This is to certify that the

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WITTGENSTEIN'S KIERKEGAARDIAN HERITAGE

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Larry Victor Ort

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Winston A. Wilkinson
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WITTGENSTEIN'S KIERKEGAARDIAN HERITAGE

By

Larry Victor Ort

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

WITTGENSTEIN'S KIERKEGAARDIAN HERITAGE

By

Larry Victor Ort

Unlike those who have previously investigated affinities and disaffinities of view among Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein, I begin this study with a systematic, comprehensive analysis of these philosophers' views of epistemology. I then explore the ramifications of these views for epistemic claims and linguistic practices within ethics and religion. I argue that a comparative study of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein is instructive for several reasons: first, familiarity with Wittgenstein's analysis of logical problems associated with our use of language allows us to better appreciate Kierkegaard's concern with logical problems; second, familiarity with Kierkegaard's use of indirect communication helps us to see the extent to which the *Tractatus* is an exercise in indirect communication; third, Kierkegaard's treatment of the ethically existing subject helps us to better understand the early Wittgenstein's discussion of solipsism; fourth, the later Wittgenstein's analysis of belief, doubt, certainty, and justification serve to clarify several problems which one encounters with Kierkegaard's doxastic voluntarism; fifth, the later Wittgenstein's analysis of the language-games associated with science and religion further clarify and lend legitimacy

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to Kierkegaard's distinction between the "sphere of proof" and the "sphere of faith." In many respects, it may be said that Wittgenstein's work further explores a number of problems which Kierkegaard raised. In addition to considering these ways in which the study of Kierkegaard illuminates Wittgenstein, and vice versa, I further argue that considerable evidence exists for the plausibility of Kierkegaard's having influenced Wittgenstein, especially as concerns Wittgenstein's views of Scripture, doctrine, proofs for the existence of God, religious belief, and religious instruction. The study also lends credence to an emergent, broadened understanding of Wittgenstein's work and suggests a way of doing philosophy which recognizes the legitimacy and place of both the scientific and religious points of view.

Dedicated to

Dr. Sidney W. Chapman and Dr. Darrell Moore,

who introduced me to philosophy

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While it is impossible to mention the many friends and colleagues who have lent their support and encouragement, I would be remiss if I did not mention a special group of friends: Dr. Pat Bailey, Dr. Barbara Cherem, Mrs. Dee Knapp, and Mrs. Natalie Gianetti. In addition, my colleagues in the Social Science and Alternative Education Divisions at Spring Arbor College have been most supportive. I gratefully acknowledge Mrs. Jane Rieder and Mrs. Betty Videto for assistance, respectively, with editing and typing. I am also grateful for the financial assistance provided by Spring Arbor College and the Lilly Foundation.

I am especially indebted to members of the dissertation committee. Dr. Winston A. Wilkinson, Guidance Committee Chairperson, who has appropriately demanded that I produce, has made numerous suggestions to improve style and content, and has

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remained a good friend throughout the entire process. Dr. Herbert M. Garelick has assisted me in understanding some of the finer subtleties in Kierkegaard's work and has made numerous suggestions concerning how best to approach the study. Dr. Ronald Suter graciously agreed to continue serving as a member of the Guidance Committee beyond his retirement. I have spent many enjoyable hours discussing this project with Dr. Suter; I greatly appreciate his many helpful comments and suggestions. And I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Charles McCracken, who completes the committee. Although I owe much to the Guidance Committee, I accept full responsibility for the opinions expressed within the dissertation.

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CUP Søre

CV Lud

EO Søren

J&P Søre

LC Lud

LLW Paul

LR Lud

NB Lud

OC Lud

PF Søre

PI Lud

PR Lud

PV Søre

TLP Lud

WVC Frie

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CUP Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*

CV Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*

E/O Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*

J&P Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*

LC Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*

LLW Paul Engelmann, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein*

LR Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore*

NB Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916*

OC Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*

PF Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*

PI Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

PR Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*

PV Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*

TLP Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

WVC Friedrich Waismann, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle*

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INTRODUCTION

While enrolled in a seminar course on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein taught by Dr. Ronald Suter at Michigan State University, I was struck by the fact that certain sections of the *Philosophical Investigations* which Dr. Suter read during the first class session had a distinctly Kierkegaardian ring to them. At that time I was fairly familiar with the works of Kierkegaard, but I had never studied Wittgenstein. Being so struck, I asked Dr. Suter whether he knew whether Wittgenstein had read any of Kierkegaard's works. Dr. Suter kindly referred me to the "Appendix: Authors Wittgenstein Knew or Read" in Garth Hallett's (1977) *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations."*

In checking this source, I was delighted to have my suspicion confirmed. Hallett (1977, pp. 768-769) remarks: "'Wittgenstein received deeper impressions from some writers in the borderland between philosophy, religion, and poetry than from the philosophers, in the restricted sense of the word. Among the former are ...Kierkegaard,' (von Wright, "Sketch", 21) whom W. [Wittgenstein] was reading already in 1919 (LR 82)." After citing a number of other sources which note Wittgenstein's familiarity with Kierkegaard's works, Hallett concludes, "References to Kierkegaard in W.'s writings are rare (Man. 132, 168; Man. 119, 151-154). Kierkegaard's influence, or at least the deep affinity of their views, probably had more to do with the topics

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which W. did not treat and his reasons for not doing so (see GI 5-7)" (Hallett, 1977, p. 769).[1]

Over the years which have followed, I have continued to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities one encounters in the works of both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein. I have been aided in this investigation by the growing body of literature which attempts to provide a corrective to the logical positivist interpretation of Wittgenstein, to reveal the interconnectedness of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, and to explore some of the ethical and religious implications of his work.

While this growing body of literature explores a number of affinities of thought shared by Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, studies which, to explore both affinities and disaffinities, employ a more systematic approach are notably lacking. This study will conduct a systematic, comparative analysis of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and later Wittgenstein's views of epistemology and will consider the implications of the resultant findings for knowledge claims and the use of language within ethics and religion. In the concluding chapter I will set forth the merits of the comparative study, showing what is to be gained by comparing Kierkegaard to Wittgenstein and vice-versa, will discuss whether there is a coherent and plausible stance which results from a consideration of the philosophical issues, and will make some recommendations for

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[1] It bears mentioning that references in Wittgenstein's writings to any philosopher are rare.

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CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

References to Kierkegaard in Wittgenstein's writings, whether direct or indirect, are rare. However, as the recollections and memoirs of those who were on close terms with Wittgenstein attest, Wittgenstein made several references to Kierkegaard in conversations. In more recent years, there has also developed a growing corpus of literature which attempts to explore some of the ramifications of their commonalities of thought.

In this literature review I will detail Wittgenstein's references to Kierkegaard as reported in Wittgenstein's own published works as well as Wittgenstein's references to Kierkegaard which are recounted by others in various recollections and memoirs. In so doing, I will acquaint the reader with Wittgenstein's view of Kierkegaard and his works. I will then turn my attention to the corpus of literature which has attempted to look for parallels within their work and will critically assess the status of those studies with an aim toward further delineating the boundaries of this thesis.

References to Kierkegaard in Wittgenstein's Published Works

Virtually all of the references to Kierkegaard appear in the manuscript material left by Wittgenstein rather than in the more famous published works. The one

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exception to this is an example which appears in the *Lectures and Conversations*, for the most part a collection of student notes from a series of lectures which Wittgenstein delivered at Cambridge in the summer of 1938. Although this example is not attributed to Kierkegaard, it appears to be drawn from his works. This example is found in the *Lectures on Religious Belief* and occurs within the context of a discussion surrounding ideas associated with death:

> A great writer said that, when he was a boy, his father set him a task, and he suddenly felt that nothing, not even death, could take away the responsibility [in doing this task]; this was his duty to do, and that even death couldn't stop it being his duty. He said that this was, in a way, a proof of the immortality of the soul--because if he lives on [the responsibility won't die.] The idea is given by what we call the proof. Well, if this is the idea, [all right]. (LC, p. 70)

Although this example is voiced by Judge William, Kierkegaard's character in the book *Either/Or*, scholars are agreed that it is an autobiographical note which pertains to Kierkegaard's own life. Kierkegaard's father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, cursed God as a youth and ultimately came to believe that Søren Kierkegaard's life must be offered up to God as a sacrifice. In offering his son as a sacrifice, the father believed that he could atone his sin of having cursed God (*vide*, Hohlenburg, 1954, pp. 24-25).

Apart from this exception, the references which occur in the manuscripts have subsequently been published in *Culture and Value* and date from 1937 through 1946. These references are set forth here in the order of their appearance.

Wittgenstein's first reference to Kierkegaard appears in the manuscripts of 1937 and directly cites Kierkegaard:

> Kierkegaard writes: If Christianity were so easy and cosy, why should God in his Scriptures have set Heaven and Earth in motion and threatened *eternal* punishments?--Question: But in that case why is this Scripture so unclear? If

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> we want to warn someone of a terrible danger, do we go about it by telling him a riddle whose solution will be the warning?--But who is to say that the Scripture really is unclear? Isn't it possible that it was essential in this case to 'tell a riddle'? And that, on the other hand, giving a more direct warning would necessarily have had the *wrong* effect? God has *four* people recount the life of his incarnate Son, in each case differently and with inconsistencies--but might we not say: It is important that this narrative should not be more than quite averagely historically plausible *just so that* this should not be taken as the essential, decisive thing? So that the *letter* should not be believed more strongly than is proper and the *spirit* may receive its due. I.e. what you are supposed to see cannot be communicated even by the best and most accurate historian; and *therefore* a mediocre account suffices, is even to be preferred. For that too can tell you what you are supposed to be told. (Roughly in the way a mediocre stage set can be better than a sophisticated one, painted trees better than real ones,--because these might distract attention from what matters.)
>
> The Spirit puts what is essential, essential for your life, into these words. The point is that your [*sic*] are only SUPPOSED to see clearly what appears clearly even in *this* representation. (I am not sure how far all this is exactly in the spirit of Kierkegaard.) (CV, 1937, pp. 31e-32e)

Three other remarks in immediate proximity further indicate considerable knowledge on Wittgenstein's part concerning Kierkegaard's view of the Christian faith.[2] In the first remark, Wittgenstein writes:

> Christianity is not based on a historical truth; rather, it offers us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to a historical narrative, rather: believe, through thick and thin, which you can do only as the result of a life. *Here you have a narrative, don't take the same attitude to it as you take to other historical narratives!* Make a *quite different* place in your life for it.--There is nothing *paradoxical* about that! (CV, 1937, p. 32e)

This passage is mindful of Kierkegaard's analysis of faith which appears in the *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Kierkegaard holds that the "objective uncertainty" associated with God's having come into existence

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[2] The connections between Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein regarding these remarks briefly set forth here will be developed more extensively in the chapter on ethics and religions.

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in the incarnation of Jesus Christ (the paradox) must be "held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness" (CUP, p. 182; *vide,* PF, pp. 108-109). In this sense, as Wittgenstein points out, we are not to take the same attitude toward this historical narrative as we would take toward any other historical narrative.

In the second remark, Wittgenstein stresses the fact that religious belief does not rest upon historical knowledge:

> Queer as it sounds: The historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be demonstrably false and yet belief would lose nothing by this: not, however, because it concerns 'universal truths of reason'! Rather, because historical proof (the historical proof-game) is irrelevant to belief. This message (the Gospels) is seized on by men believingly (i.e. lovingly). *That* is the certainty characterizing this particular acceptance-as-true, not something *else*.
>
> A believer's relation to these narratives is *neither* the relation to historical truth (probability), *nor yet* that to a theory consisting of 'truths of reason'. There is such a thing.--(We have quite different attitudes even to different species of what we call fiction!) (CV, 1937, p. 32e)

Here Wittgenstein's remarks correspond to Kierkegaard's observation that the believer's faith would be unaffected by a completely successful defense or attack upon the Scriptures, for faith is a passion, and as such, faith does not rest upon objective scientific inquiry (*vide*, CUP, pp. 30-31).

