered to the extent that is necessary - cf. §3.1i and §3.1ii, this chapter *passim*.

¹⁹ See for example, King (1974) *Sartre and the Sacred*.

in a sense 'in the world' - Christ. It thus may well prove fruitful to see Sartre from this perspective, as, like Wittgenstein, a Romantic humanist attempting to blend Eastern and Western divinity. Such a perspective withstanding, the indubitable, on Sartre and God, is that God *is the* value and supreme end of consciousness. God is the *limit* in terms of which each and all particular projects of being-God are reflected in the many *attitudes* of self towards, for example, ideas, other subjects, property. Objects only present themselves as having value in relation to the fundamental value I have chosen. Before this choice there is no value, and this choice is to be carried out, when considered, as oneself as aesthetic attitude.

Unlike Wittgenstein, who offered a 'stove' as an example in his account of aesthetic attitude, Sartre gives as examples of the aesthetic attitude particular objects of art: Beethoven's 7th symphony, certain paintings etc. This may appear as significant for the wrong reason. It is not that Wittgenstein wants to stress that the aesthetic attitude is in relation to *any* object, while Sartre wants to limit it to art objects. Rather, the choice of examples is to do with Sartre's more pure interest in *the subject* of aesthetics and Wittgenstein's belief that there should not be a subject of aesthetics: it cannot be spoken meaningfully of²⁰. With Sartre (for support see §4, above on aesthetic attitude, the remarks below on aesthetic deeds) and Wittgenstein alike the aesthetic attitude is a change of attitude *to the objects* or facts of the world, whatever they are. The approach, general and as here specific, may be different (Introduction) but the content is similar: a metaphysic of aesthetic existence.

♦ Determination and the Aesthetic Attitude

To God, is where the account of aesthetic attitude has led in both Sartre and Wittgenstein. Given the problematic this is no surprise, though where Sartre is concerned, it may be disappointing. Nonetheless, the natural attitude, situated in the world, does not render to the self the ethical meaning of the world. Is the natural attitude wrong - what would make it so? Simply

²⁰ In this, Wittgenstein was truer to his philosophy than Sartre to his; but then Sartre was always struggling with an ambivalence to the aesthetic whereas Wittgenstein embraced it wholly - cf. especially §2.3iii *What is Literature?* II and 5.4 PostScript.

that it constituted consciousness as inert, fixed, not engaged: in bad faith. A right attitude on the other hand would constitute consciousness as mobile, engaged: in good faith. The former can be said to result in unhappiness, that is, anxiety; the latter in happiness, contentment of sorts. And of course to see the world wrongly, to have a wrong attitude, to will ill, is a moral and not a cognitive or theoretical error. Thus, as Catalano has said, 'The moment a person is awakened to the real possibility of new conditions for his life, he adopts a different attitude toward his being' (Catalano, 1977, pp197). Attitude, is the way a person sees the world, their *attitude*. It is a matter of will.

The actuality of willing does not effect the world, facts remain as they are (above); what alters is the subjects evaluation, his critical response, the meaning he gives to the world. The metaphysical sense of being in the world is as an intentional relation (will) that is programmatic, consciousness constituting itself as a method of altering how the world, the given, is experienced. The (willing) self is at the limit (is a moral self) when it relates to the world as a whole. It does this by choosing itself as an aesthetic relation to the world (through the principles of disinterestedness and the stance on the world *sub specie aeternitatis*). It is from this stance, independent of contingency, that the self encounters itself as the source of ethical meaning, and thus resolves the problematic: ethical value is to come from outside the world, from either God or the subject as God. Self determination is achieved through the aesthetic attitude And all, all depends upon the relation between 'two godheads: the world and my independent I' (NB 8.7.16); it is 'a matter of envisaging the self as a little God which inhabits me and which possesses my freedom as a metaphysical virtue' (BN 42).²¹.

²¹ Besides the undoubted influence of Schopenhauer on Wittgenstein there is the formers influence on Nietzsche - and the latter's on Sartre. A work of Nietzsche's that seems to preside over these doctrines of Wittgenstein and Sartre is *The Gay Science* (and its precursor, Schopenhauer's *On Man's Need for Metaphysics*). Nietzsche says that life has become 'problematic' (preface, 3). Schopenhauer uses the same expression, but more often 'riddle': 'a riddle, whose solution then occupies mankind without intermission ... [an] ever disquieting riddle' (WWR II, 170f). A riddle founded on the philosophical astonishment that there is something and not nothing, that this something is the world, and that the contingency of this world is assumed in all our reasoning. Man needs another world, man needs metaphysics. *The Gay Science* offers a solution, one which is especially revealed to 'we philosophers': the artist and art. We must transform our outlook and thereby ourselves, becoming 'poets of our lives' (299). Crucial in this is 'aesthetic distance' (107) which (a) entails, as a condition of the self, the creative freedom to redefine self, and (b) as a factor involved in our willing relation to the world, the possibility of standing back from our lives that things can be seen differently (299), that the spell of the given is broken. The self that is to be created is the self that solves the riddle (here Nietzsche is no doubt relying on the doctrines of *amor fati* and eternal recurrence).

Wittgenstein. The above comments suggest what is true to both Sartre and Wittgenstein, that the solution to the problematic is a dis-solving and not a solving. Thus, to begin with Wittgenstein:

Doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer, and an answer only where something *can be said*. ... When all *possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. ... The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem' (6.51 and 6.521).

That is, and as we are seeing in some detail, the problematic, the self and the meaning of life, has little to do with science or psychology, it is metaphysical. Thus the solution too is metaphysical, as the (metaphysical)-self cannot be spoken of, it is in the realm of showing and not saying (*passim*). When saying has answered all questions the real 'problems of life will remain completely untouched' (6.52).

The problematic, the problem and the solution, vouchsafes itself to showing. It is a matter of willing the world as a whole - that is the right and not a wrong way to relate to the world. The self must experience itself as independent of the world if it is to encounter itself and this is achieved at the limit. Such encountering is not a matter of knowledge, at least not propositional or conceptual knowledge²². To begin with, the solution does not involve 'doubt' or an answer. Rather, the solution is a problem being dis-solved when one *relates* to it the right way. When one, to rely for the moment on a visual analogy, looks at it the right way. I can see a rabbit. Look again. Yes, I see a duck. Now you have it. But although such an example catches the spirit of this conversion of aspect, from natural to aesthetic relation, it remains inadequate to the task. There is a more descriptive example in a passage (from the year 1930) in *Culture and Value* (pp4):

Let us imagine a theatre; the curtain goes up and we see a man alone in a room, walking up and down, lighting a cigarette, sitting down etc. so that suddenly we are observing a human being from outside in a way that ordinarily we can never observe *ourselves*; it would be like watching a chapter of biography with our own eyes, surely this would be uncanny and wonderful at the same time. We should be observing something more wonderful than any thing a playwright could arrange to be acted or spoken on the stage: life itself. -But then *we do* see this everyday without it making the slightest impression on us! True enough, but we do not see it from that point of view. Well, when Engelmann looks at what he has written and finds it marvellous he is seeing his life as a work of art created by God.

