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Honesty, Humility, Courage, & Strength:

Later Wittgenstein on the Difficulties of Philosophy and the Philosophical Virtues

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> *Wittgenstein used to say to me, "Go the bloody* hard way*"; and he would write this in letters as well.*[1] *I remember this more often, perhaps, than any other single remark of his. He might have added something like …: "Otherwise you will never be able to do what you want to do. There is … something important in going …* against *the tendency to seek comfort or stimulus in this or that."* — Rush Rhees[2]

> *Wittgenstein writes: "you can't think decently if you don't want to hurt yourself …"*[3] *This was … something he said in one way or another to any of his pupils who were close to him … [P]hilosophy for Wittgenstein was a source of suffering… [a]nd… you could not be intimate with him without knowing that this was so.* — Maurice O'Connor Drury[4]

> *If, at the end, no visible traces of your influence remain in my thought, which is extremely unlikely, so shall I at least always have to acknowledge that I learnt from you, how difficult philosophy must be, if it is to be more than a collection of materials for academic controversy and learned conversation.* — G.H. von Wright to Wittgenstein (WC:414)

One of the things which sets Wittgenstein apart from many other philosophers is that he does not just try to point out where and in what

1. See, for example, WC:371. (A key to all the bibliographic abbreviations can be found at the end of the paper.)
2. Rush Rhees, 'The Study of Philosophy', in his *Without Answers*, London, Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1969, p. 169. This quotation also opens the paper by James Conant which provided the early impetus for my thoughts on these matters (see his 'On Going the Bloody Hard Way in Philosophy', in *The Possibilities of Sense*, ed. John H. Whittaker, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 85–129).
3. WC:370.
4. Maurice O'Connor Drury, *The Selected Writings of Maurice O'Connor Drury on Wittgenstein, Philosophy, Religion and Psychiatry*, ed. John Hayes, London, Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 212–3 [Letter to Rush Rhees, Spring 1966]; I have silently corrected a typo.

ways we go wrong in our thinking, but — like Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger — he also has a lot to say about *why* we go wrong in the ways we do. Wittgenstein's diagnoses of the roots of our philosophical missteps usually take a double form: first he identifies a "difficulty of philosophy" which tends to trip us up in our philosophizing, and then he identifies a way of avoiding this difficulty, usually in the form of certain qualities which would allow us to overcome the difficulty in question.

Broadly speaking, Wittgenstein distinguished between two kinds of difficulty in philosophy: intellectual difficulties on the one hand, and difficulties of the will on the other. And he thought that each of these kinds of difficulty demands a different kind of quality to overcome it: the intellectual difficulties must be overcome by various intellectual *talents* or *skills*, and the difficulties of the will must be overcome by various *virtues of character*. Of these two sets of philosophically helpful qualities, Wittgenstein was clear as to which was the more important. As he once said to Rush Rhees:

> [I]n philosophy character will often make up for a lesser degree of intellect and talent — whereas it doesn't hold the other way: a more powerful intellect but want of character. "God give a man character: it will carry him over all sorts of gaps and difficulties." (WPCR:56–7[5])

It was likely with this insight in mind that Wittgenstein stressed to Maurice Drury in 1930 that "the distinction between a philosopher and a very clever man is a real one and of great importance" (F:III:195). At least one of the things which distinguishes a philosopher from someone who is merely very clever is that the good philosopher — in addition to various intellectual talents and skills — needs certain core virtues of character, which I will call the 'philosophical virtues.' It is these philosophical virtues — as well as the difficulties of the will that make them necessary — which will be the subject of this paper.

In insisting upon the central importance of certain virtues of character in the practice of philosophy, Wittgenstein should be counted a notable predecessor to contemporary virtue epistemologists of the 'responsibilist' variety.[6] His approach, however, is both narrower and broader than that of many virtue epistemologists. It is narrower because most of Wittgenstein's remarks on this topic focus on those virtues relevant to ideal *philosophical* practice specifically, rather than to ideal intellectual conduct across the board. On the other hand his engagement is also broader than that of most virtue epistemologists, because in discussing the philosophical virtues he does not take himself to be contributing merely to a particular sub-field of philosophy (viz. epistemology), nor to a specific research program (viz. the analysis of the concept of knowledge), but rather, to be investigating the preconditions of proper engagement in philosophy altogether. Moreover, Wittgenstein's investigations of the philosophical virtues are intended to be practical: to guide himself and his students towards becoming better philosophers, and indeed better people. Thus, in discussing philosophy's difficulties of the will and the virtues needed to overcome them Wittgenstein is addressing himself to all would-be philosophers

5. This relative weighting of character above intellect in the good practice of philosophy accounts for Wittgenstein's consistent judgement of G.E. Moore as the preferable philosopher over Bertrand Russell (at least in Russell's later years). Knut Tranøy, for example, recalled that on one occasion Wittgenstein "compared Russell and Moore, saying that although Moore only had a fraction of Russell's intellectual powers, Moore possessed something which Russell had lost: sincerity. That is why, he added, one can still profitably discuss with Moore while it has not been possible for many years to do so with Russell" (F:IV:127). More pointedly, F.R. Leavis reported his impression that Wittgenstein had once said to him: "Moore? – he shows you how far a man can go who has absolutely no intelligence whatsoever" (F:II:249). When this remark is understood in the context of Wittgenstein's judgement of the greater importance of character than intelligence in being a good philosopher, it turns from a mocking disparagement of Moore's philosophical achievements, into a sincere and serious expression of admiration for Moore's character and for just how far a good character can genuinely take one in philosophy even in the absence of great talent.

6. For an overview of contemporary virtue epistemology — including a summary of the differences between its responsibilist and reliabilist forms — see Heather Battaly, 'Virtue Epistemology', *Philosophy Compass*, 3:4 (2008), pp. 639–63.

in the hope of making a genuine difference in their approach to, and practice of, philosophy.[7]

Despite being obsessed with the philosophical virtues — and the degrees to which he and others did or did not embody them — Wittgenstein nowhere wrote about them in a systematic manner. Rather, in order to uncover his understanding of these virtues, we must engage in a speculative reconstruction of his position by gathering together and organizing the many seemingly offhanded remarks which he left scattered throughout his notebooks, diaries, letters, and lectures, and in reports of conversations he had with students and friends. When we do so, we find a small number of recurrent concepts and concerns, and the emergence of a remarkably consistent and systematic position. The purpose of this paper is to set forth this position.

According to Wittgenstein, philosophy's "difficulties of the will" derive from the fact that many of us have strong desires which interfere with our philosophizing and lead us astray. There are many ways that these various desires could be categorized, but one helpful option is to divide them into two classes: desires regarding philosophical *content*, and desires regarding philosophical *form*. The former class covers desires to affirm particular philosophical positions or kinds of positions, and the latter class covers desires to philosophize in particular styles or to undertake particular kinds of philosophical projects.[8] Section 1 of what follows will sketch Wittgenstein's understanding of our distorting desires regarding philosophical content, and Section 2 will set out his account of the virtues of character that are needed to overcome those desires. Section 3 will address our distorting desires regarding philosophical form and the virtues needed to overcome them. Section 4 will then discuss Wittgenstein's view of the place of the philosophical virtues in philosophical pedagogy. And finally, in Section 5, I will consider how to take seriously the role played in our philosophizing by distorting desires and the philosophical virtues while avoiding the danger of having our philosophical disagreements devolve into the exchange of merely *ad hominem* moral and psychological attacks.

1. Difficulties of the Will Regarding Philosophical Content

The Big Typescript contains what could probably be considered the *locus classicus* for Wittgenstein's remarks on the difficulties of the will regarding philosophical content:

> [The] difficulty of philosophy [is] not the intellectual difficulty of the sciences, but the difficulty of a change of attitude. Resistance of the *will* must be overcome: … [P]hilosophy … require[s] a resignation, but one of feeling, not of intellect. And maybe that is what makes it so difficult for many… (…What makes a subject difficult to understand… is the antithesis between understanding the subject and what most people *want* to see. Because of this the very things that are most obvious can become the most difficult to understand. What has to be overcome is not a difficulty of the intellect, but of the will.) (BT:86:300)

The difficulty of the will which must be overcome, then, is that there are certain things that people want to be the case — and this makes it hard for them so much as to *see* any possible alternatives, let alone to understand them or to accept them. Thus, however strong the considerations against our cherished positions might be, we will not be able to properly appreciate them until we can overcome our conative resistance to doing so.

7. Compare Aristotle's famous remark in *The Nicomachean Ethics*, that "we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good" (trans. David Ross and Lesley Brown, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 24 [II:2, p. 1103b27–8]). Happily, some recent work emerging from the field of virtue epistemology has moved in this broader direction: analyzing and clarifying the intellectual virtues due to their practical importance for good thinking, rather than merely as a means to solve various outstanding epistemological problems or puzzles (I am thinking particularly of Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007).

8. Of course, there may be cases which are indeterminate between these two categories, and cases which simultaneously fall into both.

What kinds of positions does Wittgenstein think philosophers so desire to be true that their thinking becomes distorted as a result? Wittgenstein thought that some kinds of distorting desire were deeper than others. On the superficial side there are positions which philosophers want to be true for merely contextual reasons which are only accidentally related to the positions' specific content. And on the deeper side there are positions which philosophers want to be true for reasons internal to the positions' content. I will deal with these in turn.

1.1. Philosophical positions attractive for merely contextual reasons

Contextual reasons could include, for example: wanting the position you've been working on all month (whatever it may be) to be true, so that you don't need to start again from scratch; wanting the radical position (whatever it may be) to be true, so that you can gain a name as a philosophical maverick; wanting the as-yet unproposed position (whatever it may be) to be true, so that you can be known as the first to have argued for it; or wanting the fashionable position (whatever it may be) to be true, so that you don't need to swim against the philosophical tide in trying to get published. Schopenhauer often highlighted the ways in which these kinds of contextual motives interfered pervasively with good philosophical practice. Thus — in a passage from which Wittgenstein later quoted on more than one occasion[9] — Schopenhauer observed that:

> Nothing is more tiresome and annoying than when we argue with a person with reasons and explanations … under the impression that we have to deal only with his *understanding*, and then finally discover that he *will* not understand; that we therefore had to deal with his *will*, which pays no heed to the truth, but brings into action willful misunderstandings, chicaneries, and sophisms, entrenching itself behind its understanding and its supposed want of insight … Acknowledgement of the most important truths … will be expected in vain from those who have an interest in not allowing them to be accepted. Such an interest springs either from the fact that such truths contradict what they themselves teach every day, or from their not daring to make use of it and afterwards teach it; or, even if all this is not the case, they do not acknowledge such truths, because the watchword of mediocrities will always be: "If anyone makes his mark among us, let him go and do so elsewhere."[10]

9. See, for example, MS:158:34v.

According to Schopenhauer, then, the barriers that the will puts up in philosophy boil down to things like not wanting to admit that one was wrong, being fearful of teaching an unorthodox position (or a position frowned upon by the authorities[11]), or just plain unwillingness to recognize talent anywhere other than in oneself. All of these are paradigmatic examples of contextual interests that philosophers might have for or against particular philosophical positions.