And in the final remark, Wittgenstein argues that faith is a matter of personal commitment to a belief, a matter of the heart and soul as opposed to the intellect:

> I read: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." [Per footnote: I Corinthians 12]--And it is true: I cannot call him Lord; because that says nothing to me. I could call him 'the paragon', 'God' even--or rather, I can understand it when he is called thus; but I cannot utter the word "Lord" with meaning. *Because I do not believe* that he will come to judge me; because *that* says nothing to me. And it could say something to me, only if I lived *completely* differently.
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> What inclines even me to believe in Christ's Resurrection? It is as though I play with the thought.--If he did not rise from the dead, then he

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> decomposed in the grave like any other man. *He is dead and decomposed.* In that case he is a teacher like any other and can no longer *help*; and once more we are orphaned and alone. So we have to content ourselves with wisdom and speculation. We are in a sort of hell where we can do nothing but dream, roofed in, as it were, and cut off from heaven. But if I am to be REALLY saved, --what I need is *certainty*--not wisdom, dreams, or speculation--and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what is needed by my *heart*, my *soul*, not my speculative intelligence. For it is my soul with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, that has to be saved, not my abstract mind. Perhaps we can say: Only *love* can believe the Resurrection. Or: It is *love* that believes the Resurrection. We might say: Redeeming love believes even in the Resurrection; holds fast even to the Resurrection. What combats doubt is, as it were, *redemption*. Holding fast to *this* must be holding fast to that belief. So what that means is: first you must be redeemed and hold on to your redemption (keep hold of your redemption)--then you will see that you are holding fast to this belief. So this can come about only if you no longer rest your weight on the earth but suspend yourself from heaven. Then *everything* will be different and it will be 'no wonder' if you can do things that you cannot do now. (A man who is suspended looks the same as one who is standing, but the interplay of forces within him is nevertheless quite different, so that he can act quite differently than can a standing man.) (CV, p. 33e)

The above passage reflects a number of ideas encountered in reading the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. First, the later Wittgenstein's admission that "Lord" means nothing to him, as he is not a believer, parallels Kierkegaard's assertion, "If he [God] is not seen as sovereign he is not seen at all" (CUP, p. 140). Second, Wittgenstein's observation that apart from the resurrection, Jesus is "a teacher like any other and can no longer help" is reflective of Kierkegaard's characterization of Jesus as the Teacher who, unlike any other teacher, in the Moment brings to the learner (who is in Error or Sin) the condition (the passion of Faith) wherein he or she can know God as he or she is known by God (*vide*, PF, pp. 72-86). Third, Wittgenstein's reference to the certainty which is faith, which is not to be found in wisdom, dreams, or speculation, accords with Kierkegaard's characterization of the certainty of faith which "can be

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had only in the infinite" (CUP, pp. 30-31; p. 75). And last, as previously noted, Wittgenstein's view of belief (faith) as a "holding fast" is similar to Kierkegaard's view of faith as passionate appropriation.

Wittgenstein's next direct literary reference to Kierkegaard occurs in the context of his comments pertaining to great art (the only reference to Kierkegaard which does not pertain to religion or Christianity), and the fact that such art always contains "a WILD animal: tamed." Wittgenstein, after noting that this is not the case with Mendelssohn, continues:

> All great art has man's primitive drives as its groundbass. They are not the *melody* (as they are with Wagner, perhaps) but they are what gives the melody its *depth* and power.
>
> In *this* sense Mendelssohn can be called a '*reproductive*' artist.--
>
> In the same sense: the house I built for Gretl[1] is the product of a decidedly sensitive ear and *good* manners, an expression of great *understanding* (of a culture, etc.). But *primordial* life, wild striving to erupt into the open--that is lacking. And so you could say it isn't *healthy* (Kierkegaard). (Hothouse plant.) [The footnote reads: "[1] Wittgenstein's sister, for whom he built the house at 19 Kundmanngasse, Vienna."] (CV, pp. 37e-38e)

The last direct literary reference to Kierkegaard in Wittgenstein's own published works occurs within the context of a series of remarks pertaining to Christianity: "Wisdom is passionless. But faith by contrast is what Kierkegaard calls a *passion*." (CV, p. 53e)

Wittgenstein's References to Kierkegaard Reported by Others

Wittgenstein made several references to Kierkegaard in conversations with close friends which have been recorded in various memoirs and recollections of Wittgenstein. Creegan (1989, p.16) notes that the earliest apparent reference to Kierkegaard in any of the memoirs occurs in Paul Engelmann's *Letters from LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, With*

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a Memoir. In the passage cited by Creegan, Engelmann comments upon Wittgenstein's view of life, which Wittgenstein apparently discussed with Engelmann in 1916 while on military leave in Olmutz. Engelmann says:

> He 'saw life as a task', and on that I agreed with him. Moreover, he looked upon all the features of life as it is, that is to say upon all the facts, as an essential part of the conditions of that task; just as a person presented with a mathematical problem must not try to ease his task by modifying the problem. (LLW, 1967, p. 79)

Creegan notes, "This formulation reflects exactly Kierkegaard's position as it appears in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: 'It is impossible that the task [of life] should fail to suffice, since the task is precisely that the task should be made to suffice'" (Creegan, 1989, p. 16). For Kierkegaard, the highest task of life was to become subjective, understood in terms of becoming a Christian and living a Christian life. Such a task was sufficient for one's entire life span; indeed, on this view, "life constitutes the task" and "To be finished with life before life has finished with one, is precisely not to have finished the task" (CUP, p. 147). Although Wittgenstein's statement appears to mirror Kierkegaard's emphasis upon the task, Creegan is careful to point out that another potential source of this view could have been Tolstoy's *Gospels In Brief* which Wittgenstein was reading intensely during World War I.[3]

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[3] Hallett acknowledges Tolstoy's influence as follows: "Russell recounts of W. that 'he had been dogmatically anti-Christian, but in this respect he changed completely. The only thing he ever told me about this was that once in a village in Galicia during the war he found a bookshop containing only one book, which was Tolstoy on the Gospels. He bought the book and according to him, it influenced him profoundly' ("Wittgenstein", 31; see LR 82; Malcolm, *Memoir*, 70). 'If you aren't acquainted with it, you can't even imagine the effect it can have on people,' he wrote to von Ficker (*Briefe*, 28). It was, he said, the book which 'saved my life' (ibid.), and accompanied him so constantly that 'his fellow soldiers nicknamed him "the man with the

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Kierkegaard is also referred to in a letter, dated 20 December 1919, from Bertrand Russell to Lady Ottoline Morrell, wherein Russell indicates considerable surprise at the changes he perceived in Wittgenstein following World War I:

> I had felt in his book a flavour of mysticism, but was astonished when I found that he had become a complete mystic. He reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius, and he seriously contemplated becoming a monk. It all started from William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. (LR, p. 82)[4]

Another of Wittgenstein's references to Kierkegaard as reported by others is noted by H. D. P. Lee, who attended some of Wittgenstein's lectures from 1929-1931: "He told me that he learned Danish in order to be able to read Kierkegaard in the original, and clearly had a great admiration for him, though I never remember him speaking about him in detail" (Lee, 1979, p. 218).

Although I will deal more fully with M. O'C. Drury's recollections of Wittgenstein, it is worth noting here that Drury, one of Wittgenstein's students and a long-time friend who later became a practicing psychiatrist, remarked, "When some years later Kierkegaard was translated into English, largely by Walter Lowrie, Wittgenstein was displeased with the poor style of this translator. He completely failed to reproduce the elegance of the original Danish" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 88). Creegan (1989, p. 17) emphasizes the fact and

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Gospels"'(Janik and Toulmin, *Vienna*, 200-201)." It should also be noted that he was reading Tolstoy while he was working on the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

[4] A careful reading of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* with an eye on Wittgenstein's works reveals that Wittgenstein may have been highly influenced by James; Wittgenstein proceeded to read many of the authors James cites, including George Fox, Tolstoy, and John Bunyan. References throughout *Culture and Value* reveal that Wittgenstein was favorably impressed by these authors.

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rightly so that learning a new language in order to read an author indicates "considerable interest."

Another reference which demonstrates Kierkegaard's influence on Wittgenstein and which is from this same era (December 30, 1929, at Schlick's) appears in Waismann's *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle: Conversations Recorded by Friedrich Waismann*. This passage, entitled "Apropos of Heidegger," records Wittgenstein as saying the following:

> To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be mere nonsense. Nevertheless we do run up against the limits of language. Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox). This running up against the limits of language is *ethics*. I think it is definitely important to put an end to all the claptrap about ethics--whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable. In ethics we are always making the attempt to say something that cannot be said, something that does not and never will touch the essence of the matter. It is *a priori* certain that whatever definition of the good may be given--it will always be merely a misunderstanding to say that the essential thing, that what is really meant, corresponds to what is expressed (Moore). But the inclination, the running up against something, *indicates something*. St. Augustine knew that already when he said: What, you swine, you want to talk nonsense! Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter! (WVC, 1979, pp. 68-69)

Drury not only notes Wittgenstein's interest in Kierkegaard but places considerable emphasis upon it. In one instance Drury notes that Wittgenstein mentioned Kierkegaard's name at a meeting of the Moral Science Club of Cambridge. The following day Drury asked Wittgenstein to tell him more about Kierkegaard. He relates that Wittgenstein remarked, "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees

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ed), 1984, p. 87). In another reference to Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, Drury notes hat Wittgenstein went so far as to call Kierkegaard not merely "a great writer" but "by ar the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century" (Drury, "Symposium," in Fann ɜd), 1967, p. 70). Drury further relates how Wittgenstein then turned to an explana- .on of Kierkegaard's stages, or "categories of life-style": "the aesthetic, where the bjective is to get the maximum enjoyment out of this life; the ethical, where the ɔncept of duty demands renunciation; and the religious, where this very renunciation self becomes a source of joy" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 984, p. 87). Wittgenstein remarked, "Concerning this last category I don't pretend to nderstand how it is possible. I have never been able to deny myself anything, not even cup of coffee if I wanted it. Mind you, I don't believe what Kierkegaard believed, but this I am certain, that we are not here in order to have a good time" (Drury, "Some ɔtes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 1984, pp. 87-88). In this same passage, Drury ther recounts:

> Wittgenstein told me that one of his pupils had written to him to say that he had become a Roman Catholic, and that he, Wittgenstein, was partly responsible for this conversion because it was he that had advised the reading of Kierkegaard. Wittgenstein told me that he had written back to say: 'If someone tells me he has bought the outfit of a tight-rope walker I am not impressed until I see what is done with it.' (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 88)

passage reveals that Wittgenstein referred his students to Kierkegaard, and it also als the shared emphasis which Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein placed upon the ɔnance between one's beliefs and actions.

On another occasion Drury recounts some further remarks Wittgenstein made

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ing Kierkegaard, in response to Drury's comment that Kierkegaard seemed to ways making one aware of new categories." To this, Wittgenstein responded:

> You are quite right, that is exactly what Kierkegaard does, he introduces new categories. I couldn't read him again now. He is too long-winded; he keeps on saying the same thing over and over again. When I read him I always wanted to say, "Oh all right, I agree, I agree, but please get on with it." (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 88).[5]

ury notes, this conversation took place near the end of Wittgenstein's life. ıgh this passage reveals that Wittgenstein agrees with Drury's assessment that egaard makes one aware of new categories, it also tends to suggest that by this ıe later Wittgenstein has lost interest or is losing interest in Kierkegaard's work.

Drury was one of the first to draw attention to similarities in thought between enstein and Kierkegaard. He mentions how, upon rereading Kierkegaard's *uding Unscientific Postscript*, he was struck by certain passages which illuminat- tgenstein's writings on the ethical dimension of life. Drury cites some passages does not tell us why he sees these passages as illuminating Wittgenstein's ıt. And Drury is careful to add, "Although I have never discussed this point with do not think that Wittgenstein would have agreed with Kierkegaard's frequent the words 'the paradox' and 'the absurd.' Here surely is an attempt to get l the barrier of language" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees 984, p. 89).

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should be acknowledged that Kierkegaard intends to cover the material in a ous fashion as this is a part of his method. The exasperation which Wittgenstein sed may indicate some lack of understanding on Wittgenstein's part concerning gaard's method.

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Wittgenstein's understanding of Kierkegaard's view of the Old Testament es apparent when one considers a conversation reported by Drury. In this rsation, Drury told Wittgenstein he found some parts of the Old Testament to be offensive, e.g., the instance wherein some children mocked Elisha for his bald- nd God sent bears from the forest to eat them. Wittgenstein admonished him: mustn't pick and choose just what you want in that way." Drury replied, "But I never been able to do anything else," to which Wittgenstein responded, "Just nber what the Old Testament meant to a man like Kierkegaard" ("Conversations Vittgenstein," in Rhees (ed), 1984, pp. 169-170).

Norman Malcolm, another student, and later a close friend of Wittgenstein's, tes Wittgenstein's admiration for Kierkegaard: "He referred to him with ning of awe in his expression, as a 'really religious' man. He had read the *uding Unscientific Postscript*--but found it 'too deep' for him" (Malcolm, 1966, p. 71). In correspondence between Malcolm and Wittgenstein, Malcolm entioned Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. In a letter dated February 5, 1948, nstein responded, "I've never read 'The Works of Love.' Kierkegaard is far too or me, any how [*sic*]. He bewilders me without working the good effects which ld in *deeper* souls" (Malcolm, 1958/1966, p. 75).