²² Both philosophers insist that the problem of ethics - how to live - is not solved by science (*passim*).

The right perspective on ourselves, and thus the world, suggests Wittgenstein is an aesthetic one. Of course the ineffable will make itself 'manifest' (6.522), will show itself. But it is not we have seen a matter of facts, of questions and answers. It is a matter of elucidation, of seeing the world and thus one's relation to it 'aright'.

My propositions are elucidation in this way: he who understands *me* finally recognises them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it). [6.54 – my emphasis]

We must understand Wittgenstein: 'me', and we must do this through the propositions of the *Tractatus* (cf. next section) and in so doing we will 'see the world rightly' (6.54).

The solution to the problem of life will be the disappearance of that problem which is 'ethical reward'. This itself Wittgenstein characterises as a particular kind of happiness - which is equated with the good, with willing the good (cf. §4), so that 'The world of the happy [i.e. good] man is a different one from that of the unhappy [i.e. evil]' (6.43). Only in this sense do good or evil exist. And for these reasons, 'the happy life seems to be justified, of itself, it seems that it *is* the only right life' (NB 30.7.16). We could say that 'the happy life is more harmonious than the unhappy', that is, that 'I must be in agreement with the world' as a limit and thus 'in agreement ...with the will of God'. A good life, the happy life, is attained when the self stations itself, *sub specie aeternitatis*, at the limit. For we note that 'aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists' and that it is 'the essence of the artistic way of looking at things, that it looks at the world with a happy eye'. And so, muddled by contingency, 'Life is grave [while, the swallow of salvation] art is gay' (NB 20.10.16).

All this is, we feel, 'in some sense deeply mysterious!' Surely the answer, even if aesthetic, will lend itself to formulae? Wittgenstein asks the same question: 'What is the objective mark of the happy, harmonious life?'

It is clear by now, to both this thesis and the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* and *Notebooks*, 'that there cannot be any such mark that can be *described*'. The reason, 'This mark cannot be a physical one but only a metaphysical one, a transcendental one' (NB 30.7.16). And 'It is impossible to speak about the will in so far as it is the subject of ethical attributes' (6.423). There

is no doubt that 'It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed!' (ibid. and 6.421). And alas, 'Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent' (O, 7).

Sartre is also possessed by an ethic, of ethical knowledge and of good conscience - which, if it were possible, he would appear to equate with a happy, or at least a good or anxiety free life. Here it is appropriate to note that for Schopenhauer a central characteristic of the natural - willing - attitude to the world is that it is a suffering, *anxious* consciousness²³. The fundamental feature of the ordinary relation is its practical utilitarian demands and the resulting disjunction between how the world is and how the individual desires or wants it to be. For Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein and for Sartre, it is 'A question of willing the good in order to be ethical', so that we 'modify this [natural] point of view' (NE 5)²⁴. And again, for all three philosophers, on the issue of a change of attitude and a solution, it is a dis-solving and not a solving of the problematic.

Sartre:

as long as we observe the canvass and the frame for themselves the aesthetic object ... will not appear... It will appear at the moment when consciousness, undergoing a *radical change* in which the world is negated, itself becomes imaginative (TPI 219 – my emphasis).

The self 'assumes the imaginative attitude'. But this does not produce an 'answer' to the problem.

In *What is Literature?* for example. Sartre takes two lines from Rimbaud²⁵, and follows them thus.

Nobody is questioned; nobody is questioning, the poet is absent. And the question involves no answer, or rather it is its own answer. ...He asked an absolute question. He conferred upon the beautiful word 'ame' an interrogative existence. The interrogation has become a thing^[26] It is seen from the outside, and Rimbaud invites us to see it from

²³ As we are seeing, there is more than the concept of disinterestedness between Schopenhauer (Kant) and Sartre.

²⁴ A point to note, and one that is borne out by the analysis, is that the dominant visual metaphors of both Wittgenstein and Sartre in these matters are powerful but limited. Better than 'point of view' or 'seeing the world aright' etc. would be 'orientation', which while suggesting a self in relation, does not implicate a pure or primary epistemological relation.

²⁵ *O saisons! O chateaux! / Quelle ame est sans défaut?*

²⁶ I omitted from this quotation the following 'The interrogation has become a thing as the anguish of Tinteretto became a yellow sky. It is no longer a meaning but a substance.' In both the context of the present and the general context of what Sartre has to say in *What is Literature?* this is misleading. I believe the happy insight of the first sentence has led to the unhappy analogy of the second sentence. The yellow of the yellow-sky is a substance and without meaning; but the anguish as yellow sky is a thing with meaning, and the one cannot stand by analogy for the other. Clearly the yellow-sky does not signify a meaning; it does, however, embody a meaning, *le sens* (cf. *What is Literature?* pp2-4). This point is borne out by my analysis of *What is Literature?* (§2.3iii). It is in that section where I also warned the reader of the dangers inherent in this text.

the outside with him. Its strangeness arises from the fact that, in order to consider it, we place ourselves on the other side of the human condition, on the side of God (WL 9).

The 'strangeness' of this sort of interrogation results from the certainty that it is, as it must be, placed on the side of the ineffable and showing - with the problematic.

There is an exchange in *Nausea* which pronounces on the problematic, on the self and *the* search for meaning out of contingency (and affirms while so doing the link between art and ethics).

'In each privileged situation, there are certain acts which have to be performed, certain attitudes which have to be assumed, certain words which have to be said - and other attitudes, other words are strictly prohibited. Is that it?

'If you like ...'

'In other words, the situation is the raw material: it has to be treated.'

'That's it,' she says. 'First you had to be plunged into something exceptional and feel that you were putting it in order. If all these conditions had been fulfilled, the moment would have been perfect.'

'In fact, it was a sort of work of art.'

'You've already said that,' she said in irritation. 'No: it was ... a duty. You had to transform privileged situations into perfect moments. It was a moral question.' (N 212).

Perfect moments, constituted by certain attitudes, and out of which we have works of art, are put forward as the moral - deontological - solution to the problem of existence that waylays Roquentin.

And thus, and prior to the final considerations of *Nausea* itself, the four conclusions of this section as previously applied to Wittgenstein, can now be stated with regard to Sartre.