The contextual consideration of whose distorting effects Wittgenstein was most wary, however, is our tendency to become deeply attached to our own long-term positions (whatever they may be), because we have become *habituated* to them. It was this phenomenon which lay behind Wittgenstein's 1929 remarks to Drury about W.E. Johnson, that "[h]is life's work has been his three volumes on logic.[12] You can't expect him now to see that there is something fundamentally wrong with what he has written. I wouldn't try and discuss with Johnson now" (F:III:193). More specifically, Rhees recalled Wittgenstein saying that "it is hard to adopt a new way of thinking; not because

10. 'On the Primacy of the Will in Self-Consciousness', in his *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol II, trans. E. F. J. Payne, New York, Dover Publications, 1958, p. 226 (chap. XIX, Sec 7).

11. For more on motivations of this kind see Arthur Schopenhauer, 'On Philosophy at the Universities', in his *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, Vol I, trans E. F. J. Payne, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974, pp. 137–97.

12. W.E. Johnson, *Logic*, Parts I–III, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1921, 1922, and 1924.

it's hard to understand, but because you don't want to give up the way you've always gone" (WPCR:61). There are many reasons why it might be difficult to give up a familiar way of thinking. Habits of thought, for example, may simply blind us to the existence of alternative possibilities.[13] But even if we do notice the alternatives, pride may make us unwilling to admit that we had been wrong all this time. Additionally, stubbornness may make us averse to acknowledging that our investment in those ideas was all wasted. But perhaps the most powerful of these difficulties is the simple fact that we tend to feel at home among ideas and ways of thinking to which we have become accustomed — they come to feel safe, making it a frightening prospect to leave them behind. As "Wittgenstein often said in conversation," it "can be just plain unpleasant" for a philosopher "to give up all his pet notions … and start again from nothing" (WPCR:59[14]). Bertrand Russell described this phenomenon more dramatically:

> [W]hen a man tells you that something you've always believed was in fact not true, it gives you a frightful shock and you think, 'Oh! I don't know where I am. When I think I'm planting my foot upon the ground, perhaps I'm not.' And you get into a terror.[15]

As I mentioned earlier, however, Wittgenstein considered the desire for a philosophical position that rests entirely on its accidental contextual properties — rather than on its intrinsic content — to be the more superficial of philosophy's distorting desires. Indeed, I would suggest that Wittgenstein's 1939/40 condemnation of Schopenhauer was based precisely on the fact that Schopenhauer's discussion of the ways in which the will can interfere with the intellect was limited to desires of this merely contextual sort. Wittgenstein wrote:

> One could call Schopenhauer a quite crude mind. I.e., He does have refinement, but at a certain level this suddenly comes to an end & he is as crude as the crudest. Where real depth starts, his finishes. One might say of Schopenhauer: he never takes stock of himself. (CV:41)

It takes a certain degree of self-reflective refinement to realize that our desires tend to lead us astray in the practice of philosophy. But if Schopenhauer could think that considerations as crude as the desire simply to save face or to retain one's job are the *principal* ways in which the will interferes with the intellect in philosophy, then he must surely never have taken stock of himself — for according to Wittgenstein, countless much more profound resistances of the will are at work throughout Schopenhauer's own philosophy, and Schopenhauer was clearly oblivious to them.

1.2. Philosophical positions attractive for intrinsic reasons: the phenomenon of philosophical "charm"

Wittgenstein had a deceptively quaint word for the kind of attractiveness that certain philosophical positions can have by virtue of their intrinsic content — namely, 'charm'.[16] According to Wittgenstein, certain philosophical positions and ideas charm us, and to the degree that we are under their attractive spell they can radically distort our thinking. Charm, for Wittgenstein, comes in many degrees — from things which we *want* to be the case, through things which we *long* to be the case, all the way to things which we seem to *need* to be the case.[17] Moreover,

13. And for this reason one of the principal aims of philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is waking people up to the existence of alternative possibilities (see F:III:77, WPCR:36–9, and of course PI:113–5 and thereabouts).

14. See also F:III:280–1.

15. In Bertrand Russell, *Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1974, p. 133 (chap. 10; I have added in the closing quotation mark that was missing from the original).

16. '*Reiz*' in German (though most instances of the word appear in various student notes of Wittgenstein's English-language lectures, so the choice of the English word 'charm' is his own).

17. Wittgenstein presumably had in mind both the modern and the original senses of 'charm'. In the modern (weak) sense something might be said to charm someone simply if it fascinates and attracts them. But in its original (strong) sense, if something had charmed someone then it held a controlling magical

in many instances when the charm does not seem all that serious, one need but scratch the surface to discover that what had appeared to be merely a mild attraction actually speaks to a very deep need, and we are far further into the clutches of this charm than we had suspected. Indeed, what is most interesting about Wittgenstein's various discussions of philosophical charm is the fact that he uncovers (or at least takes himself to have uncovered) deep existential motivations in the most unlikely areas. It might be thought obvious that people would have an existential stake in the debates of moral philosophy or the philosophy of religion — but Wittgenstein diagnoses equally deep existential concerns in such abstract and seemingly disinterested fields as the philosophy of language or the philosophy of mathematics. I will illustrate this by briefly sketching two examples of things which Wittgenstein took to be liable to charm some philosophers in ways that could cause intense resistance to seeing things differently. Wittgenstein's notion of charm should not be taken to stand or fall with these particular cases, rather they should be seen merely as examples of the kinds of ways in which distorting desires can insidiously affect our philosophizing — even in the most unexpected places.

First example: the charm of a mathematical (or metaphysical) realm. According to Wittgenstein — in his 1939 lectures on the foundations of

power over them. There can be no doubt that Wittgenstein sometimes intended this strong sense to be heard in his use of the word 'charm', because on other occasions he described our philosophical predicament using words explicitly indicative of an untoward magical force. Compare, for example: his famous remark that "[p]hilosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment [*Verhexung*] of our understanding by the resources of our language" (PI:109); his thought that "[o]ur motto might be: 'Let us not be bewitched [*behexen*]'" (Z:690); his observation that "[y]ou are under the misapprehension that the philosophical problem is difficult, whereas it's hopeless. I want you first to realise that you're under a spell" (MS:158:37r; written in English in the original); and his reflection that "I now believe that it would be right to begin my book with remarks about metaphysics as a kind of magic [*Magie*]. But in doing this I must not … make fun of it. The depth of magic [*Magie*] should be preserved … For, back then, when I began talking about the 'world' (and not about this tree or table), what else did I want but to keep something higher spellbound [*bannen*] in my words?" (PO:116–7).

mathematics — there is a "natural tendency" to think that "[m]athematical propositions say something about a mathematical reality" (LFM:140). One of the reasons for this is that "certain branches of mathematics have been developed in which the charm consists in the fact that pure mathematics looks as though it were applied mathematics — applied to itself. And so we have the business of a mathematical realm" (LFM:150[18]). Why is the notion of the existence of a "mathematical realm" so charming? Of course it might not be charming for everyone, and for those to whom it is charming it may be so for a variety of different reasons — but Wittgenstein thought that one fundamental reason so many people are attracted to the existence of a distinct mathematical realm is that such a realm would afford them the possibility of a world into which to "escape". A wonderfully illustrative anecdote is related by Karl Britton. Britton told Wittgenstein that he had reviewed C.E.M. Joad's book *Teach Yourself Philosophy*[19], and Wittgenstein replied that he "assumed it [was] a bad book and hoped [Britton] … had not lost the opportunity of saying so." Britton recounts:

> I said that I had said so; but that I had lent the book to a policeman of my acquaintance who had read it aloud to his wife cover to cover. They had both been greatly charmed: "It opened up a new world to me," the policeman said. This very much interested Wittgenstein and after a moment he said: "Yes, I understand how that is. Have you ever seen a child make a grotto with leaves and stones and candles — and then creep in out of the world into a kind of world he has made for himself? It was the grotto that your policeman friend liked to creep into." (F:II:210[20])

18. See also LFM:144–5 and RFM:V:5.
19. C.E.M. Joad, *Philosophy* (Teach Yourself Books), Hodder and Stoughton, 1944.
20. See also F:III:211 on Drury's motives for reading Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*.

Wittgenstein's analysis of what had so "charmed" the policeman is very acute, and I think that this is what Wittgenstein considers to be at the heart of the charm of believing in a mathematical realm. In fact, this is precisely what Russell explicitly admitted of himself, calling his "belief in the Platonic reality of numbers" a "comforting faith"[21]. As he explained:

> What is best in mathematics deserves … to be assimilated as a part of daily thought, and brought again and again before the mind with ever-renewed encouragement. Real life is, to most men, a long second-best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible; but the world of pure reason knows no compromise, no practical limitations, no barrier to the creative activity embodying in splendid edifices the passionate aspiration after the perfect from which all great work springs. Remote from human passions, remote even from the pitiful facts of nature, the generations have gradually created an ordered cosmos, where pure thought can dwell as in its natural home, and where one, at least, of our nobler impulses can escape from the dreary exile of the actual world."[22]

To believe in an objectively existing mathematical realm is to believe that there is at least *somewhere* that is perfect, that is unsullied by the disorder and disappointments of material reality, and that we can inhabit it in our minds. Russell might as well have declared — in Hilbertian tones — "No one shall drive us from this paradise that we have created for ourselves!" And of course this is not limited to the mathematical realm alone, for speculations about a metaphysical realm more

21. Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1903, p. x ('Introduction to the Second Edition').

22. Bertrand Russell, 'The Study of Mathematics', in his *Mysticism and Logic: and Other Essays*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1959, pp. 60–1 (for a longer discussion see Russell's *My Philosophical Development*, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 154–8 [chap. 17]).

generally could play the very same escapist role.[23] Thus Wittgenstein can write that our philosophical missteps often "satisf[y]" precisely our "longing for the transcendental" (BT:90:312).