Malcolm further notes the affinity of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's thought to rational proofs for the existence of God and other attempts to ground in a rational foundation:

Any cosmological conception of a Deity, derived from the notions of cause or infinity, would be repugnant to him [Wittgenstein]. He was impatient with

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'proofs' of the existence of God, and with attempts to give religion a *rational* foundation. When I once quoted to him a remark of Kierkegaard's to this effect: 'How can it be that Christ does not exist, since I know that he has saved me?', Wittgenstein exclaimed: 'You see! It isn't a question of *proving* anything!'" (Malcolm, 1958/1966, p. 71).

Professor O. K. Bouwsma, an American professor who had attended some of genstein's lectures and who had become a friend, remarks that on one visit, genstein had raised the subject of Kierkegaard:

> Had I [Bouwsma] read any Kierkegaard? I had. He had read some. Kierkegaard is very serious. But he could not read him much. He got hints. He did not want another man's thought all chewed. A word or two was sometimes enough. But Kierkegaard struck him almost like a snob, too high, for him, not touching the details of common life. Take his prayers. They left him unmoved. But he once read the prayers and meditations of Samuel Johnson. They were his meat. "The violent incursion of evil thoughts." (I'm not sure about his judgment of Kierkegaard.) (Bouwsma,1986, p. 46)

ough Wittgenstein tells Bouwsma that he got hints from Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein s that Kierkegaard is somewhat of a snob, that he is not in touch with the details of mon life. This passage suggests that Wittgenstein disdained certain aspects of kegaard's life.

From our consideration of Wittgenstein's references to Kierkegaard in Wittstein's published works and from Wittgenstein's references to Kierkegaard as rted by others, we can conclude that although Wittgenstein was somewhat familiar Kierkegaard's religious philosophy and admitted to getting hints from Kierkeid, Wittgenstein nonetheless viewed certain aspects of Kierkegaard's life with ain. Wittgenstein's disdain may well be a reflection of his own very simple yle which he assumed following World War I. We should also note that Wittgen's familiarity with Kierkegaard spanned the greater portion of Wittgenstein's life,

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the World War I era to the end of his life, though references to Kierkegaard r most frequently during and after 1937. Creegan (1989, p. 20) cites this span of st as "evidence of the continuity in Wittgenstein's interest in the subject of on and personal faith" and suggests that there is cause to consider the relation en the early and the later Wittgenstein from this vantage point. Given the many nces to Kierkegaard concerning personal religious belief and commitment, an further suggests that an understanding of Kierkegaard's religious philosophy e of benefit when considering Wittgenstein's remarks on religion (*vide*, Creegan, p. 20).

w of Secondary Source Literature

The past several years have provided scholars of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein growing corpus of literature which explores connections between their works. t, such references and works were few and far between, but with the publication *ture and Value* which contains the majority of Wittgenstein's references to egaard, such studies have increased steadily in number. As many of these studies erved to stimulate further works and investigation, the following review will er these works in their chronological order of appearance in an effort to reveal velopment of these studies.

In light of the numerous references to Kierkegaard on Wittgenstein's part which oted by Maurice O'C. Drury, it should come as no surprise that Drury was the explore further connections. In a couple of places, Drury expresses his concern ere was something central in Wittgenstein's teachings and writings which was

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overlooked, an idea, which "binds together in one volume the *Tractatus* and the *ophical Investigations*" (Drury,"A Symposium", in Fann (ed), 1967, p. 70). observes he finds it difficult to clearly express this idea, relates Wittgenstein's ent that Kierkegaard was "by far the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth y," and cites the following two passages from Kierkegaard, which he sees as ying "this central idea in the best possible way." (Drury, "A Symposium," in ed), 1967, p. 70). The first of these passages comes from the *Journals and s*:

> The majority of men in any generation, even those who, as it is said, are occupied with thinking (professors and the like), live on and die in the illusion of a continuous process, that if they were granted a longer life the process would be a continued direct ascent of comprehending more and more. How many ever arrive at the maturity of discovering that a critical point comes where it reverses, where from now on the ascending comprehension is to comprehend more and more that there is something which cannot be comprehended.
>
> This is Socratic ignorance, and this is what the speculation of our time needs as a corrective. [X^1 A 679 (J&P, 3567)]

notes that for him "the whole weight of Wittgenstein's teaching" is aimed toward rrective of Socratic ignorance: "'We show the unspeakable by clearly displaying eakable.'" Drury further observes that "the whole driving force of the investiga- missed if it is not seen continually to point beyond itself" (Drury, "A Sympo- in Fann (ed), 1967, p. 70).

The second passage from Kierkegaard which Drury sees as conveying the idea which unites the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* deals with r:

> It is true as the understanding says that there is nothing to wonder at, but precisely for this reason is wonder secure, because the understanding vouches

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observes that the secret of Wittgenstein lay in his making wonder secure, that ne had such power to awaken again that primitive wonder from which all great ophy begins. No one had such power to shake the pillars of one's complacency" , "A Symposium", in Fann (ed), 1967, p. 71). From these passages, it would as though the central idea which Drury sees as uniting the *Tractatus* and the *gations* is that Wittgenstein's philosophy must be seen as a corrective akin to that ratic ignorance whereby our complacency is overcome, we come to realize the of our ignorance, and wonder is reawakened.

Both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, according to Drury, serve to warn us of s intellectual and spiritual dangers. The affinity of view and of task which Drury further substantiated by Rhees (1984, p. xi) who cites an earlier version of s article, "Conversations with Wittgenstein," drafted in 1966, in which Drury

The number of introductions to and commentaries on Wittgenstein's philosophy is steadily increasing. Yet to one of his former pupils something that was central in his thinking is not being said.

Kierkegaard told a bitter parable about the effects of his writings. He said he felt like the theatre manager who runs on the stage to warn the audience of a fire. But they take his appearance as all part of the farce they are enjoying, and the louder he shouts the more they applaud.

Forty years ago Wittgenstein's teaching came to me as a warning against certain intellectual and spiritual dangers by which I was strongly tempted. These dangers still surround us. It would be a tragedy if well-meaning commentators should make it appear that his writings were now easily assimilable into the very intellectual milieu they were largely a warning against.

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mmenting upon this passage Rhees notes: "He [Drury] went on with his draft, but end he felt that he could not formulate the warning that still impressed him; and hat he had written would do more harm than good" (Rhees, 1984, p. xi).

Drury's concern that something central to Wittgenstein's teachings was being said is shared by Engelmann, who states:

> A whole generation of disciples was able to take Wittgenstein for a positivist because he has something of enormous importance in common with the positivists: he draws the line between that we can speak about and what we must be silent about just as they do. The difference is only that they have nothing to be silent about. Positivism holds--and this is its essence--that what we can speak about is all that matters in life. *Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about.* (LLW, 1967, p. 97)

t (1977, p. 25) has also noted that Wittgenstein "agreed with Kierkegaard that the mportant things are best shown, not said, and that the gifted artist is the one who ow them best."[6]

Janik and Toulmin take issue with what they perceive to be the erroneous and ced view of the positivistic interpretation of the *Tractatus*. Their investigation of tural and historical milieu which serves as the backdrop to Wittgenstein's work n important dimension to our understanding of the context of his work, to say g of its contribution to an understanding of the significance of Vienna as a hotbed llectual creativity.

In commenting on how the final sections of the *Tractatus* are to be understood,

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and Toulmin (1973, p. 24) note: "Those Austrians who were closest to Wittgen-
nsist that whenever he concerned himself with anything, it was from the ethical
of view; in this sense he reminded one of them directly of Kierkegaard." They
r note that the *Tractatus* was viewed by family and friends "as an ethical *deed*,
showed the nature of ethics" (Janik and Toulmin, 1973, p. 24). Janik and
in (1973, p. 31) argue that Wittgenstein's approach and understanding of ethics
ierkegaardian, for questions of intellectual foundations cannot arise when consid-
moral issues. Later on, Janik and Toulmin (1973, p. 224) note that Wittgenstein
oncerned with both "intellectual and ethicoreligious" issues; the intellectual issues
ed from the transcendental inquiries of Kant and Schopenhauer" while the ethico-
us issues were "inherited from Tolstoy and kept alive by Kierkegaard." Both
preoccupations "focused his [Wittgenstein's] attention on the scope and limits of
tic expression" (Janik and Toulmin, 1973, p. 224).

In 1976 a philosophy symposium was sponsored by The College of Wooster,
er, Ohio, which focused on Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein. A number of papers
elivered by American and British philosophers; these papers (entitled *Essays on*
gaard and Wittgenstein: On Understanding the Self) were later edited by Bell
stwit (1978) and dedicated to O. K. Bouwsma. Three essays in particular are
germane to an understanding of the commonality of themes which Kierkegaard
ttgenstein chose to address.

In the essay entitled "Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein: A Shared Enmity," A.
Jensen notes that both philosophers held the journalistic mentality in disdain for

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In the second article, "Two Views of the Soul: Investigations, Part II, iv," d E. Hustwit sets forth an analysis of a difficult passage within Wittgenstein's *ophical Investigations*. Hustwit understands Wittgenstein to be saying that hysical conceptions and proofs of the soul are nonsense, whereas religious ɔtions are not to be understood as nonsense, although they may "present diffi- for the philosophical understanding" (Hustwit in Bell and Hustwit (eds), 1978, . As Hustwit points out, the later Wittgenstein's analysis of religious language set n *Lectures on Religious Belief* reveals that such language is very different from dinary use of language. According to Wittgenstein our use of religious language e accompanied by a picture if we are to understand what is being said. Hustwit at Wittgenstein's analysis of the soul in "Section iv" of the *Investigations* ns the use of two different sorts of techniques: first, techniques which show that taphysical theories associated with religious concepts, such as the soul, are ısical, and second, techniques of showing, or picturing, the use of religious

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s of the soul call for a picture which will enhance the understanding. It is Kierke-
rd, Hustwit observes, who provides us with "the Christian picture of the soul" in
r and Trembling and *The Sickness Unto Death*. Within these works, the soul is
imarily an ethical concept...in the sense that in a religious picture one is called to
in front of God--to see himself as having a task for a lifetime" (Hustwit in Bell and
twit (eds), 1978, pp. 59-61).

Hustwit concludes that Kierkegaard's discussion of the soul as an ethical
cept "helps to redirect our misplaced attention from the metaphysical notion of the
as a theoretical incorporeal stuff to its function as a religious idea" and that "this is
isely what Wittgenstein's aim in 'Section iv' was too." (Hustwit in Bell and
twit (eds), 1978, p. 66). Hustwit points to an affinity between Kierkegaard and
genstein, for such an analysis allows us to see the complementary manner in which
Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein work on similar subject matter. But Hustwit's
ysis also points to another affinity--namely, the shared recognition of the problems
ciated with the use of religious language in general. Both Kierkegaard and Witt-
tein recognize our reliance upon pictures as a means of communicating religious
epts.

The third article in this collection which I wish to emphasize is Richard H.
's "Understanding Fire-Festivals and Revelations." In this article Bell explores the
rence between an "interpretation" and an "understanding" of cultural practices
h are radically removed from one's own cultural practices. Bell points out that in

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enstein's "*Remarks on Frazer's 'Golden Bough'*" Wittgenstein is critical of r's interpretations, for Wittgenstein argues that understanding is always rooted in on's life-view. Wittgenstein argues that we can only understand the diverse al practices of others to the extent that we "have cultivated" our own "capaci- for dealing with the perplexities of death and life, sorrow and joy, hate and love, ir and hope" (Bell in Bell and Hustwit (eds), 1978, p. 94).

As Bell points out, Kierkegaard possesses a very similar view of the nature of standing as is evident in his book, *On Authority and Revelation: The Book on* In this work Kierkegaard contends that Adolf Peter Adler, a parish priest, is iciently acquainted with the grammar of the Christian faith and its related pts. As Bell puts it, "he [Adler] is not familiar enough with the 'grammatical round' of a Christian experience to be able to communicate it in a manner that ys that *he* understands the experience" (Bell in Bell and Hustwit (eds), 1978, p.

Both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein grasped the fact that understanding entails arity with a particular life-view which serves as the backdrop before which the standing occurs. And both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein recognize that under- ng experiences which radically differ from our own must emanate from within grammatical framework and life-view.