Firstly, for Sartre too, the dis-solving has little to do with science or psychology, it is not a matter of facts, of questions and answers, it is metaphysical problem. A central theme of *Nausea* is the main characters reflexive preoccupation with the actual purpose of writing 'the diary'. The answer of course is that it is an attempt to confront and overcome the onslaught of nausea. But how should this work? 'To keep a diary is to see clearly' (N 11). By the end of the diary, he sees that neither it nor a historical work (for example) will achieve this end: he must write, say, a novel. This point will be pursued below in the section on *Nausea*. For the present, the aesthetic attitude is the relation to world that will help one to see things aright, it will 'unveil' the meaning of existence (N 248). The degree to which one sees the world aright is the degree of consciousness one possesses of one's real goal. The aesthetic attitude will show, and this is

necessary, for when saying has answered all (factual) questions the problems of life (value) will remain completely untouched.

Secondly, the solution to the problem of life will be the disappearance of that problem; this solution, this salvation, is an 'ethical reward'. The metaphysical subject is an ethical subject - an (ethical) will in relation to the world. The self seeing the world aright is by definition an ethical principle. Elucidation declares itself as ethical meaning - not as propositional knowledge. It declares itself to showing and not saying.

Thirdly, the ethical 'good life', anxious free life, that which is attained when the self 'sees the world aright', this is possible from a perspective that is structurally the same as the aesthetic: disinterested and *sub specie aeternitatis*, at the limit. Pure reflection is inadequate to the task, as it remains positional, the cogito is prereflective and prior to this intentional, only when the operative intentionality becomes dis-interested, in an aesthetic conversion can the subject be revealed to itself - as the limit.

Fourthly, all this is, we feel, perhaps even more so than with Wittgenstein, 'in some sense deeply mysterious!' The solution, even if aesthetic, will surely give itself to formulae? It is clear by now, as it was with Wittgenstein, that for Sartre, 'there cannot be any such mark that can be *described*'. The reason, as Wittgenstein expressed it, is that 'This mark cannot be a physical one but only a metaphysical one, a transcendental one' (NB 30.7.16). This much has been clear since the self emerged from our discussion (in §2.3iii - especially on BN) of the saying—showing distinction. For with the self 'we have to deal with a human reality as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is' (BN 58). As far as saying is concerned, the self, that original freedom, is 'indefinable, unnameable and indescribable' (BN 438, and above §2.3 - 4).

There is no doubt that '*It is clear that ethics cannot be expressed!*' (ibid. and 6.421). The problematic may well be beyond what can be said, beyond propositional language, it vouchsafes itself to showing. It is a matter of the self willing the world as a whole - that is the right and not a wrong way to relate to the world. In so relating to the world the self encounters itself - at the limit

of I and showing. In the subject choosing itself as aesthetic, in distancing itself from itself, it determines itself. the problematic is resolved. meaning is shown. But how, then, as would be required, is a solution to be presented or communicated if it cannot be said. By aesthetic deeds.

♦ **Addendum to Aesthetic Attitude: Epistemological, Philosophical?**

The next section, Conclusion II, will claim that *Tractatus* and *Nausea* are aesthetic deeds on the basis, in broad terms, that they are limited wholes, with a transcendental message that is shown. A further claim could be made, in terms of both attitude and deed. The claim that (here we are speaking of the 'attitude' dimension) the *Tractatus* and *Nausea* are *philo-aesthetic deeds*²⁷. This claim could be made in a 'strong' or 'weak' sense - and in fact, the weaker sense follows in the next section: that both philosophers use the aesthetic attitude to disclose, through its embodiment, aesthetic deeds, a solution to a metaphysical (philosophical) problematic. The stronger sense of philo-aesthetic deed would rest on proving that the *philosophical attitude* was structurally and formally identified with the aesthetic attitude - or *vice versa*. Such a claim is not necessary to the present thesis, though I shall now suggest how this *is* the case with Wittgenstein and how it may be so with Sartre. Besides the intrinsic interest of this claim, such a possibility is worth pursuing (briefly) for another reason. It places the inquiry in the following realm: does the aesthetic attitude, like the natural attitude, constitute a distinct epistemological relation? We shall say that the aesthetic attitude should be distinguished from the natural, scientific or other basic attitudes: in that it is not of an epistemological structure that is conceptual or propositional: it is more fundamental than this, primitive. The aesthetic attitude, supposing it exists, does not confront the problematic in terms of a question to be answered. As was seen above, it will be a matter of dis-solving, not solving. It excludes situation, the particular, the specific (but not the individual): it is not in the realm of question and answer.

²⁷ Not only Wittgenstein (and Sartre), but Heidegger too sought recourse between art and philosophy. Interestingly, Heidegger also seeks the disclosure of Being as a whole. To achieve this he places art, essentially poetry, on an equal status with philosophy. Moreover, this is by no means a precedent: there is a history of philosophy as an attempt to deal with philosophical questions first of all through art (Cf. Bowie 1993 and 1990).

Both Wittgenstein and Sartre occasionally speak of the aesthetic attitude as *contemplative*, or as involving *knowledge*, and there is further evidence identifying the aesthetic attitude with the *philosophical* attitude. And in fact the claim to an epistemological aspect is of concern in a primarily negative sense. That is, some comments on its real possibility are needed so that it is *not* confused with a *metaphysics* of aesthetics which includes 'ethical knowledge' and the philosophical attitude *but not* scientific or self-knowledge (of a non-propositional nature).

A complete interpretation of the role of 'contemplation' and knowledge in the early aesthetics would in fact require a contextual reading of the doctrines of key works (*Notebooks–Tractatus, What is Literature? –The Psychology of Imagination*) in relation to the Kantian/Schopenhaurian tradition. 'Contemplation' is indeed a traditional (Kantian/Schopenhaurian) response to the question of the nature of the aesthetic attitude. Moreover, it is consonant with the doctrines of disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*, and it does, furthermore, appear in the contexts of both Sartre's and Wittgenstein's (convergent) aesthetic position. Thus, if we sought the apparent solidity of historic determination, with Sartre we would look to Kant, whereas Wittgenstein's comments on the 'contemplative' nature of the aesthetic attitude may be seen as originating in yet another aspect of Schopenhauer's metaphysics that Wittgenstein has assented to.

Wittgenstein says that the attitude that experiences the world as a whole (and is thus 'good') is 'contemplative'. 'If I was *contemplating* the stove it was my world, and everything else colourless by contrast with it ...' (ibid.). Within the context of what we have already said about the aesthetic relation to the world, we can see that 'contemplation' is linked in Wittgenstein's thinking here with knowledge (and ethics). Such that, in confronting the 'misery of the world' (NB 13.8.16), the only way that the self, as an attitude to the world, can be happy, is 'Through the life of knowledge'. Clearly, 'the life of knowledge is the life that is happy in spite of the misery of the world', and this so because - as contemplation - it preserves 'the good conscience'.