Given this analysis, the charm involved here is not merely a trifling attraction, but something that has roots in a person's deepest needs and longings, and perhaps even in their highest ideals and aspirations. To give up a way of thinking that answers to such fundamental needs is to risk entirely losing oneself,[24] or — as Wittgenstein put it to Rhees in 1944 — to risk "leav[ing] one all bewildered & with a feeling of worthlessness" (WC:317). It is profound resistance to this kind of outcome that Wittgenstein had in mind when he counted resistances of the will as such a serious kind of difficulty for philosophy.

Second example: the charm of the remarkable, the dazzling, and the paradoxical. Another cluster of things which Wittgenstein took to profoundly charm many people — thereby leading them astray — are the remarkable, the dazzling, and the paradoxical. In this connection Wittgenstein finds Georg Cantor's notion of the transfinite to be a particularly rich case study. In his 1939 lectures Wittgenstein said:

> If I say 'the cardinal number of all cardinal numbers' … it conjures up … the picture of an *enormous colossal* number — which gives it a great charm. And to say that there is a subject treating of this number and of greater numbers — we are dazzled by the thought. (LFM:253[25])

23. Wittgenstein once said of C.D. Broad: "Poor Broad thinks of philosophy as the physics of the abstract" (quoted in Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1973, p. 258 [chap. 8]); see also LFM:138.

24. Indeed, Russell reports that he would have committed suicide as an adolescent were it not for his study of mathematics (in his *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell: 1872–1914*, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1967, p. 50 [chap II]). Presumably its power to provide him with an escape from the world of a bullied misfit schoolboy into the pristine and peaceful heaven of mathematical forms played a role in this.

25. See also RFM:II:42.

Earlier in that lecture series Wittgenstein had discussed a simple mathematical trick and noted that — at least for the novice — it "sets the whole mind in a whirl, and gives the pleasant feeling of paradox" (LFM:16). He then observed that "[i]f you can show there are numbers bigger than the infinite, your head whirls. This may be the chief reason this was invented" (LFM:16). As with the previous example of charm, the phenomenon of reveling in the remarkable and the paradoxical is not limited to mathematics, but is common throughout philosophy. Thus entire approaches to metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language are built upon such seemingly "paradox[ical]" facts as that "one can *think* what is not the case" (PI:95), or that propositions are "something very remarkable" (PI:93) because they can represent both how things are *and equally* how things are *not*. Indeed, in 1931 Wittgenstein went so far as to claim that the whole "fascination of philosophy lies in paradox and mystery" (KLWL:63). Once again, Russell almost admits to this plainly when he says — even if somewhat facetiously — that "the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it."[26]

Now, while the remarkable and the paradoxical might sometimes be charming in only the tame sense — acting merely as titillating distractions — they are often much more than that. In fact, as with the previous example, people often have a profound *need* to cling to the remarkableness and paradoxicality of these phenomena. For according to Wittgenstein, in our scientistic age the remarkable and the paradoxical can play a surreptitiously religious role in people's lives — filling what would have been the place of religious awe and wonder. As Wittgenstein tells it, people were once able to "marvel" at "everyday phenomena" and the "commonplace" (CV:7), but science has come to be "a way of sending [people] off to sleep" by convincing them that once it is "see[n] clearly that these phenomena have causes" then "there is absolutely no reason to marvel at" them (CV:7).[27] People are trapped, for while they cannot escape the scientistic outlook which insists that once something is scientifically explained it can no longer be wondrous, they nonetheless still need something to wonder at.

If moderns are no longer able to naturally wonder at the commonplace or the explicable, science will need to fill this void by providing "scientifically sanctioned" marvels — paradoxes *within* the sciences to dazzle people. Thus the physicists offer up astonishing entities (such as tables which are solid despite being almost entirely empty[28]), the metaphysicians offer up bizarre objects (such as golden mountains which do not exist but which nonetheless have being[29]), and the mathematicians offer up mind-boggling numbers (such as the cardinal number of all cardinal numbers).[30] As Wittgenstein remarked regarding the transfinite, it gives the impression that "it introduces us to the mysteries of the mathematical world" (RFM:II:40). Such paradoxes and mysteries are a religion *manqué* — they provide the last remaining breathing-hole in the suffocating layer of cellophane which sci-

26. Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 20 (Lecture 2).

27. This attitude is well-encapsulated by John Keats' famous lines, railing against the natural philosophers: "Do not all charms fly / At the mere touch of cold philosophy? / There was an awful rainbow once in heaven: / We know her woof, her texture; she is given / In the dull catalogue of common things. / Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings, / Conquer all mysteries by rule and line, / Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine— / Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made / The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade" ('Lamia — Part II', in his *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. William T. Arnold, London, Kegan Paul Trench & Co, 1884, p. 198, lnn. 229–38).

28. See, for example, Arthur S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929, pp. ix–xii ('Introduction').

29. See, for example, Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1903, pp. 449–50 (§427).

30. This is part of what lay behind Wittgenstein's disgust with most of the 'popular science' of his day: that it provided people with cheap and misguided marveling as a replacement for true wonder. As Desmond Lee reported, "he hated the pronouncements about the universe which it became fashionable for distinguished scientists to make during the twenties and thirties (Eddington and Jeans are the best-known examples). He spoke of them as 'pontificating', meaning, I think, putting on the mantle of priesthood, trying to arrogate to themselves a semi-religious status, which Wittgenstein regarded as wholly bogus" (F:II:194; see also LA:27).

ence is wrapping around us ever more tightly (see CV:57) — and giving them up would be as hard as giving up one's religion. Thus the charm of the remarkable and the paradoxical is no longer that of a parlor game — rather, it is that of the deep existential need for a wonder-surrogate. Wittgenstein summed the matter up very well in a despondent remark to Rhees:

> You can certainly expose and refute the Cantor business. You can knock the Cantor business sky high. But that won't prevent people from believing it and going on repeating it. Because it isn't for such reasons that they hold to it. (WPCR:61–2)

The point is that even if Wittgenstein had the arguments and analyses to "show… that" Cantor's transfinite paradise "is not a paradise" at all, but merely a set of confusions (LFM:103), this would have no effect on people who are so deeply attached to inhabiting that paradise that they are simply unwilling to countenance its unreality. Such people will be unable to appreciate and absorb the arguments — no matter how sound or penetrating they might be. In cases such as these it should come as no surprise that people, "when contradicted", tend to "kick with forelegs and hindlegs like some animals" (WC:338).[31]

Numerous other examples could be brought of things which Wittgenstein took to powerfully charm many of us, such as: the charm of reductions to the repellent or lowly (LA:24, WC:390, and MWL:9:9),[32]

31. This is reminiscent of Frege's exasperated complaints about how hard it is to convince philosophers of anything unfamiliar: "This way academics have of behaving reminds me of nothing so much as that of an ox confronted by a new gate: it gapes, it bellows, it tries to squeeze by sideways, but going through it — that might be dangerous" (in his *Posthumous Writings*, eds. Hans Hermes, Friedrich Kambartel, and Friedrich Kaulbach, trans. Peter Long and Roger White, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979, p. 186 ['Introduction to Logic']). I am grateful to James Klagge for pointing me to this passage.

32. Such as, according to Wittgenstein, the charm of Freud's theory of dreams. Perhaps he had in mind here that it is enormously attractive to think that even the most lofty things are really just repellent or lowly, for then I am excused for all that is repellent and lowly in myself (after all, it's not *really* any different from what is lofty in others).

or the charm of grand unifying explanations (LA:26, fn 6).[33] And just as with the charm of the mathematical realm or the charm of the paradoxical, Wittgenstein thought that each of these could be shown to have deep roots in fundamental human needs and longings. Of course, even if we are not convinced by Wittgenstein's specific diagnoses of which positions charm us and why,[34] we may still grant — and given what we know about the power of subconscious needs and desires, it would seem very reasonable to grant — that the phenomenon of distorting philosophical charm is a real one, and that its tentacles are likely to run very deep. It was against the background of these profound and subterranean desires tugging at us in our philosophizing that Wittgenstein, in 1938, declared: "Nothing is so difficult as not deceiving yourself" (CV:39).

2. The Corrective Virtues of Honesty, Humility, Courage, Strength, and Seriousness

What we must ask at this point is: if *these* are the kinds of resistance of the will that philosophy is up against, then how can philosophy have any hope of succeeding? We might worry, after all, that mere reason cannot overcome commitments which stem not from reason but from deep existential needs and yearnings. Wittgenstein's answer is that there are particular virtues of character which could enable one to overcome these kinds of philosophical attractions — virtues, unfortunately, far rarer than intellectual talent and skill.[35] For Wittgenstein there are two essential moments involved in successfully dealing with

33. Such as, according to Wittgenstein, the charm of Darwin's theory of evolution. Perhaps he had in mind here that many people have a deep need for the world to be tidy and ordered because chaos is profoundly unsettling. It is in this connection that Wittgenstein wrote in 1948 that "[w]hen philosophizing you have to descend into the old chaos & feel at home there" (CV:74). Karl Britton reported that Wittgenstein once said to him "with genuine compassion": "I am sorry for you… I see how it is: you have a tidy mind" (F:II:210).

34. And given Wittgenstein's commitment to acknowledging heterogeneity, he ought to be happy to grant that different people are likely to be charmed in different ways and by different things.

35. See, for example, F:II:9 and F:II:195.

our distorting desires for certain philosophical positions: firstly, the difficult process of coming to know the distorting needs and desires that one has, and secondly, the difficult process of overcoming them. I will discuss these two moments in turn.

2.1. The difficulty of coming to know one's philosophically distorting desires: acquiring wisdom through a combination of honesty, humility, courage, and strength

The first challenge is that of coming to know oneself and one's desires. As Wittgenstein wrote in 1937: "Whoever does not want to know themselves, their writing will be a kind of fraud" (MS:120:72v[36]). He explained further, in 1946, that "[t]he less somebody knows & understands himself the less great he is, however great may be his talent" (CV:53[37]) — and he pointed to Freud (among a handful of others) as an example of a thinker who, while highly talented, could not be *great* because he did not know himself. Wittgenstein usually used the term 'wisdom' to signify knowledge of the darker byways of the human psyche in oneself and in others — so it should come as no surprise that Wittgenstein once told Rhees that "wisdom is something I never would expect from Freud. Cleverness, certainly; but not wisdom" (CF:42).[38]

36. My translation; in this and all the following cases I am grateful to David Egan for his generous translation help and advice.