This collection of essays reveals the marked emphasis which both Kierkegaard ittgenstein placed upon the individual person and the necessity of thinking for f. It also reveals an affinity of view between Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein

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cerning our use of religious language and such concepts as the soul. Both under-
d the soul in terms of an ethical-religious concept as opposed to the metaphysical
ion of an incorporeal stuff which Descartes held. That metaphysical conception of
soul is considered to be nonsense; it is the religious picture of the soul, wherein one
ds transparently before God and lives lovingly and obediently in God's care, which
es sense.

Alistair Hannay (1982, pp. 149-153) recognizes a possible connection between
rkegaard's concept of a "life-view" or "world-view" and the early Wittgenstein's
hasis upon what can or cannot be "said." Kierkegaard's life-view, according to
nay, possesses the following characteristics:

> Besides being a key to understanding further details within its own frame, a life-view also throws light on the past. As an organizing principle, a life-view is imposed upon, not imparted by, experience. In this it is analogous both to a first principle and to an inductively inferred law....A life-view is a 'principle' or 'law' that cannot be justified by appeal to further principles or laws. It involves a 'leap'. (Hannay, 1982, p. 150)

ording to Hannay, Kierkegaard further holds that the subjective qualities, the
ective aspects associated with life-views, are "*not* directly communicable (in the
that anything that can be *represented* in language is directly communicable...); yet
e subjective aspects are the essential elements of a life-view" (Hannay, 1982, p.
).

Hannay sees a parallel between the incommunicability associated with Kierke-
d's life-views and the incommunicability associated with the early Wittgenstein's
ment of ultimate topics such as God, Fate, and ethics. According to the early
genstein, such ultimate topics are incommunicable, for they transcend the world,

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l language can only represent states of affairs in the world. As Hannay observes, one o reads the *Postscript* is likely to be struck by the parallel in topics and in formula- ı which one encounters in the *Tractatus* (*vide*, Hannay, 1982, p.151).[7]

Hannay also sees a parallel between Kierkegaard's emphasis upon subjectivity he essential aspect of a life-view and certain aspects of the *Tractatus* which Witt- stein sets forth in a letter to Ludwig von Ficker (*vide*, Hannay, 1982, p. 152). In letter, Wittgenstein wrote that the *Tractatus* "consists of two parts: the one sented here plus all that I have *not* written," and that "it is precisely this second part is the important one" (LLW, p. 143). The second part, the subjective, essential , could not be written for it is transcendent and, as such, lies beyond the esentational capability of language.

In 1982, the same year in which Alistair Hannay published *Kierkegaard*, James Edwards published *Ethics Without Philosophy: Wittgenstein and the Moral Life*. vards also recognizes a number of affinities of view between Kierkegaard and genstein. First, Kierkegaard's emphasis upon the necessary use of indirect munication when communicating the Christian faith is seen to parallel the early genstein's distinction between what can and cannot be said (*vide*, Edwards, 1982, 1). Second, Edwards notes that both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein despised the which holds that science can solve all the problems of human life and that a life ted to science, whether the concrete physical sciences or the more abstract

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Although Hannay claims the parallel should come as no surprise in light of the that Wittgenstein had read the *Postscript*, it bears pointing out that it remains an ı question as to whether Wittgenstein had done so prior to writing the *Tractatus*.

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ative philosophy, is the highest form of life (*vide*, Edwards, 1982, pp. 62-63).

in concert with their rejection of science as the highest form of life, both "aim at

g the individual reader to *recognize himself* in the process of philosophizing--to

to his senses'--and then to make a certain movement in relation to this philoso-

g" (Edwards, 1982, p. 150). And fourth, both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein

that the happy life comes about through renunciation of "abstract intellection and

ial comfort" (Edwards, 1982, p. 206). In summary, Edwards' examination of

enstein's view of the moral life tends to indicate that the major affinity between

egaard and Wittgenstein lies in their shared recognition of two related limitations:

nitation of abstract reason for making sense of life and the limitation of our

entational use of language for communicating the same.

While several authors have drawn connections between the religious views of

egaard and Wittgenstein, John W. Cook (1987, p. 199) contends that this is a

e, that Kierkegaard's "most fundamental assumptions" are at odds with Witt-

in's. Cook (1987, p. 211) acknowledges that both were concerned with the

ms encountered in religious language, but adds, "Beyond that I can find no

nent between them." Cook (1987, pp. 211-212) summarizes Kierkegaard's

n as follows:

> The believer...is a person who will allow that Scripture is the word of God and that, because God is a timeless being, the apparent contradictions in Scripture are not really contradictions because the temporal terms used in Scripture are not, so to speak, the final word on the matters spoken of there, i.e. that what must be self-contradictory for humans may be the truth for God.

Wittgenstein would have had nothing to do with such a position, Cook asserts,

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it is possible to determine whether a word or group of words is or is not nonsense, as Wittgenstein holds, it is unreasonable to assume that religious language "has a gic' that is somehow hidden from us" (Cook, 1987, p. 212). Cook further suggests Kierkegaard thought any philosopher who held a view of language such as tgenstein's view would have to conclude that "Christianity is sheer nonsense" ok, 1987, p 212).

While Cook acknowledges that Wittgenstein drew no such conclusion, he ntains that Wittgenstein's reason for not doing so would have been abhorrent to rkegaard. In defense of this position, Cook claims that Kierkegaard simply takes it granted that Christianity is concerned with "transcendental matters" instead of the tine affairs of everyday life (*vide*, Cook, 1987, p. 212). In contrast, Cook (1987, p.) argues that Wittgenstein's view of religion is grounded in the affairs of everyday In support of this position, Cook cites two passages from Wittgenstein: "Christian- s not...a theory about what has happened and will happen to the human soul, but a ription of something that actually takes place in human life" (CV, 1937, p. 28e); trikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commit- t to a system of reference. Hence, although a *belief*, it's really a way of living, or a of assessing life" (CV, 1947, 64e). From such passages, Cook reasons that since genstein could not bring himself to reject Christianity as nonsense, he approached m the standpoint of his empiricism, thereby rendering a reductionistic account of on (*vide*, Cook, 1987, pp. 212, 216).

While Cook's position may appear to have some merit, closer examination

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ls that Cook is taking an overly narrow view of both Kierkegaard's and Wittgen-
s positions. As a consequence, one may fail to see the affinities of view which do
Cook omits Wittgenstein's reason for holding to the claim that Christianity is a
ption of something which actually takes place in human life from the preceding
ion: "For 'consciousness of sin' is a real event and so are despair and salvation
gh faith" (CV, 1937, p. 28e). Wittgenstein's recognition of the consciousness of
espair, and salvation as real events serves to link Wittgenstein's views with
egaard, for as Kierkegaard observes, one cannot come to experience the eternal
ness which Christianity proffers apart from these events (*vide*, PF, pp. 17-24). To
that Kierkegaard is solely concerned with the transcendental matters of the
ian faith mischaracterizes his position.

One may also question Cook's conclusion that Wittgenstein offers a reductionist
t of Christianity which is solely grounded in his empiricism. Granted, Witt-
in could not accept the notion that Christianity was nonsense, but it does not
from this that one must make sense of Christianity from the standpoint of
cism. To the contrary, Wittgenstein readily admits that religion is on an entirely
nt plane from the empirical, that it is for this reason that words such as "dogma"
aith" are used, and that it is for this reason religious discourse does not employ
oncepts as "hypothesis," or "high probability," or "knowing" (*vide*, LC, p. 57).
nstein further holds that the believer is not unreasonable, for "unreasonable"
a sense of rebuke. What Wittgenstein is getting at is the fact that Christian
s not a matter of reasonability at all: "Not only is it [Christian belief] not

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onable, but it doesn't pretend to be" (LC, p. 58). Here I take Wittgenstein to be ng that Christian belief is non-reasonable rather than unreasonable. Furthermore, genstein is highly critical of those who would make the Christian faith a matter of onability (*vide*, LC, pp. 58-59).

Wittgenstein's view of Christian belief as being outside the domain of rational- in basic accord with Kierkegaard's view, set forth in the *Postscript*, of Christian f. As Kierkegaard observes, the believer cannot believe nonsense because the rstanding will detect that it is nonsense and preclude belief; to the contrary, what lieved is the incomprehensible. With respect to Christian belief, the function of the rstanding is to make one aware of the incomprehensible, whereupon one grasps of it and believes against the understanding (CUP, p. 504).

Given Wittgenstein holds that Christian belief is non-reasonable, I believe k's argument that Wittgenstein offers a reductionist account of Christian belief within his empiricism is indefensible. It strikes me that a reductionist account of stianity attempts to make *sense* of Christian belief by reducing such belief to a set ysical behaviors, or dispositions toward such behaviors. To the contrary, Wittgen- 's analysis reveals that Christian belief is outside the domains of sense or non- , and in that respect, his view accords with Kierkegaard's view.

Creegan admits that any direct comparison of the works of Kierkegaard and genstein faces a number of difficulties: the fact that any such comparison cannot be fectly symmetrical" and the fact that the authors' goals are very different (*vide*, gan, 1989, p. 6). Despite these difficulties, Creegan compares Kierkegaard's and

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ittgenstein's views of religion, individuality, and philosophical method. Creegan's proach relies upon "a mutual relation of suggestiveness" wherein the terms or tegories of each are seen as shedding new light upon those of the other. As a case in int, he notes that Wittgenstein's "form of life" and "showing" have implications for erkegaard's project, while Kierkegaard's "without authority" and "the individual" form our understanding of Wittgenstein's life and work (*vide*, Creegan, 1989, p. 6).

One of Creegan's major contributions is his analysis of some problematic forms interpretation often encountered in analyses of the works of Kierkegaard and ittgenstein, e.g., the tendency to interpret their works "as containing, or at least etching, a 'systematic philosophy,' and the related tendency which consists of "taking me fragments of the author's work out of context, reifying a systematic theory from em, and using that to generate 'the author's position' on a given topic" (1989, p. 52).

While Creegan's study serves to pull together much of the preceding scholarship ncerning perceived connections between Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, it shares with t scholarship a major deficiency, for it does not set forth a comparative analysis on components of their thought which undergird many of the views under consider- on. For instance, in what ways are their views on the role of the individual in iety, and upon the place and limit of philosophy, shaped by their understanding of stemology? To what extent are their conceptions of epistemology similar or similar?

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By now it should have become apparent that there exists no systematic or ehensive analysis of the major works of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein which o demonstrate the extent of their commonalities of thought. Admittedly, some oject that such an analysis is virtually impossible, for neither philosopher was a atic philosopher. Nevertheless, it should still be possible to conduct a compara- alysis of major philosophical topics.

The present study will set forth a comparative analysis of Kierkegaard's, the Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of epistemology. Affinities and inities of view will be identified and the ramifications of the same for epistemic s and language practices within ethics and religion will be investigated. The study lose by considering whether there is a coherent and plausible philosophical stance emerges from consideration of these issues, i.e., a view which one can glean he study, and by setting forth some recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER II

KIERKEGAARD AND WITTGENSTEIN ON EPISTEMOLOGY

Conducting a comparison of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's views of temology is no small task for neither philosopher set forth a clearly articulated temology. Their views concerning epistemology appear in various places throughout r works within the context of their consideration of other closely allied problems.

Kierkegaard's overarching concern, which unifies and encompasses all of his k, is the question: what must one do to become a Christian? Although Kierkegaard ls that one can become a Christian only through faith as opposed to reason, he loys reason to show the limitations of reason. In doing so, Kierkegaard sets forth a ıber of epistemological issues.

Both the early and the later Wittgenstein consider epistemological issues within context of dissolving philosophical problems and clarifying the workings of language. early Wittgenstein's aim is to dissolve philosophical problems by means of an stigation into the logic of language in such a manner that a limit is drawn to the ession of thoughts (*vide*, TLP, p. 3). Both the early and the later Wittgenstein held language is immensely complicated, that it sets traps for the understanding, that it lts in numerous wrong turnings, and that the function of the philosopher is to erect

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osts to assist people past dangerous places (*vide*, CV, 1931, p. 18e). Recognizing problems associated with the use of language, the later Wittgenstein sees the aim of ophy as showing the "fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (PI, § 309).

The following comparative analysis will employ a topical format in which egaard's and Wittgenstein's views are considered on various epistemological ts. Topics for consideration include logic, epistemic limits, justification, edge, truth, belief, doubt, certainty, and language. As these topics are closely l, their treatment will at times overlap. Care will be taken to distinguish between rly and the later Wittgenstein's views.

and the Categories of Possibility, Actuality, and Necessity

Kierkegaard begins his critique of reason[1] with a consideration of what he ed to be a logical confusion within Hegel's System. The centrality of Kierkegaard's n with logic is apparent, for he originally planned to employ "Logical Problems" as e of what was later published as the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* [*vide*, VI B P, 5850); cf. VI A 146 (J&P, 5786)]. In journal entries VI B 13 (J&P, 5787) h VI B 18 (J&P, 5792), Kierkegaard sets forth a proposed outline for his project. In t of these entries, Kierkegaard identifies several "logical problems" for eration, among which are the nature of a category and what it means "to say that s a category," "the historical significance of the category," how a new quality

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erbert M. Garelick (1965) and Louis J. Pojman (1984) both provide accounts of gaard's critique of reason within the framework of their respective projects. The ing treatment of Kierkegaard's epistemology draws upon their work but expands atment of a number of topics with an eye on comparison with Wittgenstein's nology. I acknowledge my indebtedness to both of these accounts.