The idea of 'good conscience' being preserved by a life of knowledge is connected to self-

knowledge, to the possibility of self-evaluation and, certainly for Wittgenstein, guilt and salvation (NB 13.8.16). Good conscience is similarly connected to the relation to the 'world as a whole' and therefore God. Thus, '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' (NB 8.7.16). We know that 'There are two godheads: the world and my independent "I"' (NB *ibid.*), and that conscience as the voice of God is thus the ethical subject in its (aesthetic) relation to the world as a whole (*sub specie aeternitatis*). Good conscience is a willing self that is in agreement with itself at the limit. Thus the life of knowledge, as when I contemplate the stove, is a life based on experiencing the world as a whole: it is an ethical insight into one's freedom of will, one's projects and goal, and it is shown. It is not constituted by information or facts for these cannot be determined or controlled, as they are 'independent of my will'. Self determination is only possible if we accept the contingency of the world, the independence of self, and the possibility of a good conscience through the changing of the ethical *meaning* of the world - as a whole or totality.

In aesthetic determination, the willing self escapes the contingencies of the world, its happiness then becomes solely the function of its identity relation to the as a whole or limit. Knowledge, then, is ethical knowledge, it is a matter of 'seeing things aright', of elucidation and clarification. It is this that thus links the aesthetic attitude with the philosophical attitude. An identification explicitly made in the *Tractatus*: 'The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject (T 5.641). The metaphysical subject, as will, as attitude, indistinguishable as it is from the potential of itself as aesthetic, is also the *philosophical self*:

The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world — not a part of it (5.641).

In a remark dated 1931 Wittgenstein says that a teacher of philosophy such as himself 'ought to be no more than a mirror, in which my reader can see his own thinking with all its deformities so that, helped this way, he can put it right' (CV 18). There are some useful

comments on the philosophical attitude in a mid-work of Wittgenstein's which I have no hesitation in now referring to due to (a) the importance of attitude to the present work and (b) its obvious continuity to the *Tractatus*, and (c) its succinct explanatory power. The work in question was only recently published²⁸, and this under the title '*Philosophy*'. The lengthy and descriptive sub-title reads thus: 'Difficulty of philosophy not the Intellectual difficulty of the sciences, but the difficulty of a change of attitude. Resistance's of the will must be overcome.' (PO [P], p161). In this work Wittgenstein states that on his return to philosophy he had considered making explicit part of what he'd earlier tried to show in the *Tractatus*: that the special difficulty of philosophy - philosophy proper, metaphysical - philosophy, was a matter of attitude (*umstellung*).

It is of more than passing interest that '*umstellung*' has been translated as 'attitude' and not, as it might, 'conversion' (apparently the English translator was aware of this important subtlety in Wittgenstein's technical meaning). Using a concept of 'conversion' may prove to be a very beneficial way of approaching these issues. A *change* of attitude is a *change* of will to the world as a whole, a conversion from one way of experiencing the world to another - (cf. below, section II 'Aesthetic Deeds'). What is needed to solve the problems of philosophy is not more information. It is, rather, a clearer way of seeing things, brought about by a conversion of attitude. The philosophical self is the metaphysical self and thus the problem of philosophy is 'not a difficulty of the intellect but of the will'. (Recall that difficulties of intellect would be a matter for the 'thinking subject' or the 'psychological self' - §3.1ii). Solving the problematic becomes a dis-solving of the problematic.²⁹ Wittgenstein thus states that 'work on philosophy is ... actually more of a work on oneself' (PO [P], p161).

Sartre and Conclusion. In *The Psychology of Imagination*. Sartre says, for example, that the

²⁸ In 1929, on in his return to philosophy, one of the first works Wittgenstein worked on was what has come to be known as The Big Typescript, constructed in 1933. Most of this 800 page manuscript was posthumously published as the *Philosophical Grammar*. However, for reasons that remain moot, 4 complete and self-contained chapters that are of the greatest interest, in title at least, to the non-linguistic tradition of philosophy, have remained unpublished even today - with one exception, 'Philosophy'. Unpublished remain the chapters on 'Phenomenology', 'Expectation, Wish, etc.' and 'Idealism'.

²⁹ Arguably Wittgenstein never renounced the essence of his early conception of philosophy: 'A philosophical problem has the form: "I don't know my way about" ... Philosophy leaves everything as it is' (PI 123-4).

nature of the relation between subject and object qua aesthetic attitude to object is that 'I "contemplate" it' (TPI 221). Then, while hinting at his commitment to strict aesthetic criteria of judgement, he says. 'I listen to a symphony orchestra playing Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Let us disregard exceptional cases – which are besides on the margin of aesthetic contemplation - as when I go mainly "to hear Toscanini" interpret Beethoven' (TPI 222). In *Nausea* there is constant reference to a contemplative attitude when speaking of art, the aesthetic and the imaginative attitude³⁰. In *What is Literature?* Sartre tells us that 'We shall be able to yield ourselves to that moderate pleasure which, as everyone knows, we derive from the contemplation of works of art' (WL 21). In the same work we are told that the aesthetic attitude 'cannot have pure contemplation as an end. For, intuition is silence, and the end of language is to communicate' (WL 12).

These references to contemplation indicate that the aesthetic attitude, dis-interested will, is thought by Sartre to be contemplative. But it would appear that there is no clear structure between this aesthetic contemplation, knowledge and the philosophical attitude. Nevertheless, such a structure has been suggested by T. Busch. He puts forward the phenomenological reduction as that which links - via a principle of distance - the ethical with the philosophical attitude.³¹ In *The Psychology of Imagination*, for example, we have the following: 'But to experience it [the Seventh symphony] on these analogues the imaginative reduction must be functioning, ... it therefore occurs as a perpetual elsewhere, a perpetual absence' (TPI 224). In *Being and Nothingness*, in the sections on 'The Origin of Negation' and 'The Immediate Structures of the For-itself', distance is made possible by the reduction.

The analysis of methodological doubt ... has clearly shown the fact that only reflective consciousness can be disassociated from what is posited by the consciousness reflected on. ... a putting between parenthesis' (BN 75).

However, to speak in the same breath of the methodological doubt and 'parenthesis' is either to conflate or offer a new formulation. Besides, the attitude as phenomenological doubt involves

³⁰ See for example *Nausea*, pp37f, 135f, , 157, 246-253

³¹ T. Busch (1975) 'Sartre: The Phenomenological Reduction and Human Relationships'.

questioning: thus its philosophical use and, it would seem to follow, its distinguishing feature from the aesthetic attitude.

Nonetheless, Busch's approach may well be fruitful, and the possibility of a stronger identity between the aesthetic and philosophic attitudes is important and should not be discounted, though this is not the place to attempt such a detailed and highly specific inquiry.³² We continue, therefore, with the structurally weaker identification, potent enough in itself, with an aesthetic attitude that in its primary mode is ethical as opposed to epistemological or philosophical, and which discloses itself through aesthetic deeds.

(II) PART II: (CONCLUSION II): LINGUA–AESTHETIC–(PHILO) DEEDS (TRACTATUS AND NAUSEA)

The reciprocity between attitude and deed having already been established, the point now is that it would be a mistake to read either the early Sartre or the *Tractatus* in the hope of finding an answer to the problematic. It is in the practical challenge of experiencing these works - as aesthetic deeds - that one attains the goal or purpose of insight into the problematic and thus its dis-solving.