37. Compare also his well-known remarks to Russell from 1913: "I can't write you anything about logic today. Perhaps you regard this thinking about myself as a waste of time — but how can I be a logician before I'm a human being! *Far* the most important thing is to come to terms with myself!" (WC:63).

38. See also D:103–5 where Wittgenstein accuses Spinoza of lacking self-knowledge and therefore of having merely hollow wisdom. I think that — at least sometimes — Wittgenstein's use of 'deep' and 'shallow' was related to this: a philosophy is deep if it shows an understanding of, and is therefore able to genuinely meet, our true needs and desires (as in Wittgenstein's remark: "I would like to be deep & yet I shy away from the abyss in the human heart!!–" [D:183]). Thus, I take it that he accuses both Schopenhauer (CV:41 and F:III:174) and Nietzsche (F:III:18) of being shallow because while they took themselves to be addressing precisely our deepest needs, they fell woefully short due to not having understood what those needs really are (thus, for example, of Nietzsche's "general world view" Wittgenstein "said that he didn't think there was much 'consolation' to be had from it — it was 'too shallow'" [F:III:18]). It is an interesting question whether related factors could account for Wittgenstein's considering Kant and Berkeley to be deep (F:III:174), or whether he had different matters in mind in those cases.

Talent and cleverness are necessary for being a good philosopher, but they will not help if one does not know oneself.[39] For if you do not even know what charms and attractions are secretly orienting your thinking, then you cannot plausibly hope to overcome their distorting influence. Freud served Wittgenstein as a particularly dramatic example of lack of self-knowledge, because — on Wittgenstein's reading — Freud was under the influence of charm precisely where he thought that he had overcome its influence. Thus, in 1944 Wittgenstein wrote:

> [Freud] always stresses what great forces in the mind, what strong prejudices work against the idea of psychoanalysis. But he never says what an enormous charm that idea has for people, just as it has for Freud himself. There may be strong prejudices against uncovering something nasty, but sometimes it is infinitely more *attractive* than it is repulsive (WC:390).[40]

Thus, though one certainly needs cleverness in order to succeed in addressing philosophical problems, one needs wisdom a great deal more.

39. In fact, if one lacks wisdom and the other virtues of character, increased cleverness will tend to make one worse off rather than better off, for the cleverer one is the more tools for self-deception one will have at one's disposal. As Wittgenstein wrote to Ludwig Hänsel in 1937: "[C]larity of thoughts … becomes exceedingly important where lack of clarity could lead to self-deception. I believe, for example, that I could make myself more easily understood to a person who is less intelligent than you are, since he would not have a parry so readily at his disposal, which must only then again be established as unsound. But I mean of course not that this intelligence is something bad; it is only something dangerous unless it is joined by another intelligence" (WH:299) — namely, by wisdom and the 'moral intelligence' of the other philosophical virtues. (See also Wittgenstein's similar remark to Piero Sraffa at WC:372).

40. Wittgenstein took this blindness to himself to be a great failing on Freud's part. I imagine that this is what lies behind Wittgenstein's extraordinary condemnation of Freud from 1930: "[A]s far as his [= Freud's] character is concerned he is probably a swine or something similar" (D:17; interestingly, Wittgenstein says exactly the same of himself in 1937 [WH:305]).

This explains Wittgenstein's 1931 thought about the possibility of using a certain common German proverb as the epigraph for his new book: "I could choose as the motto for my book: A fool can ask more than ten wise men can answer" — to which he immediately added: "Actually it should be 'ten clever men'" (MS:109:288[41]). The fool can indeed stump ten merely *clever* men, but precisely the *wise* man will be able to tell where the fool has been misled because he understands the strings tugging at the fool's heart.

So one must know oneself and one's desires if one wants to be able overcome the resistances of one's will — in short, one must be honest with oneself about oneself. But this is hard. In March 1937 Wittgenstein exclaimed in his diary: "How difficult it is to know oneself, to honestly admit what one is!" (D:221).[42] Three days later he explained: "To know oneself is horrible, because one simultaneously recognizes the living demand &, that one does not satisfy it" (D:221). In his philosophical notebooks from the same time he touched on this theme again, speaking of "those who do not want to descend into themselves, because it is too painful" (MS:120:72v[43]). Later, in 1944, he wrote to Norman Malcolm that "it is… difficult to think, or *try* to think, really honestly about your life & other people's lives" because "thinking about these things is … often downright nasty. And when it's nasty then it's *most* important" (WC:370). Of course, there are as many reasons why it is nasty to genuinely know ourselves as there are failings and shameful truths waiting to be known. But the difficulty of self-knowledge most relevant to this discussion is that of truly admitting to ourselves how profoundly dependent we are upon certain delusions. It is terribly hard to have to acknowledge how utterly our happiness — so often — relies on illusions, the shattering of which would leave us lost and hopeless.

41. My translation.

42. This theme can be traced back to the very first Western philosopher: when Thales was asked "What is difficult?", he replied, "To know oneself" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol I, trans. R.D. Hicks, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1959, p. 37 [I:36]; I have amended the punctuation).

43. My translation.

It is terrible to have to acknowledge how fragile our happiness is, how weak we must be to be so beholden to illusion for that happiness, and how far this weakness makes us slaves of untruth and self-deception.

What would it take, then, in order to overcome the difficulty, horror, or just plain nastiness, of coming to know ourselves? According to Wittgenstein this demands a combination of humility and courage: no one could bear to truly know themselves "unless they want to humiliate themselves through & through" (D:221), and "[w]ithout a little courage one can't even write a sensible remark about oneself" (D:9). Humility is the primary virtue that is needed here, for there are two central forms of humility and either would be sufficient to greatly lessen the pain involved in honest self-knowledge. On the one hand, being humble can mean being cognizant of your fallibility — and to the degree that you do not have delusions of perfection you will be less disappointed when confronted by your failings and shortcomings.[44] On the other hand, being humble can mean being unpreoccupied with yourself — and to the degree that you are not the center of your own concerns it will be less distressing for you to discover your flaws and weaknesses.[45] Thus humility — in both its forms — takes the sting out of self-awareness, and the truly humble person will be free to know themselves without any resistance of the will. This is why, in 1931, Wittgenstein observed that "[s]elf-recognition & humility is one" (D:105).

44. I am reminded of Miguel de Molinos' rebuke: "If you become disturbed when you succumb to some vice or negligence, then take it as a manifest sign that secret pride still reigns in your soul. Did you think that you would no longer succumb to vices and weaknesses? … Humble yourself" (*The Spiritual Guide*, trans. Robert P. Baird, New York, Paulist Press, 2010, p. 133 [Bk II, §§125–6]). Closely related to the humility of recognizing one's own fallibility is the quality of *self-forgiveness* — a kind of compassion towards oneself and one's failings — which would also help ease the way to honest self-knowledge. This quality, however, was so far from Wittgenstein's own character (see, for example, his outburst to Fania Pascal at F:II:240), that I doubt it even occurred to him in this connection.

45. See Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, *Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007, pp. 240–1 (chap. 9).

But it is possible to come to know ourselves even without humility, or at least without enough of it. For we can force our way through to such knowledge by means of a combination of strength and courage: by confronting head-on our shame, self-disgust, and self-disappointment, and powering through them despite the pain they cause us. When Wittgenstein speaks of courage he most often seems to have in mind a *willingness* to endure suffering,[46] and when he speaks of strength he means the *capacity* to endure suffering (or "an enormous capacity for suffering" [CV:81], as he put it in 1948). Neither willingness alone, nor capacity alone, would be sufficient to allow us to face the unflattering truth about ourselves. Rather, honest self-knowledge demands both the willingness and the capacity to bear the pain of shattered illusions. It should therefore come as no surprise that Wittgenstein often spoke of courage and strength in the same breath. In 1946, for example — in precisely the context of the difficulty of self-knowledge — he confessed: "I have neither the courage nor the strength … to look the facts of my life straight in the face" (MS133:7r[47]). To the degree that we lack humility, then, we can only come to the wisdom of self-knowledge if we are both courageous and strong — that is, if we are both willing and able to bear the disappointing and shameful truths which honest introspection is likely to uncover.

2.2. *The difficulty of overcoming one's philosophically distorting desires: living delusionlessly through heroic courage, strength, and seriousness*

It is all very well to attain a degree of self-knowledge regarding our philosophically distorting desires — but merely to know one's desires is not yet to be able to neutralize them so as to avoid their deleterious

46. It must be remembered, after all, that courage is not limited solely to acting despite fear, but often also refers to acting despite pain, suffering, and distress. As Henry Sidgwick — another Cambridge philosopher — had already observed, "[w]e sometimes… call those who bear pain unflinchingly, courageous" (*The Methods of Ethics*, London, Macmillan & Co, 1907, p. 332 [Bk III, chap. X, sec 1]; I have added the comma for the sake of clarity).

47. My translation. See also MS117:132v for another example of Wittgenstein mentioning courage and strength together.

effects on our thinking. We can do that either by eliminating the culpable desires entirely, or else by resisting their pull despite their continued existence and power. Because it is extremely difficult to know how to go about uprooting and eradicating a given desire,[48] Wittgenstein concentrates on the option of accepting that such distorting desires exist in us but attempting to withstand or overcome the force that they exert. As he wrote in 1939/40: "One cannot speak the truth … if one has not yet conquered oneself. One cannot speak it — but not, because one is still not clever enough" (CV:41). The problem is not our lack of intelligence, but the fact that we "live … in untruthfulness" (CV:41) — that is, we live steeped in our various inclinations, yearnings, and needs for the world to be a certain way, and these steer our thinking with no regard for truth. It is these desires whose influence the good philosopher must be able to conquer.

Now, just as courage is integral to seeing ourselves as we really are rather than as we would like ourselves to be, so too courage is necessary for seeing the world as it really is rather than as we would wish it — that is, for giving up ways of thinking that are rooted in our distorting desires.[49] Thus, Drury reports that: "Once when I was talking to Wittgenstein about McTaggart's book *The Nature of Existence*[50]

48. Wittgenstein seems to think that the most profound philosophically distorting desires can only be eradicated by means of society-wide shifts in mode of life, over which no one person has control (see RFM:II:23, CV:70–1, and F:II:210).