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; to "appear through continued quantitative increase," "the leap," "the difference en a dialectical and a passion-filled transition," that "all historical knowledge is ıpproximation," and the nature of existence [VI B 13 (J&P, 5787)]. All of these rns focus upon perceived shortcomings in Hegel's System.

According to Kierkegaard, Hegel's treatment of logic in the *Phenomenology of* leads to adverse consequences. For example, in Hegel's world historical view, dual existence is of no significance. But Kierkegaard believes individual existence ıltimate importance because eternal happiness depends on an existing individual's : of faith. And Kierkegaard observes that Hegel's System is contradictory, for ı it is supposed to be presuppositionless, nevertheless it "presupposes faith as hing given" (CUP, p. 18).[2] Furthermore the System presupposes that faith is to be stood in terms other than the passionate interest which is the expression of faith. quently, Hegel's presuppositionless System "resolves itself into a delusion in which stem has deceived itself into thinking that it knew what faith was" (CUP, p. 18).

As the age was suffering from delusion, Kierkegaard believed it was necessary to the nature of faith. To express the individual's concern with faith, Kierkegaard the question, "How may I...participate in the happiness promised by Christianity?" p. 20). Kierkegaard further advises his reader that the problem concerns himself for two reasons: "partly because, if it is properly posed, it will concern everyone in

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Iegel saw Christianity as one of the stages, though not the final stage, in the tical process which ultimately leads to the truth. Since Christianity is not the tage in the System, the Christian faith is superseded, but what supersedes the ian faith (philosophy) still preserves the truth of Christianity. In this respect, held the System to be "Christian."

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ıme manner," and, compliments of the System, "partly because all the others already faith as something given, as a triviality of little value, or as a triviality which nts to something only when tricked out with a few proofs" (CUP, p. 20). egaard is emphasizing that the Christian faith has existential implications for each very individual, that it must be approached individually if approached at all, that it is omething which is possessed by all (as the System would have us believe), nor is it thing which may be approached and experienced through reason and speculative sophy. As the logic of Hegel's System (the logic associated with the unfolding of or the Absolute) precludes existential considerations of the sort which concern egaard, an attack on Hegel's conception of logic is of paramount importance to egaard's critique of reason.

Kierkegaard sees Hegel's importation of necessity into historical process to rest a confusion of the categories of possibility, actuality, and necessity. On Hegel's Aristotelian logic fails to capture the nature of truth as a dynamic unfolding process ı leads to the development of consciousness. Aristotelian logic is grounded in the f contradiction: "A is B and A is not B cannot both be true," i.e., a proposition t be both true and false. Hegel rejects the idea that propositions must either be true se, and in so doing rejects the law of contradiction. According to Hegel, all that is ed for a proposition to be both true and false is that it express what is actually the luring different historical periods. What is true now may be false at some later point tory. Bearing this in mind, Hegel reasons that when one attempts to convey some about reality, it is at best only a partial portrayal of reality. As opposed to a "yes" or

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response to an assertion about reality, the correct response would be "yes and no." view of truth undergirds Hegel's speculative System.

In the Hegelian dialectic truth develops through confrontation of ideas. In this ct, an idea (the "thesis") encounters its opposing idea (the "antithesis"). As the ning process unfolds, a higher form of consciousness evolves which realizes that exists a higher truth, a "synthesis," which annuls the one-sided character of both the ion and the counter-assertion while preserving their truth. Hegel further held that alectic of history through which reason (consciousness) unfolds or develops is a ssary" unfolding.[3]

In the context of a discussion concerning the transition from possibility to lity, Kierkegaard maintains that this transition never occurs through necessity for sity is a category entirely distinct from the categories of possibility and actuality. e historical always involves the transition from possibility to actuality, it cannot take of necessity as Hegel maintains. Kierkegaard believes Hegel's importation of

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Hegel's dialectic rejects the conclusions which Kant derived in the "Transcendental ctic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant warned of the futility that results from pting to construct a theoretical system from pure reason; any such attempt was ed to failure for, as he demonstrated, it is also possible to argue the opposite of what een theorized. If we take some metaphysical thesis and argue for its truth, we can ise argue for the truth of the antithesis as well in a similar convincing manner. In of his demonstration, Kant argued that pure reason, which is used to go beyond ience, will ultimately argue against itself.

Hegel held that the contradiction was of no consequence when understood that contradictions occur within a historical, developmental context. As Popper (1962, p, has pointed out, Hegel's philosophy of identity, wherein the reasonable is real and al is reasonable, "undoubtedly was an attempt to re-establish rationalism on a new which "permitted the philosopher to construct a theory of the world out of pure ning and to maintain that this must be a true theory of the real world. It allowed y what Kant said was impossible" (1962, p. 326).

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ssity into the historical process rests upon a confusion of these categories: "N.B. essity must be dealt with by itself. The fact that modern speculative thought has orted necessity into the historical process has caused much confusion; the categories ossibility, of actuality, and of necessity have all been compromised" (CUP, pp. 306-). Kierkegaard seeks to clarify the confusion by means of considering the attendant ical problems."

Kierkegaard's analysis and understanding of the categories of necessity, ibility, and actuality are grounded in classical Aristotelian logic which recognizes e laws of reason: the laws of identity, excluded middle, and contradiction. So erstood, necessity is viewed as logical necessity (as opposed to causal necessity or al necessity). Logical necessity, as it relates to being, is connected with essence as osed to existence; it is connected with the fundamental nature of something idered independently of its existence. In contrast, possibility and actuality are the two es of being which essence may assume. The possible has the potential to become zed, while the actual is potentiality which has been realized, i.e., "realized tiality." Although a transition from possibility to actuality may occur, the essence ins unchanged. Since necessity is connected with essence, the necessary cannot *come* eing for it already *is* and remains so. As Kierkegaard puts it, "Everything that comes xistence proves precisely by coming into existence that it is not necessary, for the hing which cannot come into existence is the necessary, because the necessary *is*" . 91). Kierkegaard continues to reason:

> The necessary is a category entirely by itself. Nothing ever comes into existence with necessity; likewise the necessary never comes into existence and something

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by coming into existence never becomes the necessary. Nothing whatever exists because it is necessary, but the necessary exists because it is necessary or because the necessary is. The actual is no more necessary than the possible, for the necessary is absolutely different from both (PF, p. 91).

ese reasons, necessity cannot be a synthesis of possibility and actuality, as Hegel for possibility and actuality differ only in being as opposed to essence.

egaard maintains Hegel is mistaken in his belief that historical development occurs essity, and he sees Hegel's importation of movement into logic to be "a sheer sion of logical science" (CUP, p. 99).

According to Kierkegaard, change associated with coming into existence occurs esult of a cause (*vide*, PF, p. 93). But when we are confronted by a chain of ening causes, Kierkegaard observes, we are tempted to believe that the change is ring of necessity, but such is never the case for these intervening causes always back to a freely effecting cause (*vide*, PF, p. 93).

The early Wittgenstein also accepts the three laws of thought associated with the ories of possibility, actuality, and necessity. The early Wittgenstein holds, as does egaard, that the only necessity is logical necessity (*vide,* TLP, 6.37). Furthermore, rly Wittgenstein holds that nothing is accidental in logic; that if an object can occur ate of affairs, the possibility of this occurrence must already be "written into the itself," or be contained within the essential nature of the object (*vide*, TLP, 2.012). know the essential nature of an object, then we also know all of its possibilities. Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein believes logical necessity is connected with essence, as ed to existence, but Wittgenstein further says that if one knows the essential nature nething, one also knows the attendant possibilities:

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(Every one of these possibilities must be part of the nature of the object.)
A new possibility cannot be discovered later. (TLP, 2.0123)

ld be noted that Wittgenstein is not saying that these possibilities become

ties of logical necessity. Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard are in agreement that the

ion from a possibility to an actuality is a causal transition rather than a necessary

transition. However, it should also be noted that Wittgenstein would not, in all

ood, refer to the transition associated with coming into existence as "taking place

eedom" as does Kierkegaard.

Although Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein subscribe to a causal theory of

, it must be stressed that they do not conceive of causality in terms of compulsion.

probably the sense of Kierkegaard's assertion that things come into existence with

n. As the early Wittgenstein puts it, "There is no compulsion making one thing

because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity"

5.37). Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein deny the existence of any

ary connection between states of affairs. Concerning this fact, Wittgenstein

s:

There is no possible way of making an inference from the existence of one
situation to the existence of another, entirely different situation. (TLP, 5.135)

There is no causal nexus to justify such an inference. (TLP, 5.136)

We *cannot* infer the events of the future from those of the present.
Superstition is nothing but belief in the causal nexus. (TLP, 5.1361)

sal nexus, the early Wittgenstein has in mind the idea of a necessary *a priori*

ion. As Max Black (1964, p. 244) has noted, Wittgenstein clearly does not intend

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eny the existence of causal regularities, but he does intend to deny they are *a priori*. ccept the view that such a necessary *a priori* causal connection exists is to embrace a rstition.

The affinities encountered between Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein cerning logic and necessity are grounded in a view of logic as transcendental or *a ri*, but, as we have seen, the *a priori* status of logic does not extend to causality. le the early Wittgenstein holds logic to be transcendental, to be a "mirror-image of world" as opposed to a body of doctrine (*vide*, TLP, 6.13), the later Wittgenstein ndons this view and maintains that language rests upon an *a posteriori* order of the ld in which language and logic reflect the agreement in our forms of life: "The nomenon of logic rests on agreement in men's lives no differently than language does" n. 164, 163-64). As the later Wittgenstein realized, the refusal to hold to the view that c rests upon an *a priori* order of the world does not mean that logic collapses or is ished, for it still rests upon something which is fundamental to both logic and uage, namely, the agreement in our lives. In this regard, it must be recognized that ater Wittgenstein's view of logic and language differs considerably from kegaard's view and his own earlier view.

Limits of Language and Reason

Kierkegaard believes that the application of language and reason ultimately causes recognize their limitations. While Kierkegaard's critique of language will be set later, it presently bears noting Kierkegaard holds that language abstracts from ence in a manner which loses some of the aspects of existence. In this respect

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ıge is incapable of fully capturing existence. Given this limitation of language, and that existence is an on-going process, and hence, possesses no finality, the uction of an existential system is an impossibility. Kierkegaard writes, "a logical ı is possible;...an existential system is impossible" (CUP, p. 99). Kierkegaard warns the formulation of a logical system care must be taken "not to include in it ng which is subject to an existential dialectic, anything which is, only because it or has existed, and not simply because it is" (CUP, p. 99). The logical system must orate only the necessary. After asserting that the formulation of an existential ı is impossible, Kierkegaard asks, "Does this mean that no such system exists?" to he responds, "By no means; nor is this implied in our assertion. Reality itself is a ı--for God; but it cannot be a system for any existing spirit" (CUP, p. 107). on (1941/1983, p. 55) comments upon the fact that reality cannot be a system for s and further contrasts and compares a logical system with a system which ces reality:

> But a system embracing reality is for human knowledge impossible. For Reality is for human knowledge something which is always in process of becoming, and hence the necessary systematic finality is an indefinitely postponed *desideratum.* In a logical system all development is immanent, from the same to the same, the whole being implicit in each part. Hence it is dominated by necessity, for the necessary is simply an expression for self-identity and self-relatedness, and for the eternal sameness of the relation which each logical concept or system bears to itself.

Again, it should be noted that the object of Kierkegaard's attack was Hegel's ı, which Hegel saw as unfolding of necessity. Pojman (1984, p. 28) has noted that gaard looked upon Hegel's System "as the arch example of hubris." Kierkegaard ch attempts at system building as instances wherein one attempts to know reality

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el which is appropriate and possible only for God; for Kierkegaard all such

ts are an offense to God.