What is an aesthetic deed? In the present thesis it is specifically a (literary) object (of art) that is intended to disclose ethical meaning through its aesthetic construction³³. This entails that which has already been stated: a reciprocity between aesthetic attitude (disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis*) and art objects (cf. especially §5.1 'Preliminary Remarks and §2.1). A solution to the absurdity of life would be in terms of a *justification*. So far, the *aesthetic* attitude has been put forward - and what of art? 'Life is grave, art is gay' (NB 20.10.16). 'Only the work of art would give man that justification, for the work of art is a metaphysical absolute' (WD 87).

³² See Dufrenne (1973, pp24) who distinguishes the natural and philosophic (reduction) attitudes. Also, Ricouer (1986, pp209f) who speaks of the reduction as the withdrawal of all reference to empirical reality.

³³ Clearly, as has been indicated, the principle has a broader application to individual actions, deeds that show value/meaning; indeed, a life itself, *a la* Wittgensteins, could be said to be an aesthetic deed, or at least the attempt for such disclosure. But unless a critique of action is undertaken, this aspect is of religious and biographical interest.

And so, 'The sole purpose of an absurd existence was indefinitely to produce works of art which at once escaped it. That was its sole justification; ... It was really a morality of salvation through art' (WD 78). In effect, at least for the present thesis, this is a reciprocity between determination and disclosing or attempting to communicate. Determination, the aesthetic attitude, is, it was seen, structurally identified with ethics. It may well be the case that both Sartre and Wittgenstein would sanction the permanent possibility of artefacts as aesthetic deeds (with a moral purpose). This much is at least suggested (cf. above): 'The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*; and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*' (NB 83); 'At the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative' (WD 86). This, with the earlier linguistic doctrines, supports the present claim, that specific literary works, namely *Tractatus* and *Nausea*, are presented as aesthetic deeds.

A specific aim of *Tractatus* and *Nausea*, for example, is to disclose the aesthetic solution to the problematic, and do so in such a way that it is graspable by others of similar attitude. (Recall a central idea of *What is Literature?* is that aesthetic creation is through both writer and reader - 'Reading/Writing' is the relation Sartre gives to his own fundamental project in *The Words*). There are, however, at least *prima facie*, massive differences between *Tractatus* and *Nausea*: whereas one is to be taken in the primary sense as a work of fiction the other is to be taken in the primary sense as a work of philosophy. Nonetheless, given the similarities of their authors' philosophical commitments - on language, self and aesthetics - a deeper affinity can be expected.

When, thus, considering *Tractatus* and *Nausea* (post §2 of the present thesis), their use of language, and the status of their propositions, this fact strikes us: that for both works, these propositions do not treat of anything in the world. Their propositions do not represent (signify or denote), states of affairs. They should be taken as, in broad terms, metaphysical statements. Only when taken as referring to the world as a whole do they have sense, *sinn, sen*. By the doctrines of their own authors, these works do not say, they show, they disclose, indirectly, *le sens* and *sinn*. That Sartre and Wittgenstein chose radically different vehicles for their project is a matter of temperament and not that of subject matter and philosophical goals: the differences are

superficial. the deep structure of both works is constituted in terms of (what we have come to know as a Tractarian) saying—showing distinction.

Although it could not reasonably be claimed that the subject matter of either *Tractatus* or *Nausea* was less philosophical than the other (on *Nausea* cf. §2.3ii), and although the approach is clearly very different, the deep - saying—showing - principle on which they are both based is the same. And the real strength of each work lies not in philosophic argument, but in examples³⁴, in image and metaphor - and in the effect of the whole work upon the reader. *Tractatus* and *Nausea* are limited wholes, with a transcendental message that is shown. Neither work can avoid the requirements of propositional discourse and the charge of being unverifiable and meaningless (§2.4). More to the point, neither work was intended to avoid these strictures - quite the opposite.

An objection that could be raised here is the 'leap' from individual or particular propositions to the work as a whole, from individual propositions that do not treat of anything in the world (though some may) and the ultimate dependence on taking the work (*Tractatus* or *Nausea*) as a whole. But here, this putative difficulty is quickly explained by recourse to a (part/whole) principle, the universal implies the particular, the particular the universal. We are familiar with such a principle in Sartre's early writings. Above (§2) was discussed the important Sartrean concept of man as the universal singular: each individual acts for himself and in so doing for the world as a whole. This relation is fundamental to Sartre's philosophy. And similarly, in the *Tractatus*, we should say, based on the results of our inquiries, that language is the universal singular: the picture theory ensures that all propositions, taken on their own, imply the world as a whole, the totality of language. The self *is* the universal singular: Man is never truly an individual, human history, my epoch is the universal, my projects are universalised, a synthesis: but it is only the universal pole of self that is beyond signification, the particular that can be spoken meaningfully of. It is just this bi-polarity which is at the centre of the problematic and which structures the intentions of the authors of *Tractatus* and *Nausea*.

³⁴ More could be made of this - as Manser (1966) does in his Chapter 1.

Sartre. In the early philosophy of Sartre, signification is limited to semantic employment, while *sens* is deployed as a cognate which refers to the image, to freedom and indeterminacy (§2.3ii & *passim*). This indeterminacy of meaning depends upon a fully determined world: the 'artworld' (to borrow G. Dickie's use of Danto's term), the world as a *whole*. Works of art, claims Sartre, embody their meaning, and signify nothing beyond themselves (TPI). The original or fundamental project of their creator is expressed through *le sens*. This is the basis of Sartre's use of aesthetic objects as symptomatic of the artists fundamental project in his existential psychoanalyses of these artists. The existential psychoanalysis of *Being and Nothingness* is intended to reveal or disclose to the subject his or her fundamental project. In short, offer a solution to the meaning of life. But that art objects are *symptomatic of an artists fundamental project* is a psychological matter, and not an aesthetic one³⁵. Aesthetically, the interest in the art work is its identification with *le sens*, with the imaginative or aesthetic attitude, and the possibility of Showing, disclosing ethical meaning: the subjects project or goal.

A poem can disclose a metaphysic: but if it is to disclose the metaphysical subject it must exist and be appreciated in the right - aesthetic - way. Its depiction of historical events, characters, and landscape must surpass being pure exposition or a tract, and can only do so if these qualities combine in a holistic structure which is open, dynamic and suggestive, a structure that is not descriptively determined. It is just this principle that dominates the writings of Sartre, his plays, novels and, with no more than a shift of balance, the likes of *Being and Nothingness*. The image - open, indeterminate, creative and free - commands as it integrates with the project of showing. We choose *Nausea* (and not say *Being and Nothingness*) as the work most clearly intended to embody the metaphysics of aesthetics that so fascinated the early Sartre, and which finds such an unlikely alliance with the *Tractatus*. (Wittgenstein is dead set against the transcendental in his later works - at least at the level of text).