49. Compare Nietzsche: "[T]he same courage that it takes to know oneself also teaches us to look at life without whims: and vice versa" (*Writings from the Early Notebooks*, eds. Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas, trans. Ladislaus Löb, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 196 [32(67)]). After all, being aware that things are other than we would like them to be — whether in the world or in ourselves — is a fairly traditional understanding of what suffering amounts to. For example, Schopenhauer — one of Wittgenstein's first philosophical influences — characterized suffering as "a dissatisfaction with one's condition" (*The World as Will and Representation*, vol I, trans. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 336 [§56]).

50. John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, Vols I–II, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1921 and 1927.

he said to me: 'I realize that for some people to have to forsake this kind of thinking demands of them an heroic courage'" (F:III:175).[51] And on another occasion Wittgenstein told Drury: "I think I can see very well what Schopenhauer got out of his philosophy … For some people it would require a heroic effort to give up this sort of writing" (F:III:195[52]). It takes immense courage to deny oneself — in the name of truth, honesty, and clarity — the positions and beliefs that one seems for all the world to *need*, the "truths" which seem to be necessary to make the world a minimally tolerable place. And when courage is exhibited to a high enough degree, it is heroic. Thus, if we are to avoid capitulation to our philosophically distorting desires, what is demanded is heroic courage. In this vein Wittgenstein wrote in his diary in 1931 that to look at "the world … as it is" — rather than allowing oneself to be "lull[ed] … into a beautiful dream" — is to look at "the world … like a hero" (D:81).

As before, this courage (this *willingness* to suffer the truth) can only become effective in allowing us to actually face reality, if it is coupled with inner strength (the *capacity* to suffer the truth). This is why both strength and courage are needed in order to resist the pull of those deep desires which lead us philosophically astray. And this is why, in a 1938 letter to Ludwig Hänsel, Wittgenstein ended with the exhortation: "May you have the strength not to fool yourself" (WH:313).

There is a third virtue — namely, seriousness — which Wittgenstein sometimes mentions, and which is necessary to complete the trinity of "endurance-virtues", in addition to courage and strength. In 1950 Bouwsma asked Wittgenstein what he meant when he called a thinker "serious", and Wittgenstein replied that he meant "a man who endured conflict and struggle, who came back again and again to these matters.

51. When Wittgenstein's own commitment to the Tractarian view of the world came under powerful and sustained attack by Frank Ramsey — during their regular discussions in 1929 — Wittgenstein wrote: "[My] discussions with Ramsey … train me in a certain courage in thinking" (MS:105:4 [my translation]; see also PI:Preface).

52. It is also possible that this is an alternative account of the previous conversation.

He wrestles" (F:IV:116). How, then, does this differ from a courageous and strong person? We find a potential clue in a self-reproach which Wittgenstein noted in his diary in 1936: "My work (my philosophical work) is … lacking in seriousness & love of truth" (D:153). The point, I take it, is that courage can be deployed in ways that are not serious. For example, to be willing to expose oneself to suffering merely for the thrill of it, or in order to carry out a vendetta, or so as to impress others, takes genuine courage, but is entirely frivolous. By contrast, to be willing to endure suffering for a good reason — such as for love of truth — is to be courageous in a *serious* manner. And it is only this kind of serious strength and courage — strength and courage yoked to love of truth and clarity — that will allow a philosopher to overcome his or her distorting desires and to be genuinely open to seeing reality as it is, however it is.

2.3. The cost of good thinking and the centrality of the endurance of suffering

In a letter to Malcolm from 1944 Wittgenstein warned darkly that "[y]ou can't think decently if you don't want to hurt yourself" (WC:370). Presumably he meant that good thinking demands — if not that we actively desire to hurt ourselves — at least that we be fully willing to be hurt. After all, we have seen that almost all the core philosophical virtues orbit around the endurance of the suffering that is demanded by honesty.[53]

This fact begins to explain a theme to which Wittgenstein returned again and again: the *cost* of good thought. In 1937 he exclaimed that "[t]o produce something good <u>costs</u> a lot, after all!" (WH:295). And in a striking development of this idea in 1946 he added: "You could attach prices to ideas. Some cost a lot some little … And how do you pay for

53. The capacity to endure suffering had loomed large in Wittgenstein's thought even as far back as 1912, when Russell reported in a letter that "Wittgenstein… said how he admired the text 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul' and… said he thought it depended… on suffering and the power to endure it." (Quoted in Brian McGuinness, *Young Ludwig: Wittgenstein's Life 1889–1921*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005, p. 113 [chap 4]; referring to Mark 8:36).

ideas? I believe: with courage" (CV:60[54]). As we have seen in the preceding discussion, the price we pay for good philosophizing is at least twofold: first of all the suffering involved in courageous self-knowledge (i.e. in coming to know our philosophically distorting desires), and secondly the suffering involved in courageous self-overcoming (i.e. in resisting those distorting desires so as to see the world as it actually is). Given the centrality of suffering and the willingness to endure it in honest philosophical thinking it makes sense that Wittgenstein should insist that good thought costs much and that courage is the currency with which we pay for it.

Wittgenstein worried, however, that the contemporary age does not sufficiently value the virtues of strength and courage. As he wrote in 1948: in the "present day … [the c]apacity for suffering is not rated highly, since there are not supposed to be any sufferings" (CV:81).[55] Indeed, Rhees speaks of "how often Wittgenstein … criticis[ed] … contemporary education of children … [for] not see[ing] a need to make children able to bear suffering"[56]. In this day and age, then, it is essential that aspiring philosophers take their moral education into their own hands, and train themselves in endurance in whatever ways they can — for this is the cost of good thought, and this is what lies at the heart of all the philosophical virtues.[57]

3. Difficulties of the Will Regarding Philosophical Form and the Virtues Needed to Overcome Them

Section 1 looked at the difficulties posed by desires for the truth of particular philosophical positions. Those, however, are not the only kinds of desire that tend to lead us astray in our philosophizing. Wittgenstein was equally concerned about the ways in which desires to engage in certain philosophical forms, styles, and projects can also lead to significant distortions in our philosophy — namely, in cases when they are for some reason inappropriate, but we desire them nonetheless. It is to these manifestations of philosophy's difficulties of the will, and to the

54. For further references to the cost of good thought, see also CV:66, D:139, WC:390, and F:III:80.

55. Wittgenstein saw this de-emphasization of suffering and endurance as being a result of the contemporary delusion that science and technology are on the way to eradicating all suffering (see CV:46 and CV:8).

56. Rush Rhees, 'Notes Dated 27/11/73', Rush Rhees Collection, Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University, (SU/PC/1/86). See also CV:81. Presumably the notorious harshness of Wittgenstein's 1920's experiment in primary school teaching (see Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1990, chap. 9) derived — at least in part — from this deeply held belief that training children to endure suffering, rather than to avoid it, is an integral aspect of early education. Wittgenstein's views on the place of suffering and endurance in education stood in sharp contrast to Russell's (see, for example, Russell's short essay 'Should Children be Happy?', in his *Mortals and Others: American Essays 1931–1935*, ed. Harry Ruja, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 100–1). Indeed, Wittgenstein's pedagogical philosophy was so alien to Russell that when Wittgenstein once complained "with disgust" that "school-children" these days "were simply taught to enjoy themselves", Rhees reports that Russell dismissed this as merely "an amusing bit of crankiness" on Wittgenstein's part (Rush Rhees, 'Notes Dated 25/11/73', ibid.). Wittgenstein, however, could not have been more serious. So much so that Drury recounts — rather shockingly — that "after he [= Wittgenstein] had conversations with some young persons who had survived the horrors of a concentration camp he said: 'I was able to make myself understood at once, you see they had been *well educated*'" (Maurice O'Connor Drury, *The Selected Writings of Maurice O'Connor Drury on Wittgenstein, Philosophy, Religion and Psychiatry*, ed. John Hayes, London, Bloomsbury Academic, p. 215 [Letter to Rush Rhees, Spring 1966]).

57. I am put in mind of Thomas Merton's initial reaction to attempting St. Ignatius of Loyola's first spiritual exercise: "I vaguely remember fixing my mind on this notion of indifference to all created things in themselves, to sickness and health, and being mildly appalled. Who was I to understand such a thing? If I got a cold I nearly choked myself with aspirins and hot lemonade, and dived into bed with undisguised alarm" (*The Seven Storey Mountain*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1990, p.269 [pt. three, chap. 1, sec ii]). The attitude recalled by Merton illustrates exactly what Wittgenstein was so concerned about: the way in which the least suffering — or even discomfort — has become utterly intolerable to many, so that it must immediately be eased or eradicated as far as possible. The point is not that suffering should be embraced for its own sake, but rather that a certain kind of appalled shrinking from life's lesser sufferings is a sure sign that one is not ready to endure the more profound sufferings of truly honest philosophizing. Moreover, regular practice in submitting to minor sufferings is an essential component of training oneself to develop greater potential for endurance — as Śāntideva wrote: "There is nothing which remains difficult if it is practised. So, through practice with slight pain, even great pain becomes bearable" (*The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 51 [VI:14]; I have slightly amended the translation).

virtues needed to overcome them, that I turn in this section — though rather more briefly, having already laid most of the groundwork.

In the preface to his *Fables in Prose*, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote that "[h]aving duly reflected on the theory of fable, I was surprised that the simple course of Aesop, which leads directly to truth, should be deserted by the moderns for the by-path of a flowery and gossiping mode of narrative".[58] In the margins of his copy, Wittgenstein responded by jotting:

> Can one take something as a model merely because it is good? Doesn't one often *have* to give what is less good, because one's own talent and the circumstances don't allow the greater one? Should everyone try, and is it possible, at all times to write a lapidary style?! If anyone tries to do this at the wrong time, he gives only artificial lapidarity.[59]

Not every good and valuable style or project should act as a model for our emulation, because not every such style or project is open to us. In his marginal note Wittgenstein identified two factors that could limit the forms or tasks that it might be appropriate for a person to take on: firstly "one's own talent", and secondly "the circumstances". I will briefly discuss each of these limiting factors in turn, and the virtues involved in the resignation that they demand.

58. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Extract on the Subject of Fable', in his *Fables and Epigrams; with Essays on Fable and Epigram*, London, John and H. L. Hunt, 1825, p. vii; I have silently modernized the spelling of the translation.