The idea of a limit is also present in Kierkegaard's discussion, within

ophical Fragments, of the paradox:

> The highest pitch of every passion is to will its own downfall; and so it is also the supreme passion of the Reason to seek a collision, though this collision must in one way or another prove its undoing. The supreme paradox of all thought is to discover something that thought cannot think. This passion is at bottom present in all thinking, even in the thinking of the individual, in so far as in thinking he participates in something transcending himself. (PF, p. 46)

quiring into the nature of this unknown something with which Reason collides,

egaard notes: "It is the Unknown. It is not a human being, in so far as we know

man is; nor is it any other known thing. So let us call this unknown something: *the*

(PF, p. 49). Reason recognizes that it cannot advance beyond this point, that it has

ed a limit. But the passion of reason remains unabated even though it recognizes

he Unknown (the God) is unknown because it is beyond Reason's capacity to know,

though it further recognizes that even if the Unknown were to become known, it

not be talked about (*vide*, PF, p. 55). Kierkegaard further characterizes the

own as "the limit to which the Reason repeatedly comes" (PF, p. 55). Ultimately,

egaard says that if the Unknown is to become known, the Unknown must reveal

to us by means of the Teacher, the God-man paradox encountered in Christ. More

e said concerning the Unknown in the chapter which sets forth a comparative

sis of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's views of ethics and religion.

The early Wittgenstein also acknowledges the limits of language and reason. In a

rsation recorded by Friedrich Waismann, Wittgenstein directly cites Kierkegaard's

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rception of this limit within the context of his own work:

> Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language....Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be mere nonsense....[1] Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox). This running up against the limits of language is *ethics*. (WVC, 1979, p. 68) [4]

e bracketed figure in this passage refers the reader to a note wherein Waismann cites o more examples of running up against the limits of language which the early ittgenstein noted. The first of these is found in the *Tractatus*: "Feeling the world as a nited whole--it is this that is mystical" (TLP, 6.45b). The second example appears in "Lecture on Ethics": "'Nothing can happen to me,' that is, whatever may happen, for it is without significance" (LE, p. 8). The early Wittgenstein refers to the latter perience as the feeling that one is absolutely safe. A third experience, the experience of ling guilty, of feeling that "God disapproves of our conduct" is also mentioned in the *cture on Ethics* (LE, p. 10). Employing Kierkegaard's terminology, Wittgenstein scribes these as experiences wherein thought has discovered "something that thought not think" (PF, p. 46). Although we do attempt to express or to say what it is that we perience on such occasions, we find that words fail us when we try to adequately scribe the experience or to fully express the significance of the experience. Although early Wittgenstein does not describe these experiences as encounters with the

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[4] Concerning Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's treatments of the limit, it should be ed that a potential common source for both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein is to be nd in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's work. Kierkegaard acknowledges his indebtedness Lessing in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in a section entitled "Attributable to ssing." Wittgenstein does not speak of Lessing in this context, but he does cite Lessing *Culture and Value*, (p. 8e).

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nown," or "the God," as does Kierkegaard, he does acknowledge that such riences are mystical.

According to the early Wittgenstein, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is to be rstood as an attempt to draw a limit between the sayable and the unsayable. In the ce, Wittgenstein advises his reader:

> The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood. The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.
>
> Thus the aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather--not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts: for in order to be able to draw a limit to thought, we should have to find both sides of the limit thinkable (i.e. we should have to be able to think what cannot be thought).
>
> It will therefore only be in language that the limit can be drawn, and what lies on the other side of the limit will simply be nonsense. (TLP, p. 3)

To understand the manner in which the early Wittgenstein draws this limit, it is sary to briefly explicate the Tractarian view of language. Wittgenstein writes, "We e facts to ourselves" (TLP. 2.1). By virtue of our reason, we construct a picture, "a l of reality" (TLP, 2.12); which is itself a fact (*vide*, TLP, 2.141). Within this model lity, "the elements of the picture are representatives of objects" (TLP, 2.131) which terminately related to one another (*vide*, TLP, 2.14). Wittgenstein calls this ction of the elements the "structure of the picture"; he calls the possibility of this ure the "pictorial form of the picture" (TLP, 2.151).

The pictorial form reflects the possibility that things in reality are related to each in the same manner as are the elements of the picture, i.e., the structure of the e reflects the structure of reality. Since the pictorial form is attached to reality, "it

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hes right out to it" (TLP, 2.1511) and "is laid against reality like a measure" (TLP, 512). If the picture is adequately to depict reality, the pictorial form of the picture must elate directly with the form of reality (*vide*, TLP, 2.17). Given this, "A picture can ict any reality whose form it has. A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a ured one anything coloured, etc." (TLP, 2.171). Since a picture is incapable of icting its own pictorial form, it is limited; although, it should be noted, the picture *lays* its pictorial form (*vide*, TLP, 2.172). The picture (model) stands apart from, or ide, the state of affairs which it represents; this allows us to determine whether the ure correctly or incorrectly depicts the state of affairs (*vide*, TLP, 2.173). If a picture ld depict its pictorial form by means of another picture, then it would be capable of ing itself outside its own pictorial form. Wittgenstein denies that this is possible *e*, TLP, 2.174). If it were possible, a picture could depict a picture of a picture *ad itum*. A limit is thereby imposed by the relationship of the picture to what it depicts.

According to the early Wittgenstein, the limits of our world are demarcated by c and language: "The *limits of my language* mean the limits of my world" (TLP, 5.6). his view, we can only say what the world has in it; any attempts to say what is not in world must be seen as attempts to go beyond the logical possibilities contained in any ct. If we were capable of going beyond these possibilities, it would mean that logic is ble of going beyond the world, and this is impossible for "The world is all that is the " (TLP, 1). The early Wittgenstein sets forth these characteristics of logic and thought llows:

> Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits.
> So we cannot say in logic, 'The world has this in it, and this, but not that.'

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For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well.

We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot *say* either. (TLP, 5.61)

assage is better understood in light of a previous passage wherein Wittgenstein "It used to be said that God could create anything except what could be contrary to vs of logic.--The truth is that we could not *say* what an 'illogical' world would look TLP, 3.031).

Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein recognize that reason ultimately nters a limit. For Kierkegaard, reason ultimately encounters the Unknown, "*the* which is beyond reason's capacity to know. The early Wittgenstein not only wledges running up against the limits of language to be ethics, but he further cites egaard's recognition that there is a running up against something. Both Kierkegaard ittgenstein associate the limit with the ethico-religious.

mic Justification

As has been demonstrated, Kierkegaard's treatment of necessity and the limit are l to his critique of Hegel's philosophy and to his consideration of what one must do ome a Christian. This is also the case concerning the failure of reflection [reason] to e adequate justification. Many of Kierkegaard's remarks concerning this character- f reason appear within the context of his discussion surrounding the supposedly positionless nature of the beginning of Hegel's System.

In his consideration of the Hegelian System, Kierkegaard observes that the claims to be presuppositionless because it begins with the immediate, but he then

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"*How does the System begin with the immediate? That is to say, does it begin with it diately?*" (CUP, p. 101). As Kierkegaard states, if we presume that Hegel's logical n came after existence, then the System is *ex post facto*, and it "does not begin diately with the immediacy with which existence began; although in another sense be said that existence did not begin with the immediate, since the immediate never uch, but is transcended as soon as it is" (CUP, p. 102). We simply are incapable of apturing the immediate; beginning immediately with the immediate is an impossi- Taking this to be so, Kierkegaard draws the following conclusion concerning the of Hegel's beginning: "The beginning which begins with the immediate *is thus eached by means of the process of reflection*" (CUP, p. 102). And since this ing is only reached by the process of reflection, it cannot in fact begin with the diate.

Given that we must begin via the process of reflection, Kierkegaard (CUP, p. 102) How do I put an end to the reflection which was set up in order to reach the ing here in question?" If we seek and find justification, then it is possible to ask for ication of the original justification, and so on to infinity. Such reflection can be only by means of resolve, and this, as Kierkegaard notes, has disastrous conse- s for the System:

> But if a resolution of the will is required to end the preliminary process of reflection, the presuppositionless character of the System is renounced. Only when reflection comes to a halt can a beginning be made, and reflection can be halted only by something else, and this something else is something quite different from the logical, being a resolution of the will. (CUP, p. 103)

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ems, but it also fails in its attempts to provide justification for right action. In a ussion concerning the individual who is engaged in existential deliberation with the of acting decisively, Kierkegaard states, "If I am essentially reflective and am in the umstance of having to act decisively, what then? Then my reflection will show me as many possibilities *pro* as *contra*, exactly as many" [X[1] A 66 (J&P, 3707)]. Reason g infinite, it is capable of presenting one with an endless series of considerations and stions. The result is that one finds oneself confronted by the *absurd*. According to kegaard, "the absurd is this: that I, a rational being, must act in the situation where understanding [*Forstand*], my reflection say to me: You can just as well do the one g as the other, where my understanding and reflection say to me: You cannot act--that vertheless must act" [X[1] A 66 (J&P, 3707)]. In such a case one knows that one must nately act yet reason cannot conclusively demonstrate the most propitious action, for y possibility is confronted by a counter-possibility. Kierkegaard cites the failure of on with respect to such a decision when he states, "Nothing is more impossible and e self-contradictory than to act (infinitely-decisively) by virtue of reflection" [X[1] A 66 ', 3707)].

How is one to get out of this bind wherein "reflection has blocked the passage"? rding to Kierkegaard, "I take one of the possibilities and turn beseechingly to God ay: This is how I am doing it; bless it now; I cannot do otherwise, for I am brought alt by reflection" [X[1] A 66 (J&P, 3707)]. Kierkegaard further observes that when cts decisively in a daily routine, one may think the action taken stems from tion, but one is herein mistaken, for reflection always is characterized by the

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ilibrium of possibilities. Nonetheless, Kierkegaard's primary concern is the insuffic-
:y of reason to inform one of how one should act in existential matters wherein one
st act "infinitely-decisively."

As we have seen, Kierkegaard's demonstrations that the immediate may only be
hed by means of reflection, and that reflection may only be halted by means of an act
ne will, undermine Hegel's claim of presuppositionlessness. Kierkegaard advances
her argument, worthy of our consideration, against Hegel's claim that the System is
uppositionless. This argument points to the reliance of speculative philosophy upon
uage which it has inherited and appropriated for its purposes as opposed to having
eloped:

> If it were the case that philosophers are presuppositionless, an account would still have to be made of language and its entire importance and relation to speculation, for here speculation does indeed have a medium which it has not provided itself. [III A 11 (J&P, 3281)]

passage reflects Kierkegaard's highly developed understanding of the inherent
tations of language as the medium of philosophical discussion. It is impossible to be
uppositionless for our language is laden with presuppositions. Here one cannot help
note the similarity to the later Wittgenstein's insistence that we must appropriate
nary language (as opposed to attempting to create some logically perfect language)
that we must attempt to understand the manner in which the hidden presuppositions
in our ordinary language lead to confusion and philosophical muddles.

The early Wittgenstein's remarks concerning justification are limited to his
ideration of the law of induction. Like Hume, Wittgenstein held that induction had
a psychological justification, as opposed to a logical justification (*vide*, TLP,

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31). Since the law of induction is stated as a proposition which has sense, he further
ls that it could not be a law of logic (*vide*, TLP, 6.31) and that induction is to be
erstood as "accepting as true the *simplest* law that can be reconciled with our
eriences" (TLP, 6.363). And because the only necessity is logical necessity, no
pulsion makes one thing happen as a consequence of another thing having happened.

The later Wittgenstein's view of induction and the law of induction is essentially
ame as that encountered in the early Wittgenstein; in that sense, the treatment of
ction is a unifying thread between the early and the later Wittgenstein. The later
genstein considers all attempts to ground the law of induction to be futile; it could
more be grounded than certain particular propositions concerning the material of
rience" (OC, § 499). This view accords with his statement to the effect that induction
ists in our accepting as true the simplest law which accords with our experience
, TLP, 6.363).

The later Wittgenstein further observes that we are tempted to think that because
thing happens repeatedly the associated proposition is thereby proven. He warns
st this point of view when he reminds us of the difference between a proof and an
rical foundation. The fact that something happens repeatedly does not serve as a
of the associated proposition but it does provide us with an empirical foundation
serves as the basis of our assumption that it will so happen in the future:

> So hasn't one, in this sense, a *proof* of the proposition? But that the same thing has happened again is not a proof of it; though we do say that it gives us a right to assume it.
>
> This is what we *call* an "empirical foundation" for our assumptions. (OC, §§ 295-296).