Sartre, on music:³⁶ 'I believe that music in effect signifies nothing, but that it has its

³⁵ Hence, existential psychoanalysis is very much peripheral to present concerns.

³⁶ Not only Wittgenstein (which is well known), but Sartre too was greatly indebted to a love and understanding of music, it played a 'considerable' part in his life, and Sartre "always played the piano for two to four hours a day" .

meaning (*le sens*)'. Music, like all art, 'gives us a possibility of capturing the world as it was at each moment without object'. What the works of an era express is 'something which we all grasp without the power to define it well. This "thing" is the meaning (*le sens*). Bach's music most certainly renders the meaning of the Eighteenth Century'. So too, the music of Beethoven for example, continues Sartre, 'the expression of the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries'. But it is, at the same time, 'something incomparably greater – a sort of view of this time which one may always have from the outside'. (Hoeller, 1993, pp17 & 21).

'In fact the problem for me is to make myself be by acquiring the possibility of taking the Other's point of view on myself' (BN 365). *Nausea*, is a kind of a token (in Richard Wolheim's sense) whose expressed aim is to help the other see the world, and thus themselves, from the point of view of the other and, ideally, from the point of view of God. The author's intention, one such intention in writing *Nausea*, was to 'present in literary form metaphysical truths and feelings'³⁷. Specifically, this involves disclosing the actual nature of the self³⁸. 'The work of art, taken as the sum of its exigencies, is not a simple description of the present but a *judgement* of this present in the name of a future [and] this awareness of self is a surpassing of self' (WL 118 - my emphasis). Roquentin's choice of himself as an artist is a choice to *relate* to the world aesthetically, while this itself mirrors Sartre's choice - aesthetic attitude - in writing *Nausea*. The essential reciprocity is, however, that between *Nausea* and reader. Roquentin wants the novel to 'be beautiful' and 'make people ashamed of their existence' (N 252).

Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein is one of the great German prose stylists, he is in fact regarded by many as a supreme artist, a poet. The most common, and the correct response on first reading the *Tractatus* is that 'it is beautiful'. In correspondence, Wittgenstein again and again states his intention that the *Tractatus* be beautiful, that it exists as a work of art, that he could not spoil the

'Music, Meaning, and Madness: A conversation with J-Paul Sartre', an interview with L. Malson in Cf. Hoeller (ed.), [1993].

³⁷ De Beauvoir, quoted in Manser (1966), pp1

³⁸ As Manser (1966) notes - as also, now familiarly, in 'its particular mode of existence' (WL 7).

work with arguments. It is well documented that although Wittgenstein was a talented musician he did in fact want to be a poet. We have also, for example, his now famous letter to Englemann, where he refers to a poem by Uhland as ‘magnificent’, for it is this, the poem, that achieves what Wittgenstein set out to achieve with the *Tractatus*; Wittgenstein refers to it in his letter, stating that: ‘The unutterable will be – unutterably – contained in what has been uttered’³⁹. The poem, *Graf Eberhards Weissdorn* is, in Kaul Kraus’s phrase, ‘so clear that no one understands it’.

In Wittgenstein’s Vienna it was believed that prose could near poetry insofar as the aphorism was perfected. Kaul Kraus, Wittgenstein’s influential contemporary, did much to forward this notion, but no more than the two great favourites of Wittgenstein: Lichtenberg and Nietzsche. The principle, thus formative in Wittgenstein’s writing, was that ‘an aphorism goes beyond truth with one more *satz*’. The point of the *Tractatus* is ethical, that is aesthetic, its mode of expression is the aphorism, and for Wittgenstein in Vienna (in a way perhaps unprecedented before or since), the aphorism was a poetic form.

As we saw, by its own doctrines the aphorisms of the *Tractatus* are placed on the side of the *mystische*, with ethics and aesthetics. Like *Nausea*, the *Tractatus* both contains the doctrine of showing *and* is itself an expression of that doctrine. Unless philosophical propositions are non-metaphysical, construed as representing possible, contingent, states of affairs, along the lines of a scientific or empirical enquiry, then they are trying to say what cannot be said: they are without sense (§2.2 & §2.4). But if philosophical inquiry *is* construed along the lines of an empirical inquiry then, although its propositions have sense, it is not philosophy!

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* [my emphasis] -- ... *this* method would be the only strictly correct one’ (6.53).

Strictly speaking then, and as is well known, the *Tractatus* should not try and say anything about the world as a whole, its propositions should not treat of matters metaphysical; they should limit themselves to possible states of affairs *in* the world. But its propositions do speak of the world as a whole, it does make metaphysical claims, contain statements of value. Many of its

³⁹ P. Englemann, *Letters from LW*, pp82-5, (9.4.17).

propositions are *a priori* statements made either about the world (even the logical propositions tell us something about the world -i.e. 6.124, 6.13) or about what is beyond experience, the transcendental. This is, Wittgenstein tells us, the only real philosophy. But these propositions do not picture or model facts in the world. As a non-empirical, *a priori* - philosophically consistent - inquiry, the *Tractatus* should not have been written. Famously, and prevailingly, it appears that its very existence is at best paradoxical, at worst erroneous and misguided. Wittgenstein, it is charged, should himself have remained silent. Instead, he wrote a whole book of sense-less propositions.

If the above charge is just, then, although Wittgenstein is clearly not daft, it appears that he has made a rather elementary mistake, one that flaws a whole work, and the seven years of life it represents. One alternative, and I should say that we need an alternative, is that Wittgenstein recognised the paradox, intended it, and embraced it. But there is no internal evidence in the *Tractatus* to support this and, moreover, Wittgenstein was not at all, unlike Sartre, fond of paradox. One would hope then for some explanation, one that satisfied not only the internal evidence of the work itself, but also external evidence surrounding the authors' aims and intentions etc.

This charge against Wittgenstein and the *Tractatus* is prolific (even today), it is made by the great and by the giddy. Of Carnap's assessment, Wittgenstein says 'I cannot imagine that Carnap should have so completely misunderstood the last sentences of the *Tractatus* - and hence the fundamental idea of the whole book' (letter to Moritz Schlick, August 1932). Again, in another letter

You haven't really got a hold of my main contention, to which the whole business of logical propositions is only a corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed by propositions - i.e. by language - (and, which comes to the same, what can be *thought*) and what cannot be expressed by propositions, but only shown (*gezeigt*); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy.⁴⁰

Wittgenstein also states the 'main contention' in the preface to the *Tractatus*: 'The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said

⁴⁰ Russell, *Autobiography* (1985)

clearly [by propositions], and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence [i.e. it can only be shown]' (p3). The statement of the main contention is followed by what Wittgenstein takes to be its application in philosophy: 'I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the [philosophical] problems' (p5). On *essential points* Wittgenstein had found the final solution. What, then, had Wittgenstein thought he had shown about the essential character of philosophical problems?