59. Quoted and translated by Rush Rhees in his 'Correspondence and Comment [Letter 3]', *The Human World*, Nos. 15–6, May–August 1974, p. 156; I have slightly amended the translation. See also the final remark in Wittgenstein's 1937 diary: "One is right to fear the spirits even of great men. And also those of good people. For what produced well-being in him can effect ill-being in me" (D:251).

3.1. Refraining from philosophical styles and projects made inappropriate by lack of talent

In the midst of an acrimonious argument with Alice Ambrose — in May 1935 — Wittgenstein wrote of her to G. E. Moore, saying:

> I think you have no idea in what a serious situation she is … [S]he is now actually standing at a crossroad. One road leading to perpetual misjudging of her intellectual powers and thereby to hurt pride and vanity[60] etc. etc. The other would lead her to a knowledge of her own capacities and that *always* has good consequences." (WC:242)

What are the good consequences that invariably follow from knowledge of one's own capacities? At least one major consequence that Wittgenstein would have had in mind is the resultant avoidance of that for which one is not equipped. Different philosophical forms and different philosophical tasks demand different degrees and kinds of talent in order to be successfully undertaken. So being conscious of our own degrees and kinds of talent will help us to ensure that we do not take on styles or projects to which we could never do justice.

In a 1937 letter to Hänsel, Wittgenstein illustrated this dynamic in his own case, referring to the way he had to resign himself not to write polemics against contemporary popular science, despite taking the latter to be nothing less than "an abomination" (F:III:205):

> I … have thoughts (& not bad ones) about the popular-scientific scribbling of today's scientists; but I am barred from communicating my opinions to people in the form of polemic writings. I don't have the requisite gift[61]; & must get my conviction, which is important to me, across

60. Interestingly, Wittgenstein once said to Drury: "Wounded vanity is the most terrible force in the world. The source of the greatest evil" (F:III:172).

61. Regarding what Wittgenstein took good polemical writing to consist in, see CC:4/9/1945 and WC:410.

> in another, far less direct manner.[62] — Just because someone else can do it well, I can<u>not</u> [necessarily therefore] do it myself; & <u>just because</u> yet someone else <u>does</u> it badly, I am not [therefore] allowed to do it badly, too!" (WH:297)[63]

The strong desire to write in a certain philosophical style or to undertake a certain philosophical task may come from a genuine and correct sense of the value of that form or of the importance of that project. But even so, to give in to this desire when one does not have the requisite degree or kind of talent required to do a truly good job, would be to act "indecently" (WH:297). The indecency lies in the fact that engaging in what is bound to be a substandard undertaking would involve cheating oneself, cheating one's audience, and — in the end — cheating the very project that one tries to undertake and which one ostensibly values. Thus, when Malcolm received his PhD, Wittgenstein wrote to him: "[M]ay you not cheat either yourself or your students", and concluded his letter by saying: "I wish you good not necessarily clever thoughts, & decency that won't come out in the wash" (WC:326). It is through secure decency that we resist the temptation to cheat ourselves and others.

This demand that we not cheat ourselves or others applies to everyone, of course; but the less talent one has, the more limited will be the

62. In fact — quite remarkably — Wittgenstein's entire later philosophical oeuvre could be seen as this "far less direct manner", for Wittgenstein said to Bouwsma in 1949 that the "consummation of philosophy" might simply be "fine popular science" (F:IV:106).

63. I have added the phrases in square brackets for the sake of clarity. For a similar sentiment — this time regarding his need to hold back from poetry due to being a "second-rate poet" — see MS:117:193. To get a sense of how very serious Wittgenstein was about this kind of restraint, compare also the stunning 1948 passage in which he pondered what he considered to be Gustav Mahler's peculiar and difficult situation: "If it is true, as I believe, that Mahler's music is worthless, the question is what I think he should have done with his talent. For quite obviously it took *a string of very rare talents* to produce this bad music. Should he, say, have written his symphonies & burnt them? Or should he have done himself violence & not have written them?" (CV:77–8; see also the continuation of the passage).

range of styles and tasks properly available to one, and the more one will need to restrain one's temptation to act beyond one's capabilities.

Exactly as we saw in Section 2, the process of combatting these distorting desires — this time desires regarding styles and tasks rather than regarding particular positions — will fall into two stages: first self-knowledge and then self-overcoming. Thus, we will need to begin by acknowledging the degrees and kinds of talent we actually have — despite the fact that they may be painfully smaller and different to those we would have liked to have, and indeed painfully smaller and different to those we may have flattered ourselves that we did have. As we saw above, this kind of honest self-assessment is enormously difficult. So much so, that Oswald Spengler — a thinker much admired by Wittgenstein — could claim that "[t]he most bitter thing in life is to have to say that one is not equal to a task, that one is not a great scholar, soldier, or artist. But inner dignity demands that one say it."[64]

After the stage of self-knowledge must come that of self-overcoming: having acknowledged our limitations, if we discover that we do not have the talent to properly fulfil the styles and tasks to which we are attracted, we must force ourselves to turn aside from those styles and tasks regardless of the strength of their pull upon us, and regardless of whatever merit they may have in themselves. Karl Kraus — another of Wittgenstein's early influences — summed up Wittgenstein's sentiment in a typically pithy aphorism: "So many people write because they lack the character not to."[65] By this point it should come as no surprise what kind of character — that is, which virtues — Wittgenstein thought would be needed for this kind of self-assessment and self-restraint. He told Hänsel that turning aside from a project because one is not sufficiently fitted for it "takes strength and courage" (WH:297).

Sometime in the 1930's Wittgenstein said to Drury: "Of one thing I am certain. The religion of the future will have to be extremely ascetic;

64. In his *Aphorisms*, trans. Gisela Koch-Weser O'Brien, Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1967, §16 ('On Fate').

65. Karl Kraus, *Dicta and Contradicta*, trans. Jonathan McVity, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2001, §627 (chap 6).

and by that I don't mean just going without food and drink." Drury later recalled of himself that when Wittgenstein made that remark, "I [= Drury] seemed to sense for the first time in my life the idea of an asceticism of the intellect" (F:III:203). It turns out that to be a good philosopher demands an immense asceticism of the intellect — and the less talented one is, the more such restraint is demanded.

3.2. Refraining from philosophical styles and projects made inappropriate by circumstances

So much for the ways in which talent might limit the kinds of philosophical endeavor we can decently undertake. How might external circumstances also limit the remit of proper philosophical engagement, and therefore also lead to difficulties of the will when our desires push against such limits? The circumstances which most concerned Wittgenstein in this connection were *temporal* circumstances: the character of the age into which we have been born and in which we are philosophizing. Wittgenstein observed that we are not free to philosophize however we wish, for if our philosophizing is to be done in good faith then it must be done in a manner that is responsive to where philosophy has arrived in the era in which we are thinking and writing.

The development of philosophy impinges upon the ways in which we can legitimately philosophize, for after a significant philosophical revolution we are not free simply to continue thinking and writing just like before, as though nothing had happened. Thus, for example, after Kant, philosophers cannot legitimately continue to engage in straightforward metaphysical speculations — however strong their inclination to do so might be — at least not without seriously taking Kant's critique of metaphysics into account. In short, there is something dishonest about philosophizing as though one does not live in the age in which one actually lives.[66] Thus, when Drury mentioned to

66. And if not dishonest, then perhaps absurd — in the vein of Pierre Menard's attempt to (re)write *Don Quixote* in the 20th century (see Jorge Luis Borges, 'Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote', trans. J.E.I., in Borges' *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings*, USA, New Directions, 2007, pp. 36–44).

Wittgenstein that their Cambridge contemporary, Frederick Tennant, had been trying "to revive in a complicated way the 'argument from design'",[67] Wittgenstein replied: "You know I am not one to praise this present age, but that does sound to me as being 'old-fashioned' in a bad sense" (F:III:182). I take Wittgenstein's complaint against Tennant to be that the latter was philosophizing as though the medieval period had never come to a close, and Wittgenstein did not need to be a fan of modernity in order to believe that there was something deeply wrong with philosophizing as though one were not a modern.[68]

Indeed, insensitivity to one's philosophical circumstances was the focus of Wittgenstein's very first philosophical publication — his damning 1912 review of Peter Coffey's book, *The Science of Logic*.[69] Wittgenstein opened his review with the following lament:

> In no branch of learning can an author disregard the results of honest research with so much impunity as he can in Philosophy and Logic. To this circumstance we owe the publication of such a book as Mr. Coffey's "Science of Logic": and only as a typical example of the work of many logicians of to-day does this book deserve consideration. The author's Logic is that of the scholastic philosophers, and he makes all their mistakes …. (PO:2–3)

The problem — as Wittgenstein later understood it — is that the forms which make for greatness in one age do not necessarily do so in

67. See particularly F. R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology, vol* II*: The World, the Soul, and God*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956.

68. In thinking about these things Wittgenstein no doubt had in mind Spengler's insistence that on approaching any task — including philosophical tasks — a person "must begin by asking himself… what to-day is possible and what he must forbid himself", because whoever fails to acknowledge the era into which they have been born and the limitations which that imposes must remain "either a simpleton, a charlatan, or a pedant" (in his *The Decline of the West (Complete in One Volume)*, New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1932, p. 44 [vol I, chap. I, sec XV]; I have slightly amended the translation).

69. P. Coffey, *The Science of Logic: An Inquiry into the Principles of Accurate Thought and Scientific Method (In Two Volumes)*, London, Longmans Green & Co, 1912.

another. He considered this to be true not just for philosophy but for all cultural productions. Thus in 1930 he mused that:

> Because … [at] a particular period of time, a particular race associates its pathos with very particular ways of acting, people are led astray & believe that the greatness, significance lies necessarily in that way of acting. And this belief is always reduced to absurdity just when a transvaluation of values comes about through an upheaval, that is, when true pathos now settles upon another way of acting. Then — probably always — the old, now worthless bills remain in circulation for some time & people who are not quite honest pass them off as great & significant until one finds the new insight once again trivial & says 'of course these old bills are worthless.' (D:31–3)

For Wittgenstein, every genuine philosophical revolution amounts to a "transvaluation of values."[70] To continue to philosophize in the old ways even after such a revolution has taken place is therefore to dishonestly trade on worthless bills.