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As the later Wittgenstein points out, both the empirical propositions associated

ur empirical foundation and the propositions of logic serve as the basis for our

ıg:

> I want to say: propositions of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language).--This observation is not of the form "I know...". "I know..." states what *I* know, and that is not of logical interest.
>
> In this remark the expression "propositions of the form of empirical propositions" is itself thoroughly bad; the statements in question are statements about material objects. And they do not serve as foundations in the same way as hypotheses which, if they turn out to be false, are replaced by others. (OC, §§ 401-402)

Concerning the truth of the law of induction, the later Wittgenstein argues that the

ay in fact be true, but that does not mean that we know it to be true, nor does it

hat it makes sense to say we know that the law of induction is true:

> But it would strike me as nonsense to say "I know that the law of induction is true".
>
> Imagine such a statement made in a court of law! It would be more correct to say "I believe in the law of..." where 'believe' has nothing to do with *surmising*. (OC, § 500)

The later Wittgenstein makes a number of other comments concerning the nature

fication within the context of his discussion of the law of induction. He argues that

not need the law of induction to justify our actions or predictions: "The squirrel

ot infer by induction that it is going to need stores next winter as well. And no

lo we need a law of induction to justify our actions or our predictions" (OC, § 287).

nstein's assertion is better understood in light of his discussion surrounding our

to successfully continue a mathematical series:

> Would it be correct to say that it is a matter of induction, and that I am as certain

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that I shall be able to continue the series, as I am that this book will drop to the ground when I let go; and that I should be no less astonished if I suddenly and for no obvious reason got stuck in working out the series, than I should be if the book remained hanging in the air instead of falling?--To that I will reply that we don't need any grounds for *this* certainty either. What could justify the certainty *better* than success? (PI, § 324).

Although Kierkegaard barely mentions induction, the fact that Kierkegaard and ly Wittgenstein both held that the only necessity is that of logical necessity and, ondingly, that all coming into being is contingent as opposed to necessary, would o indicate that Kierkegaard would also have held a Humean position regarding any to ground the law of induction. On the basis of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's of logic, it is reasonable to expect that Kierkegaard would have agreed with the Vittgenstein's assessment that the law of induction is not an *a priori* law (*vide*, .31).

Apart from considerations of the law of induction, the later Wittgenstein's ent of justification rests upon the understanding that our knowledge is comprised of st inherited system. Justification is connected to this system, for one must ask how osition is related to other propositions which surround it in the language-game is its natural home. In discussing a situation wherein one might claim to believe ing absurd, e.g., that motor cars grew out of the earth, Wittgenstein asks, "But how is *one* belief hang together with all the rest? We should like to say that someone uld believe that does not accept our whole system of verification" (OC, § 279). er Wittgenstein reminds us that we do not hold fast to one proposition in isolation ther propositions, but we rather hold fast to a "nest of propositions" (OC, § 225). ation of any proposition must therefore take into consideration its fit with other

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tions which are in the same nest. This view is also expressed as it relates to more systems in *Philosophical Remarks* where the early Wittgenstein observes: "It isn't to say that *p* is provable, what we must say is: provable according to a particular " (PR, § 153).

As an example of the fit of one proposition with numerous other propositions, the ittgenstein considers our knowledge that the earth is round and points out that we ntinue to hold to this assertion unless we were to look upon nature very differently:

> We know that the earth is round. We have definitively ascertained that it is round.
> We shall stick to this opinion, unless our whole way of seeing nature changes. "How do you know that?"--I believe it. (OC, § 291)

his proposition is part of a whole nest of propositions, the abandonment of this ition would also entail the abandonment of numerous other propositions.

Within the context of a discussion concerning the nature of following rules, the ittgenstein observes that we ultimately reach the point where it no longer makes o ask for justification:

> "How am I able to obey a rule?"--if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do.
> If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: "This is simply what I do." (PI, § 217)

tely justification comes to rest in what we do, in our actions, in how we think and What people accept as justification--is shewn by how they think and live" (PI, § ustification comes to rest in our "form of life," i.e., in our natural history. When we ached this level, explanations then fail us, and we must rely upon description: "At oint one has to pass from explanation to mere description" (OC, § 189). This may s with an uneasy feeling, but as he said, "The difficulty is to realize the

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dlessness of our believing" (OC, § 166). Nonetheless, "...the chain of reasons has an PI, § 326).

These observations led the later Wittgenstein to a very interesting observation: not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? ust look at the practice of language, then you will see it" (OC, § 501). Here one is minded of the early Wittgenstein's insistence in the *Tractatus* that "Propositions he logical form of reality" (TLP, 4.121). One is further reminded of the later nstein's discussion of the search for the essence of games in the *Philosophical gations* and of his advice to "*look and see* whether there is anything common to o repeat: don't think, but look" (PI, § 66).

The earlier insistence that propositions show the logical form of reality and the sistence that we must look at the practice of language reflect another unifying between the early and the later Wittgenstein. Both of these views also point to the at justification ultimately comes to rest in our common forms of life, i.e., in , in what we do, in our linguistic practices, or our natural history.

Concerning the nature of justification, it should be noted that both Kierkegaard later Wittgenstein believed that justification must come to an end, and both held comes to an end in action. However, it should be noted that Kierkegaard and nstein differ in their understanding as to why justification must come to an end. erkegaard, justification must ultimately come to an end if one is to act decisively. er it be for the purpose of beginning a system or for the purpose of acting ly-decisively, one must terminate the process of reflection and the search for

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natters of epistemic justification in which justification ultimately rests upon the fact
is is what we do. Although some may object that this difference is so significant as
e any comparison fruitless, one must not lose sight of the fact that Kierkegaard
at philosophy and speculation are only possible because of shared linguistic
tions. In this sense, Kierkegaard acknowledges the activities and the forms of life
are stressed by Wittgenstein.

Some may still object that the context of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's
erations surrounding the nature of justification are so different as to render any
rison unwarranted. Such a conclusion must be considered incorrect, as both the
nd the later Wittgenstein's considerations of ethics and religion reveal. The early
nstein held with Kierkegaard that reason cannot provide adequate justification for
ions:

> Nothing we do can be defended absolutely and finally. But only by reference to something else that is not questioned. I.e. no reason can be given why you should act (or should have acted) *like this*, except that by doing so you bring about such and such a situation, which again has to be an aim you *accept*. (CV, 1931, p. 16e)

manner, consideration of the later Wittgenstein's treatment of religious similes
that these similes, or pictures, which serve to convey rules of life can only
e, rather than justify, what we do (*vide*, CV, 1937, p. 29e). Furthermore, Witt-
n remarks, "Religion says: *Do this!--Think like that!*--but it cannot justify this and
even tries to, it becomes repellent; because for every reason it offers there is a
ounter-reason" (CV, 1937, p. 29e).

As these quotations reveal, both the early and the later Wittgenstein held the same

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concerning the nature of justification as it relates to religious action or belief.

egaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein agree that reason, as

d to ethics and religion, fails to provide adequate justification for action. Further

eration of this shared viewpoint will be set forth in the chapter on ethics and

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ledge and Truth

Given Kierkegaard's project of addressing the question of what one must do if one

ecome a Christian, it should come as no surprise to the reader that Kierkegaard's

tanding of knowledge is firmly grounded in a theistic world-view which demands

e acknowledge the sacred. He deplored the manner in which philosophers treat

things as though they are clearly dispensable should they not accord with the

opher's objectives or views:

> Philosophers treat dogmas, the sacred affirmations of Scripture, in short the whole sacred consciousness, the way Appius Pulcher treated the sacred hens. One consults them, and if they predict something bad, then like the general one says: If the sacred hens won't eat, then let them drink--and thereupon casts them overboard. [II A 529 (J&P, 3279)]

Kierkegaard does not come right out and say as much within the context of this

entry, his writings certainly point out that just as it is noted by Livy that Appius

r lost the battle of Drepanum in 249 B.C. because of the manner in which he

the augur's warning, we too shall lose the battle in life if we choose to ignore what

ed.

Kierkegaard believes that knowledge has a sacred quality about it, since it is not

e province of man but is rather God-given. As he notes,

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he philosophers think that all knowledge, yes, even the existence [*Tilværelse*] of
ıe deity, is something man himself produces and that revelation can be referred
› only in a figurative sense in somewhat the same sense as one may say the rain
ılls down from heaven, since the rain is nothing but an earth produced mist; but
ıey forget, to keep the metaphor, that in the beginning God separated the waters
f the heaven and of the earth and that there is something higher than the *atmo-*
›here. [II A 523 (J&P, 2266)]

ierkegaard is advancing the argument that God is the giver of all knowledge. In

notes to this passage Kierkegaard further states: "The contrast to this I have

l in one of my other journals [i.e., II A 302] by the statement that all knowledge

atio" [II A 534 (J&P, 2267)]. From the theological perspective, the *re-spiratio*

f knowledge is associated with the creation account of man set forth in Genesis

Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his

ıe breath of life, and the man became a living being" (NIV). Life is in-breathed,

ɜegaard sees knowledge as possessing a quality of exhalation and re-breathing of

hich God has given.

ierkegaard holds that there are two types of reflection [reason], objective and

ɜ reflection, which yield, respectively, two different types of knowledge,

l knowledge and essential knowledge. In objective reflection, thought is directed

n the subject in such a manner that truth becomes objective. In subjective

, thought is directed toward the subject in such a manner that it goes deep within

ɜt and the truth becomes subjective. Kierkegaard characterizes objective reason

s:

ıe way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental, and thereby trans-
rms existence into something indifferent, something vanishing. Away from the
bject the objective way of reflection leads to the objective truth, and while the
bject and his subjectivity become indifferent, the truth also becomes indifferent,

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nd this indifference is precisely its objective validity; for all interest, like all ecisiveness, is rooted in subjectivity. The way of objective reflection leads to bstract thought, to mathematics, to historical knowledge of different kinds; and lways it leads away from the subject, whose existence or non-existence, and from ıe objective point of view quite rightly, becomes infinitely indifferent. (CUP, p. 73)

Iow are we to understand what Kierkegaard means when he says that objective

ıdifferent? Surely, many truths which he would call indifferent are of crucial

ce for our existence. For example, when driving we ignore the truths of physics

n peril. Kierkegaard cannot mean indifferent in the sense of unimportant. The

indifference with which Kierkegaard is herein concerned has to do with disinter-

a neutral or unbiased disposition. This sense of indifference becomes clearer in

vhat Kierkegaard has to say about the maximal limit of objective reflection:

t its maximum this way will lead to the contradiction that only the objective has ome into being, while the subjective has gone out; that is to say, the existing ubjectivity has vanished, in that it has made an attempt to become what in the ostract sense is called subjectivity, the mere abstract form of an abstract bjectivity. And yet, the objectivity which has thus come into being is, from the ubjective point of view at the most, either an hypothesis or an approximation, ecause all eternal decisiveness is rooted in subjectivity. (CUP, p. 173)

Vhen one is concerned with questions which involve eternal decisiveness, e.g.,

become a Christian?, one cannot remain indifferent in the sense of impartiality

lity. And yet the path of objective reflection as it relates to such questions would

s in the search for evidence in such a manner that one would move closer to

g the Christian faith by means of a series of approximations, e.g., I have some

ion for believing, I now have more justification, I have almost enough, etc. In

oach one could never have enough justification because even if one had a

ve proof one's belief would not be of the right kind, it would not have the right

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and, hence, it would not be *faith*. Again, one must keep Kierkegaard's project in

ıe must remember that Kierkegaard is setting forth what is necessary if one is to

a Christian.

ı contrast to objective reflection, subjective reflection focuses upon the subject in

anner that the individual's subjectivity is of paramount importance. Kierkegaard

izes subjective reason in the following manner:

'he subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in
ıis intensification of inwardness to realize the truth. And it proceeds in such
ıshion that...the subjectivity of the subject becomes the final stage....Not for a
ngle moment is it forgotten that the subject is an existing individual, and that
xistence is a process of becoming. (CUP, pp. 175-176)

ard's view of subjective reflection is grounded in his understanding of human

ccording to Kierkegaard, man is a synthesis of animal and spirit, i.e., of the

l the infinite. The essential task of the individual who becomes aware of what it

exist is not to bring about existence via the mediation of the finite and the

ɔut rather, "as one who is composed of finite and infinite...to *become* one of the

entially" (CUP, p. 376). For this reason, Kierkegaard, in direct opposition to

sists that mediation marks the beginning of the task as opposed to the comple-

e task.

s noted before, objective reflection and subjective reflection yield respectively

l knowledge and essential knowledge (knowledge which is important in the

egree as opposed to knowledge of a thing's essence). According to Kierkegaard,

ntial knowledge relates to existence, or only such knowledge as has an essential

ıip is essential knowledge" (CUP, p. 176). This essential relationship to

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nce is not grounded in the identity which speculative philosophy holds to obtain en thought and being, nor does it mean that there exists objectively some object corresponds to the knowledge. Rather, essential knowledge is to be understood as tially relating to existence" in the sense that "knowledge has a relationship to the r, who is essentially an existing individual" (CUP, p. 177). Essential knowledge gnificance for the existential condition and development of the knowing subject; t is limited to ethical and ethico-religious knowledge, for "Only ethical and ethico-us knowledge has an essential relationship to the existence of the knower" (CUP, p. n contrast, "All knowledge which does not inwardly relate itself to existence, in the ion of inwardness, is, essentially viewed, accidental knowledge; its degree and s essentially indifferent" (CUP, pp. 176-177). That is, accidental knowledge is ally indifferent to one's existential development or to matters of inwardness, which to the ethical or ethico-religious.