Philosophy can say nothing about the world:
The rationalists were right in seeing that Philosophy was not empirical, that is, that as soon as it became empirical it became a question for a science of some sort.
But they were wrong in supposing that there were *a priori* synthetic judgements. ...
The empiricists ... were right in maintaining that ... synthetic propositions were matters of experience (NB pp79-80, also, cf. T6.371ff and 4.11-4.113).

What Philosophers' had formally tried to *say* they must now show; the material mode of speech must be replaced by the formal mode of speech. In this way Philosophers' can still perform the task of making clear the essence - *a priori* structure - of world and self. Moreover, our reciprocity, the Philosopher who does this will succeed and 'will see the world [its essence] aright' (6.54 - also NB32, pp110).

There really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world' (5.641).

The world, the given, is in a sense *my* world, it is 'I' the metaphysical subject that gives it value, meaning - and for Sartre too.

It may be charged that here again Wittgenstein's position is flawed as paradoxical: by *saying* it is my world I refute myself; more importantly, this is not something that can be said, for 'If I wrote a book called *The World as I Found it* ... in an important sense there is no subject' (5.631). The acknowledged reef of solipsism, that in fact the world - of Value - *is* my (the metaphysical subjects) world, cannot be said but it can - and must - be shown: *this* in fact is Wittgenstein's aim.

For Wittgenstein at least, solipsism is unavoidable in a philosophical attitude directed toward self and value. Moreover, there are comments in the *Notebooks* that indicate a closer identification between solipsism and the aesthetic attitude, as is also suggested in scattered passages throughout Sartre's early writings. But pursuit of this dimension would take us beyond

present needs. It needs mentioning however because firstly it reaffirms the important point with which this section opened: that there is a claim to a stronger identification between the aesthetic and philosophic attitudes than that already made here. Secondly, the remarks on solipsism occur in the context of philosophy, and in the context that philosophy, the *Tractatus* itself, cannot say and must show: philosophy cannot proffer metaphysical or transcendental statements with sense unless these statements are taken as showing.

The existence of the *Tractatus*, as a work of philosophy, a philo-lingua-aesthetic deed, is not, as judged by its own doctrines, a paradox, *if* it is seen as such a deed - showing - where such a deed is conceived in terms of an aesthetic consciousness transcending natural cognition, that the subject (reader) can, as its author claims, be shown, 'see the world aright'. For similar reasons, it is neither paradoxical or absurd to try and show a philosophical thesis through a novel - indeed, given the framework and its principle of showing such a remit is the logical outcome.

♦ **Curtain Down.**

'The profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence, (BN 363). Presence is used to emphasise that which is absent; saying gives us showing, relative value the possibility of permanent value. *Tractatus* and *Nausea* are salvation myths.⁴¹ R. Rorty⁴² identifies the *Tractatus* as another example in the old quarrel between poetry and philosophy, a tension between its recognition of contingency (and meaninglessness) and its effort to achieve universality (or the absolute) through *it-self* as transcendence.⁴³

One part of Wittgenstein's bi-polar self, the psychological self, is an object in the world which may be referred to by language, while the other part of the self, the metaphysical subject, is, as with Sartre's original freedom, both the background to the possibility of language and also

⁴¹ J. Edward's (1990) *The Authority of Language*, makes a similar claim for the *Tractatus* - seeing the work as a salvation myth, as an image of ascent to a God-like status. Also, Danto Sartre (1975) makes the same claim for *Nausea* (pp91).

⁴² R. Rorty, 'The Contingency of Selfhood' in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989)

⁴³ We may also be reminded of 'perfectionist writing'. This idea found its contemporary revival in the *Essays of Emerson via Nietzsche* (cf. especially *The Gay Science*). The author is said to arrange the text - or the words of the text - such that the readers are dis-orientated from their ordinary conformed relation to the present toward a further advanced state of themselves. See Mulhall's discussion 'Wittgenstein and Heidegger: Orientations to the Ordinary' in *EJP*, vol. 2, no.2, Aug. 1994.

as such universal. In Sartre, original consciousness, consciousness without object, a pure, active, intentional, meaningful (operative), unreflected subjectivity; a nonsubstantial and therefore non-referent existence, definable only in terms of either its past or in terms of its absent-present-at-hand, that is, its concrete situatedness. The *pour soi* is what it is not, it is not determined by its freedom, ever torn away from itself toward its possibilities. The source of the 'I', original freedom is perpetually beyond language. But Freedom is not beyond image/*sens* ('poetry' in *What is Literature?*). Poetry, language as art, (through *le sens*) is capable of expressing the pre-reflective moment - which is also one of 'totality'. It is only in language as *la sens* that the universal singular - 'man' - is expressed. Freedom and metaphysical subject is not signified by language, it therefore will not, cannot, and is not described, not anywhere, including *Being and Nothingness*, *Nausea*, *Tractatus* (and this dissertation).

Where *Nausea* and *Tractatus* (and for the sake of criticism, this dissertation) are concerned, if each, as a matter of stating the authorial intent, if each were given the sub-title 'The world as I found it', then the self, as original Freedom or the metaphysical subject, could not be directly mentioned, propositionally referred to in those texts. Its presence is in the silences, it is beyond the signifying prose, it is at the limit of understanding; only in grasping the meaning in terms of the whole does one grasp the original project and relate to the world in 'good faith'. This aesthetic experience is best achieved through the unreality of works of art (what Part One of this thesis lacks) - but can be forcibly integrated into the philosophical enterprise. This does not mean, however, that 'the work of art is not reducible to an idea; first, because it is a production or reproduction of a *being*, that is, of something which never quite allows itself to be *thought*; then because this being is totally penetrated by an *existence*, that is by a freedom' (WL 85). By, in fact, an 'inexhaustible freedom', and 'When all is said and done, the message is a soul which is made object. A soul, and what is to be done with a soul? One contemplates it at a respectful distance' (WL 21). How does one do this, making the message effable, the absent present? Through aesthetic deeds, through art-and-the-ineffable.