What, then, is one to do if one finds oneself born in the wrong age, so to speak — powerfully attracted to a form of philosophy or philosophical project which has been left behind? Exactly as we would expect, Wittgenstein insists that such circumstances call for "genuine & strong characters" who will "simply turn away from" the inappropriate field (CV:8). Again we find the same two moments: one must first of all be genuine — in the sense of honest and not self-deceiving — for one needs to begin by recognizing that the circumstances really are such that they make various highly desirable philosophical styles and projects illegitimate; and then one must be strong — for once one has recognized that those philosophical styles and projects are illegitimate, one needs the self-control to deny them to oneself. In this short phrase, then, we see Wittgenstein once again summarize the complex

70. As he wrote in 1937: "If I want to teach … a new movement of thought, then my purpose is a 're-valuation of values'" (MS:120:145r; my translation).

of philosophical virtues that we have seen are needed to overcome the various difficulties of the will in philosophy — namely: first self-knowledge, and then self-overcoming.

4. The Place of the Philosophical Virtues in Philosophical Pedagogy

To the degree that the philosophical virtues — such as honesty, humility, courage, and strength — are necessary for the practice of good philosophy, they should also be given a significant place in philosophical pedagogy. And fortunately, ensuring that the philosophical virtues are not ignored in philosophical education is something that can be achieved even by philosophers who are relatively lacking in the talents and skills necessary for the attainment of truly significant philosophical achievements. In fact, this pedagogical role may be the principal task that such philosophers have. This, at least, was Wittgenstein's judgement — in 1937 — of the value of G. E. Moore as a philosopher:

> Though he [= Moore] is a <u>thinker</u> he never made — as far as I can judge — a decisive discovery in philosophy.[71] But in his vocation as a teacher he has been <u>more</u> useful than many others who had a decidedly greater talent than he. And this simply through his honesty. Or one could also say, through his seriousness, for this amounts to the same here … [A] lecture by Moore is anything but entertaining for he acknowledges himself as one who is gnawing & not yet clear. (He is gnawing during the lecture.)[72] … [But even] the least clever learns from him: 1.) <u>how difficult it is</u> to see the truth & 2.) that one need not say

71. For later temperings of this judgement, however, see WPCR:53, WC:365, and F:III:88.

72. Back in 1913 this quality — Moore's inconclusive and repetitive gnawing — had driven the young Wittgenstein to distraction. As Malcolm recorded, Wittgenstein "said that he had attended Moore's lectures only a few times, when he was a student at Cambridge before World War I, because he could not bear the repetitiousness that always characterized them" (F:III:87–8).

> one understands what one does not understand. (WH:299–301[73])

Thus, even if one does not have enormous talent one's philosophizing could nonetheless have the value of modeling the core philosophical virtues, thereby teaching one's students something far more important for their philosophical growth than any particular truths, insights, or techniques. Of course, to the degree that when teaching philosophy one is actively engaged in philosophizing, one will have the opportunity to exemplify — in the range of ways described above — all the virtues essential to good philosophizing. But lack of special philosophical talent — talent to the degree that allows one to make genuine progress in philosophy — will call upon those same virtues in special ways.

The most obvious is the way in which honesty is called for. Namely, the honesty not to fool oneself into thinking that one has found the answers one is looking for when one has not, and the honesty to be able to admit this to others as well. This honesty is essential for a teacher of philosophy, but not easy to come by — as Wittgenstein wrote to Charles Stevenson in 1934:

> I hope you'll enjoy teaching; but if you're any good at it I think your enjoyment will be kept down somewhat by the discovery of how *enormously* difficult it is to get clear enough about a thing to be able to explain it to another man without cheating him and yourself. I mean that if you don't find it *overwhelmingly* difficult to teach philosophy you won't be much good at it. For I imagine that 'rock-bottom honesty', as you call it, is damn difficult to acquire. (WC:233[74])

73. See the entire letter for context. Wittgenstein was not alone in this assessment of Moore's powerful pedagogical impact. Compare, for example, the following remarks by Wittgenstein's and Moore's Cambridge colleague, Richard Braithwaite: "[I]n his public character, Moore was a philosopher and nothing but a philosopher. In this is included being an educator of philosophers: Moore's single-minded and passionate devotion to the search for truth inspired all who came into contact with him" (in his 'George Edward Moore, 1873–1958', in *G. E. Moore: Essays in Retrospect*, eds. Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1970, p. 30). And compare also the following report by Alice Ambrose, a student of both Wittgenstein's and Moore's: "Moore in his lectures was self-effacing. Criticisms he put forward of claims he himself had made, say in a previous lecture, could as well have been directed to an anonymous philosopher whose mistakes called for correction" ('Moore and Wittgenstein as Teachers', *Teaching Philosophy*, 12:2, June 1989, p. 107).

To be a good teacher you must not fool yourself or your students regarding how clear you are in your ideas or how far you have got in your thinking; but to avoid fooling yourself or your students in these ways you must be brutally honest, and be so in public; to be publically honest about your lack of clarity and lack of understanding, however, is horribly difficult. For this reason being a good teacher will rarely be pleasant. And, for this reason — and all those discussed above — this honesty in teaching will demand both courage and strength. The teacher of philosophy who is not yet clear or certain — though they may not be able to convey to their students the final word on the nature of numbers or on the morality of abortion — has an unsurpassed opportunity to model for their students the essential virtues of honesty, humility, courage, and strength.[75]

More than this, though, not yet having managed to reach firm philosophical conclusions — being stuck groping towards the truth without having arrived — demands courage in another way too. Namely, the courage to push on with one's philosophizing despite the disorienting lostness of not having answers and not being sure that one will

74. He wrote to Malcolm in 1940 along similar lines: "[M]ay you not cheat either yourself or your students. Because, unless I'm very much mistaken, that's what will be expected from you. And it will be very difficult not to do it, & perhaps impossible; & in this case: may you have the strength to quit. This ends today's sermon" (WC:326). And a little earlier — in 1933 — he had written to Stevenson as follows: "I know that, as a professor of philosophy, you've got to profess to understand what everyone meant when they said ---. But you aren't a professor, & so just enjoy your freedom!" (WC:218).

75. Interestingly, Wittgenstein saw himself as lacking this honesty in his own teaching, as he confided to his diary in 1936: "[I]n my lectures I have also cheated often by pretending to already understand something while I was still hoping that it would become clear to me" (D:153; and see also WH:295 and WH:303).

ever arrive at them. For as Wittgenstein observes, the limbo of philosophical uncertainty can be deeply existentially unsettling. In his early letters to Russell in 1913, Wittgenstein felt that he was faced with just the kind of existential disorientation that results from insufficient talent. He wrote:

> What I feel is the curse of all those who have only half a talent; it is like a man who leads you along a dark corridor with a light and just when you are in the middle of it the light goes out and you are left alone. (WC:39)

Just a few letters later, Wittgenstein then spoke of courage as what was needed to move forward despite this lonely darkness: "Shall I get anything out??! It would be awful if I did not & all my work would be lost. However I am not losing courage & go on thinking" (WC:45). And a few letters later still: "I have all sorts of ideas for a solution of the problem but could not yet arrive at anything definite. However I don't lose courage & go on thinking" (WC:49[76]). This is presumably what lies behind Wittgenstein's candid assessment of Norman Malcolm as a philosopher. In 1949 he told Bouwsma that "Malcolm … had not much talent, but he did not give up."[77] Wittgenstein meant this as a full-throated compliment — for character is more important in philosophy than talent, and it takes significant courage to refuse to give up one's thought-paths despite seeing no settled solutions anywhere on the horizon.[78]

76. See also BT:121:427 for a very similar use of 'courage' in a surprisingly different context.

77. O.K. Bouwsma, 'Conversations with Wittgenstein', Typescript, p. 22; in The Rush Rhees Collection, Richard Burton Archives, University of Swansea, call mark: UNI/SU/PC/1/8/7 (this line was edited out of the published edition of Bouwsma's notes, and belongs in the ellipsis at F:IV:113).

78. Compare also Wittgenstein's praise of Alice Ambrose in the recommendation letter he wrote for her in April 1935: "I … have found her indefatigable in trying to understand the extremely difficult problems we have been discussing" (CC:25/4/1935).

Since honesty, humility, courage, and strength are the four principal philosophical virtues integral to the successful practice of philosophy by those who *do* have talent, it turns out that in demonstrating honesty, humility, courage, and strength in their own philosophical 'gnawing', even teachers of philosophy who lack significant talent will nonetheless have something essential to pass on to their students — including even students who are more talented than them.[79]

This explains how Wittgenstein can talk of the relation between the cost of a thought and its value in bi-conditional terms: "[I]f you write something, let it cost you much. Then there'll definitely be something to it. Otherwise definitely not" (WH:297). It is clear why, if a thought has *not* cost much, it will likely not be of much philosophical value — for given all our distorting desires, philosophically valuable thoughts are very unlikely to be obtained without the prior difficult acquisition of the philosophical virtues. But why should it be that just because a thought *has* cost a lot, it will necessarily be valuable? Surely if a person entirely lacks the requisite philosophical talents and skills, their thoughts might not be worth much, despite the cost of honesty and courage they paid to obtain them. The explanation, I think, is that a thought that genuinely cost a lot to attain, will — quite apart from whatever value it may or may not have as a philosophical insight — bear the significant value of embodying and exemplifying for others the essential but all-too-rare philosophical virtues. And that will make it valuable, regardless of its philosophical content. As Wittgenstein said: "Strangely, even in a lecture a person affects more through the example he gives than through the stated opinions" (WH:301), for "disingenuousness breeds disingenuousness & ingenuousness breeds ingenuousness" (WH:303).[80]

79. And bear in mind that if, by Wittgenstein's lights, the category of 'those who lack significant talent' included a philosopher such as G.E. Moore, it will surely also include the vast majority of those teaching philosophy at universities today (to say the least).

80. Oswald Spengler expressed a similar opinion about the 'exemplary' power of teachers: "The influence of a genuine educator lies in what he is rather than in what he says. This is the way in which every good society has always

Remarkably, it was this role of positively affecting people's character that Wittgenstein — at least on one occasion — claimed to be what truly made someone a philosopher. When speaking of Schopenhauer to Theodore Redpath, Wittgenstein once exclaimed: "Well, he *was* a philosopher." And when Redpath asked him what he meant by that, Wittgenstein took Redpath by surprise in responding: "A teacher of manners[81]" (F:III:18).

5. A Practical Conclusion: Avoiding the Danger of Cheap Psychologizing in Philosophical Debate

What is the status of Wittgenstein's thoughts on philosophy's difficulties of the will and the philosophical virtues? Wittgenstein would surely not have counted them as a part of philosophy proper, as he considered that to consist solely in the construction of illuminating synoptic overviews of areas of linguistic and conceptual terrain. However, if we do not accept Wittgenstein's unusually narrow conception of philosophy, then the study of the philosophical virtues and vices — what they are, the roles they play in the practice of philosophy, and the ways in which they interact — could and should be counted an important part of meta-philosophy. For the kind of character a person should ideally have in order to be a good philosopher is surely just as important for an understanding of the nature and practice of philosophy as the kind of tools and methods philosophers ought to use, the aims they ought to have, and other such meta-philosophical staples.

It is also essential to note that the philosophical virtues discussed by Wittgenstein are important not just for the practice of specifically 'Wittgensteinian' philosophy. Rather, almost everything that Wittgenstein said about philosophy's difficulties of the will and the virtues of character needed to overcome them is relevant to philosophy in the vast majority of its forms, Wittgensteinian or otherwise. Confirming

educated. The eye learns faster and better than the mere intellect" (in his *Aphorisms*, trans. Gisela Koch-Weser O'Brien, Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1967, §329 ['Miscellaneous Thoughts']).

81. 'Manners' presumably in the now somewhat archaic sense of 'morals'.

this — though it hardly needs confirmation — we find that contemporaries of Wittgenstein's as diverse as Russell and Husserl were also much concerned with philosophy's difficulties of the will and its corresponding virtues.[82] Thus, for example, Russell maintained that "[c]ourage is essential to intellectual probity"[83] because "[t]he desire to establish this or that result, or generally to discover evidence for agreeable results, of whatever kind, has … been the chief obstacle to honest philosophizing."[84] And Husserl — in an urgent and earnest tone closer to Wittgenstein's — issued a call for "a heroism of reason"[85] which would involve "the courage … to accept … what really presents itself to mental insight, and … to describe it *honestly* instead of twisting its meaning".[86] Indeed, Husserl saw the demand for philosophical virtue as a quasi-religious one, for "[w]hat in religion is the probity of the heart, in philosophy is the honesty of the intellect".[87] In short, it is — quite rightly — not just Wittgenstein who harbors grave fears of our philosophical temptations, and it should not be thought that it is just Wittgensteinian philosophers who stand in need the correctives of heroic courage and honesty.

82. Though they did not dwell on them as insistently as Wittgenstein did, nor give the same account of their roles and interrelations.

83. Bertrand Russell, 'The Aims of Education', in his *Education and the Good Life*, New York, Boni & Liveright, 1926, p. 78 (Pt I, chap II).

84. Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1914, pp. 237–8 (chap VIII).

85. Edmund Husserl, 'Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man', in his *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy: Philosophy as a Rigorous Science & Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man*, trans. Quentin Lauer, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, p. 192 (Pt III). I am grateful to Kevin Mulligan for pointing me to this and the next passage.

86. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 306 [§108: third section, fourth chapter]; I have slightly amended the translation.

87. Recorded by Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, in her 'Conversations with Edmund Husserl, 1931–1938', in *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, vol. I, eds. Burt Hopkins and Steven Crowell, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 337 (Sept. 4, 1935).

The problem with all this, however, is that the practice of diagnosing the subterranean desires and vices which lead people astray in their philosophizing is a dangerous one — for it can all too easily become yet another tool which we use to cheat ourselves and others. After all, with sufficient ingenuity and imagination it is possible to come up with at least plausible suggestions of ulterior motives for holding any philosophical position at all, or for undertaking any kind of philosophical task or style. Appeal to these kinds of psychological diagnosis could then simply become a cheap way of dismissing our opponents' positions by means of *ad hominem* attack instead of substantive argument.

It should not be surprising that this danger exists. After all, given that this vision of philosophy stresses the ubiquity of the charms, temptations, and "easy ways out" which plague our philosophizing, it is only to be expected that the vision itself has the potential to become a stumbling block.[88] The recognition of the importance of the philosophical virtues to the practice of philosophy can therefore turn a substantive philosophical debate all too quickly into nothing but an exchange of accusations about how the other side is mired in various fundamental philosophical delusions and vices.[89]

One potential solution to this problem is for philosophers to take upon themselves the blanket policy never to engage in attempts to diagnose the untoward psychological roots of other people's philosophical positions. Instead they would focus solely on exposing the substantive philosophical mistakes and weaknesses of the positions with which they disagree, and on constructing what they consider to be more plausible philosophical alternatives. Wittgenstein, however, would consider this an ill-advised and overly reactionary response to the danger. After all, if we look at Wittgenstein's own practice we see that he considers the psychological diagnosis of his interlocutors' philosophical vices and temptations to be a productive and perhaps even necessary[90] aspect of philosophical discussion — as long as it does not *displace* the provision of substantive philosophical arguments. Thus the vast majority of Wittgenstein's own philosophical output is comprised of substantive philosophical investigations and analyses — and these are absolutely essential to what he is doing — but in the course of presenting these philosophical considerations he also periodically refers to the psychological traps and temptation which he takes to lie in the vicinity.[91] The mere fact that engaging in this kind of diagnosis has the potential to lead us astray does not mean that it can therefore simply be avoided.

In the end, the only thoroughgoing defence against the unphilosophical deployment of the concepts of 'charm', 'philosophical vice', and the like, is the greater development of the philosophical virtues of character in oneself. The more honest and humble one is in the recognition of one's own philosophical shortcomings, the more humble

88. Wittgenstein certainly recognized that his own way of philosophizing held a dangerous charm, both over himself and others. Regarding himself, for example, he observed in 1931 that "I am somewhat in love with my sort of movement of thought in philosophy. (And perhaps I should omit the word 'somewhat')" (D:109); and regarding others, Malcolm recounts that Wittgenstein told him, in 1939, "that he saw that I was 'charmed' by Cambridge philosophy and that it would be a pity if I went away in that condition" (F:III:64–5; by 'Cambridge philosophy' Wittgenstein meant chiefly his own philosophy, see WC:404).

89. This is the worry raised by James Klagge and Walter Ott in the conclusion of their review of Eugen Fischer's book, *Philosophical Delusion and its Therapy* (New York, Routledge, 2011). They write: "In standard philosophical arguments we are accustomed to being called wrong, and being offered reasons that we are wrong. In Fischer's view we are to be called 'deluded,' and offered explanations as to why we are deluded. But this is a dismissive response that does not take the other seriously as a rational and intentional being… [It] is an alienating response, not one likely to engage others in a discussion, rather like arguing with your spouse by saying: 'Have you skipped your Prozac?' Or: 'Are you having your period?'" (Klagge and Ott, 'Eugen Fischer, *Philosophical Delusion and its Therapy: Outline of a Philosophical Revolution*', *British Wittgenstein Society: BookNOTES*, at: http://www.britishwittgensteinsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/fischerreview.pdf [retrieved: November 19, 2016], pp. 8–9)

90. See, for example, BT:87:303.

91. For an illuminating list of such instances in *Philosophical Investigations* see James C. Klagge, *Wittgenstein in Exile*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2011, p. 25 (chap. 2).

and serious one is in valuing truth over one's own rightness, and the more strong and courageous one is in being able to face the possibility of one's own mistakenness, the less likely one will be to try to avoid genuine and substantive philosophical exchanges with one's interlocutors, and the less quickly one will therefore be tempted to shut down substantive argument in *ad hominem* ways. Indeed, the real reason that it is imperative to acknowledge and investigate the ways in which misguided temptations and desires can lead us philosophically astray is not at all so as to help us in the diagnosis of other people. Rather, it is so that we can be more conscious of the work that we must each do on ourselves in our practice and teaching of philosophy. As Wittgenstein said: "work on philosophy is actually closer to working on oneself" (BT:86:300).[92]

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CC Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Gesamtbriefwechsel/Complete Correspondence*, eds. Monika Seekircher, Brian McGuinness, and Anton Unterkircher, Charlottesville, InteLex, 2005 (using the letter's date).

CF Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Conversations on Freud', in his *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief: Compiled from Notes Taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor*, ed. Cyril Barrett, Oxford, Blackwell, 1966 (using page number).

CV Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch, Oxford, Blackwell, 1998 (using page number).

D Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Movements of Thought: Diaries 1930–1932, 1936–1937', in his *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions*, ed. & trans. James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002 (using page number).

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KLWL Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1932: from the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee*, ed. Desmond Lee, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980 (using page number).

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LFM Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939: from the Notes of R. G. Bosanquet, Norman Malcolm, Rush Rhees, and Yorick Smythies*, ed. Cora Diamond, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989 (using page number).

LRB Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Lectures on Religious Belief', in his *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief: Compiled from Notes Taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor*, ed. Cyril Barrett, Oxford, Blackwell, 1966 (using page number).

92. I would like to thank David Stern for inviting me to participate in the Obermann Center's 'Summer Seminar on Wittgenstein's 1930–33 Lectures' in 2015 — for which I prepared the first version of this paper — and to thank all the seminar participants for their helpful discussion and feedback. For valuable comments on various subsequent drafts of this paper I am grateful to David Egan, James Klagge, Kevin Mulligan, David Stern, Martin Urschel, and two anonymous referees for this journal. And for many illuminating conversations along the way I am thankful to Lochin Brouillard, Joseph Carlsmith, Yuval Dolev, Paul Franks, Richard Fumerton, Naftali Goldberg, Sol Goldberg, Elisha Mallard, Volker Munz, Alois Pichler, Christine Pountney, and Ze'ev Sultanowitz.

MS Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition*, Charlottesville, InteLex, 2003 (using item number, then page number).

MWL Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1933, from the Notes of* GE *Moore*, ed. David G. Stern, Brian Rogers, and Gabriel Citron, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016 (using manuscript volume number, then manuscript page number).

PI Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations*, trans. GEM Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009 (using section number).

PO Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical Occasions*, ed. James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1993 (using page number).

RFM Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1978 (using part number, then section number).

WC Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911–1951*, ed. Brian McGuinness, Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 2008 (using page number; I have silently corrected Wittgenstein's spelling mistakes in English).

WH Ludwig Wittgenstein and Ludwig Hänsel, 'Ludwig Hänsel–Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Friendship, 1929–1940', in Wittgenstein's *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions*, ed. & trans. James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002 (using page number).

WPCR Ludwig Wittgenstein and Rush Rhees, 'Wittgenstein's Philosophical Conversations with Rush Rhees (1939–50): from the notes of Rush Rhees', ed. Gabriel Citron, *Mind*, 124:493, January 2015 (using page number).