§5.4 POSTSCRIPT: THE PROBLEM OF BEING GOD

There are two issues requiring this PostScript, the one new the other returned to. As to the latter, it has been observed *passim* but especially at §2.3iii on the interpretation of *What is Literature?* that Sartre's commitment to the aesthetic, while not ambiguous may nevertheless be ambivalent. This point needs stressing, for Wittgenstein is neither ambiguous nor ambivalent in recommending the aesthetic solution to the riddle of life. The reason for Sartre's ambivalence is now clear in a way it could not be earlier. Three principle factors can be noted: (a) Poetry and *le sens* depend ultimately upon an identity with image and imagination (cf. sub-section on *The Psychology of Imagination* at §2.3ii). (b) The aesthetic entails 'distance' and disinterestedness. (c) Art and the aesthetic operate within a differing ontology, in the realm of the unreal and the un-realizable. All and each of these factors pose a seemingly unavoidable entrapment in bad faith: an engaged literature will have to describe social truths and prescribe an ideology, but all three principles are a remove from such a remit: they invoke a distance and a sure means for identifying one-self or ones projects with an imaginary world of the un-realizable. Art, poetry, the symbolic pole of a proposition, all are only indirectly engaged - as the expression of the subject. It is of little surprise then that Sartre is ambivalent: as an artist and poet himself, and as a philosopher with a solution - an aesthetic solution to *the* problem - he wishes to embrace the aesthetic within his philosophy of freedom. This he does in the early work, but always there is a tension, and increasingly over the years he tries, as does the later Wittgenstein, to move away from the transcendental to a more directly engaged - (Marxist) - solution; and always then, an ambivalence in his recommendation of the aesthetic as a solution to the absurd. Nonetheless, the transcendental remains forceful in the early works, and Sartre's occasional reserve has little impact on its generally affirmative articulation, a situation encouraged, at least for him personally, by the fact that art, poetry and the aesthetic is engaged at the - indirect - but foundational level as an expression of original freedom, of the subject as a historical and subjective reality.

The second (new, and final) issue of this PostScript leads on from the comments on ambivalence and bad faith. Given Sartre's account of our extreme freedom, there clearly is the problem of bad faith, with which reference to the aesthetic as just noted. But there are many patterns to bad faith, including that which tends to - rightly - dominate discussion, that of self-deception.

The standpoint *sub specie aeternitatis* is the standpoint of God, which is that of absolute value. This may well be what we all desire (Sartre) or should strive for (Wittgenstein), but in fact the demand by a situated embodied subjectivity for absolute value can never be satisfied, for there is an inherent self-deception, the logic of which defeats the aesthetic project.

Firstly, although Wittgenstein and Sartre believe in at least the idea of God, and Wittgenstein *appears* to believe in the reality, Sartre does not think such a belief to be justifiable. By a logical analysis of the definition of God, Sartre maintains that 'God' is contradictory - and, therefore, cannot exist. Sartre considers, for example, the opposing properties of the meaning of the in-itself and the for-itself, that these entail the opposition between being/action, object/subject, etc. Such differences, though all necessary to a God, cannot be reconciled, according to Sartre and his ontology. Mystics say *coincidentia oppositorum* is possible, and appeal to their experience, Sartre says it is not and appeals to his analysis. And yet, God enters into Sartre's very definition of man: 'To be man means to reach toward being God. Or if you prefer, man fundamentally is the desire to be God' (BN, *passim*).

Human reality is the desire for the absolute. But the problematic of each philosopher concurs that all choices *in the world* (of contingency) are arbitrary. The choice of an aesthetic attitude is and must be made *in the world* by the situated subject. The aesthetic choice is itself therefore arbitrary, although of course it is treating itself as an absolute. The aesthetic solution is perhaps the only solution - for Sartre, it is in the imaginative attitude that the human subject most nears the standpoint of God. Moreover, in *Being and Nothingness*, he hints at the possibility of escape from the contradiction through a coincidence in terms of 'beauty': an 'ideal fusion of the lacking with the one that lacks what is lacking' (BN 194). Beauty would thus present us with

(Wittgenstein's) two Godheads, it would be 'an ideal state of the world, correlative with an ideal realisation of the for-itself' (ibid.). And so, surprisingly,

In this realisation the essence and the existence of things are revealed as identity to a being who, in this very revelation, would be merged with himself in the absolute unity of the in-itself (BN 194).

But still, the solution ultimately fails: Beauty is a Value, it is unreal, existing in the imaginative attitude. 'To the extent that man *realises* the beautiful in the world, he realises it in the imaginary mode' (ibid.); beauty cannot be experienced as real, and the harmony between two real Godheads cannot be. The latter, the absolute, can only be *possible*, an ideal, and to render it otherwise as real is self-deception.

The problem here is not with the postulating of an *aesthetic* solution, a scientific or religious solution, for example, would be just as flawed, logically. The *aesthetic* solution suits a certain temperament, a certain philosophy of life, a certain problematic. The problem is why postulate any, unworkable solution. The need for salvation may well be a condition of selfhood - or of the philosophical project for some. Indeed, in terms of a hope for a possible totality, Sartre does give this an ontological status, it being a condition of consciousness. Whatever, faced with a problematic of existence and an ideal (impossible in Sartre's case), it is *the attempt to attain the standpoint of God that remains*, (alas, it is sometimes felt, in Sartre's case), the best response to an absurd riddle. It is so because within *the* framework, the attempt for disinterestedness and *sub specie aeternitatis* reveals to the self that it is responsible for creating ethical value, and that such value, as with itself, can only be shown: 'Only the work of art would give man that justification, for the work of art is a metaphysical absolute' (WD 87). The world cannot be seen from outside; but the self can see itself as a transcendental subject, seeing and willing the world from the outside, taking itself as the very condition of potential.

Sartre and Wittgenstein both allow for the hope for salvation: their philosophies then must, as they do, allow for the *possibility* of salvation: there is neither ambiguity nor ambivalence here. Not now the actual standpoint of God, but the attempt to resolve the problematic through choosing one-self as the *potential* for the standpoint of God, and hence *acting* within and through

this potential. An imperfect justification for an absurd riddle, but, rooted in human potential, it will do. Through Art, the defeat of the Ineffable 'itself turns into salvation' (WL 24). As Sartre, in this very context, was fond of saying, 'the loser wins'.

¹ The poem by Rilke (*I.12 of Sonnets to Orpheus*) which follows the Bibliography was written around 1922. Given the aesthetic attitude, it could well be experienced as showing the essence of what has been *said* over the previous 200 or so pages. The poem places not the sign nor temporality ('nimble clocks') as true to life, but the symbol is 'real day and night'; although the poem speaks of, amongst other things, uniting or harmonising two spirits, the self as a true relation, at a distance, limits, anxiety, the beyondness of essence ('ever reach') and transcendence ('bestow'), it does so as a whole and through *sinn le sens*, not through signification. (It may be of further interest that Rilke and Wittgenstein admired each others works - and in fact, it was Wittgenstein's money that in part allowed Rilke the liberty to pursue his art in the castle at Duino where the *Sonnets to Orpheus* were created.

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PART TWO
SHOWING

POEM:

(BY RILKE)

Hail, the spirit able to unite!
For we truly live our lives in symbol,
and with tiny paces move our nimble
clocks beside our real day and night.

Still we somehow act in true relation,
we that find ourselves we know not where.
Distant station feels for different station –
what seemed empty space could bear ...

purest tension. Harmony of forces!
Do not just our limited resources
keep all interference from your flow?

Does the farmer, anxiously arranging,
ever reach to where the seed is changing
into summer? Does not Earth bestow?