When one knows something, the knower stands in relationship to what is known. ctive reflection, emphasis is placed upon the truth content of the purported edge rather than upon the nature of the relationship between the knower and what is . In subjective reflection, emphasis is placed upon the existing subject as that stands in relationship to what is known. "Which of these two ways," Kierkegaard s now the way of truth for an existing spirit?" (CUP, p. 173). Kierkegaard es this question and the crucial differences between these two ways in the ng manner:

When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is

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not focused upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should be thus related to what is not true. [Original italicized] (CUP, p. 178)

ling to Kierkegaard, one is "in the truth" if one stands in the proper relationship to ne claims to know. In objective reflection, one stands "in the truth" if one has taken per care to assure that the object to which one stands in relationship is indeed true, one has taken care to assure that standard conditions of observation are present, rification conditions are met, etc. Given that these conditions are met, one may to know that something is true. In subjective reflection, one stands "in the truth" if ys sufficient attention to the nature of one's relationship to what is adjudged true.

To demonstrate the difference between raising the question of truth in an objective r as opposed to a subjective manner, Kierkegaard asks that we consider the le of the knowledge of God. In this case, objective reflection is concerned with the n whether the object of knowledge is indeed God or something other than God, s subjective reflection is concerned with "the question whether the individual is to something *in such a manner* that his relationship is in truth a God-relationship" p. 178). In subjective reflection, if one passionately searches to know God with hole heart and soul, then one stands "in the truth" even if one has not yet come e knowledge of God. In objective reflection, the focus is on the results of the ; in subjective reflection, the focus is upon the manner and spirit in which one ts the inquiry. Kierke-gaard draws the reader's attention to the fact that he is herein

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ncerned with the nature of essential truth, or "the truth which is essentially related to istence," as opposed to accidental truth, and that the distinction is drawn for the rpose of clarifying essential truth as "inwardness or as subjectivity" (CUP, p. 178).

Kierkegaard holds two different conceptions of truth which correspond, on the e hand, to objective reflection and accidental knowledge and, on the other hand, to bjective reflection and to essential knowledge. One can stand in either an objective or a bjective relationship to what is adjudged true. Consideration of objective truth, as it is forth in propositions, is concerned with an ideality adjudged either true or false as it es or does not correspond to some state of affairs in reality which is subject to verifica- n. In contrast, consideration of subjective truth is concerned with the relationship ween ideality and a reality which is present when something is accorded worth or lue. In the case of subjective truth, when the ideality is realized in something, it is udged to be true. In objective truth, the truth resides in the correspondence of the tement to reality. In subjective truth the reality itself takes on the quality of truth or sehood, as, e.g., a person becomes a true friend (*vide*, Swenson, 1941/1983, p. 122).

Again, it bears repeating that Kierkegaard's consideration of the ways of objective lection and subjective reflection is integrally bound up with his consideration of the estion of what one must do to become a Christian. In his consideration of this question, erkegaard concludes that the objective way is doomed to failure for it leads away from vardness or subjectivity. The objective way is the way of approximation; it is the way scientific inquiry whereby knowledge and truth are always expanding and are always bject to revision upon the basis of new discoveries. In contrast to this way, if one is to

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e into a God-relationship, one must do so via the subjective way, the way of appro-
ion. In appropriation one takes the truth into oneself in such a manner that it trans-
s the knowing subject.

As has been demonstrated, Kierkegaard's analysis of knowledge and truth was
ucted within an overtly theistic framework in which the question of what one must
become a Christian is constantly under consideration. This concern led to an
sis of the differences between objective and subjective reflection, accidental and
tial knowledge, and objective and subjective truth. Two ways confront the one who
nsidering the question of whether or not to become a Christian: the way of approxi-
on and the way of appropriation. As Kierkegaard attempts to demonstrate, the way of
oximation is totally inappropriate for it is concerned with objective reflection,
ental knowledge, and objective truth, all of which work against faith.

It is at this point that a major disaffinity between the work of Kierkegaard and the
and later Wittgenstein becomes apparent. Given that the aim of both the early and
ter Wittgenstein was to dissolve philosophical problems through clarifying the
ings of our language, the analysis of knowledge and truth is conducted within a radi-
different framework from that of Kierkegaard. Hallett (1977, p. 769) makes a
y pertinent observation: "Kierkegaard's influence, or at least the deep affinity of their
, probably had more to do with the topics which W. did not treat and his reasons for
oing so." Hallett (1977, p. 24) further notes that probably the most important
ment between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* is to be seen in the area of their
non silence, in the fact that neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein addresses "the

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ıt questions of politics, history, art, ethics, religion and metaphysics." Both Kierke-
d and Wittgenstein, in somewhat different ways, point to areas of life which are inca-
le of adequate expression by means of representational language. To a certain degree,
somewhat limits comparisons; nonetheless, both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein do set
ı a number of ethical and religious views, many of which will be investigated in the
chapter.

Both the early and the later Wittgenstein's views of knowledge and truth focus far
e upon what Kierkegaard classifies as accidental knowledge and objective truth than
ı essential knowledge and subjective truth.[5] This is not to say that the early or the
Wittgenstein was unsympathetic to Kierkegaard's project or to some of the concerns
ch Kierkegaard addressed, for that is clearly not the case, as may be seen from
erous manuscript entries subsequently published in *Culture and Value*.

The early Wittgenstein's views concerning knowledge and truth are set forth
in the Tractarian account of language wherein facts are viewed as states of affairs
h are composed of objects (or things) (*vide*, TLP, 2-2.01). If one knows an object,
one also knows all of the ways in which it can combine in states of affairs, that is,
knows all of the logical possibilities contained within the object (*vide*, TLP, 2.0123)
ı other words, the internal properties of the object (*vide*, TLP, 2.01231). As was
iously noted, the Tractarian view further holds that language pictures or models

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Although neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein discusses subjective truth or
ective knowledge, some discussion of their views of truth and knowledge is
anted here because some connections with Kierkegaard do become apparent and
liscussion has ramifications for later discussion of Kierkegaard's, the early
genstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of ethics and religion.

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.ity: "A proposition is a picture of reality. A proposition is a model of reality as we .gine it" (TLP, 4.01). Therefore, if one understands a proposition, one is already ıiliar with the state of affairs pictured by the proposition and one understands the sense he proposition apart from explanation (*vide*, TLP, 4.021). Accordingly, a proposition ctions as follows: "A proposition *shows* its sense. A proposition *shows* how things ıd *if* it is true. And it *says that* they do so stand" (TLP, 4.022). In this passage we ounter the early Wittgenstein's famous "say/show" distinction. Through reason and guage, we construct propositions and compare reality to those propositions (*vide*, TLP, 5). And the propositions that we so construct are "true or false only in virtue of being a ure of reality" (TLP, 4.06). Given the nature of the logical scaffolding which one ounters in the Tractarian account, it should come as no surprise that knowledge is unded in logical necessity, in an *a priori* certainty: "The connexion between knowl- e and what is known is that of logical necessity" (TLP, 5.1362).

According to Wittgenstein, the fact that a proposition is adjudged true or false is ntially related (as opposed to being accidentally related) to the fact that the proposi- possesses meaning, for any proposition which has meaning is either true or false as it rately or inaccurately pictures reality:

> "True" and "false" are not accidental properties of a proposition, such that, when it has meaning, we can say it is also true or false: on the contrary, to have meaning *means* to be true or false: the being true or false actually constitutes the relation of the proposition to reality, which we mean by saying that it has meaning (*Sinn*). (NB, p. 113)

arly Wittgenstein further observes that when we consider various propositions ged to be true, we may observe that they may correspond quite differently to the

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/. What is really common to all of these cases, according to Wittgenstein, is that they
ssess "*the general form of a proposition*" (NB, p. 113). When we give the general form
a proposition we set forth the manner in which "symbols of things and relations"
rrespond with the way things stand in reality. In setting forth the general form of a
position, according to Wittgenstein, we "are saying what is meant by saying that a
position is true" (NB, p. 113). Accordingly, the early Wittgenstein sets forth the
llowing definition of truth: "To say 'This proposition has *sense*' means "'This proposi-
n is true" means...' ("p" is true = "p". p . Def.: only instead of "p" we must here
roduce the general form of a proposition.)" (NB, p. 113).

This definition and analysis of truth conditions associated with propositions
rresponds with that given by the later Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*:

> At bottom, giving "This is how things are" as the general form of propositions is the same as giving the definition: a proposition is whatever can be true or false. For instead of "This is how things are" I could have said "This is true". (Or again, "This is false".) But we have
>
> 'p' is true = p
> 'p' is false = not-p.
>
> And to say that a proposition is whatever can be true or false amounts to saying: we call something a proposition when *in our language* we apply the calculus of truth functions to it. (PI, § 136)

n this it may be seen that the early and the later Wittgenstein, although embracing
different conceptions of language, embraced the same view of truth, a view which is
nded in the general form of a proposition. Although the earlier account of truth looks
much like a correspondence theory of truth, the later Wittgenstein's view of truth is

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often referred to as a redundancy view of truth for to say "'p' is true" is simply to say "p", i.e., "is true" is redundant and drops out.

Any analysis of the affinities and disaffinities among Kierkegaard's and the early and later Wittgenstein's views of truth must take into consideration the logically atomistic account of language encountered in the *Tractatus* as well as the intense investigation of language in the *Investigations*. With respect to these investigations into the nature of language, it bears noting that Kierkegaard's investigation of language pales by comparison. Nonetheless, Kierkegaard's and the early and later Wittgenstein's conceptions of truth, so long as truth is understood in terms of objective truth, to use Kierkegaard's terminology, possess a number of affinities. Given the fact that Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein hold to the three laws of reason and to the view that the only necessity is logical necessity, this should come as no real surprise. As has been noted, both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein believe that our knowledge of objects is associated with logical necessity, that is, with the internal, essential properties of the object.

Many of the later Wittgenstein's comments concerning knowledge are to be found in the work entitled *On Certainty*. This work was written in response to G. E. Moore's arguments in behalf of common sense. In these arguments, Moore attempted to defend the use of "I know..." in matters of common sense, e.g., "I know that I have two hands." Wittgenstein saw Moore's argument as resting upon a misunderstanding of the language-games involved and the matter of justification associated with these language-games. In objecting to Moore's position, Wittgenstein argues that simply asserting that

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one knows something can in no way serve as a proof: "What is the proof that I *know* something? Most certainly not my saying that I know it" (OC, § 487). The later Wittgenstein further argues that neither the enumeration of what one claims to know nor the protestations of those who make knowledge claims may be accepted as the basis of proof (*vide*, OC, § 48). As Wittgenstein points out, when philosophers use the words "I know..." within the context of philosophical discussion, they are using these words very differently from when they are used in our ordinary life to say "I know that that is a..." (OC, § 406). Wittgenstein confesses that when Moore said "I know that that's..." he desired to say that Moore didn't know any such thing, yet Wittgenstein observes that he would not say that to a non-philosopher who made the statement in ordinary conversation. Accordingly, Wittgenstein felt that there was something fundamentally different about these two uses of "I know..." (*vide*, OC, § 407). The later Wittgenstein questions our use of "know" as a "preeminently philosophical word" because it leads us astray in such a way that we do not recognize the foundation of our action, a foundation which lies in the fact that "certain propositions seem to underlie all questions and all thinking":

> And in fact, isn't the use of the word "know" as a pre-eminently philosophical word altogether wrong? If "know" has this interest, why not "being certain"? Apparently because it would be too subjective. But isn't "know" *just* as subjective? Isn't one misled by the grammatical peculiarity that "p" follows from "I know p"?
>
> "I believe I know" would not need to express a lesser degree of certainty.--True, but one isn't trying to express even the greatest subjective certainty, but rather that certain propositions seem to underlie all questions and all thinking. (OC, § 415)

Again we see that justification takes place against the backdrop of the inherited system of propositions.

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The nature of this inherited system of beliefs and the justification of beliefs ecomes clearer in light of the later Wittgenstein's analysis of the manner in which our eliefs cohere to form a greater whole. As Wittgenstein notes, "Our knowledge forms an ormous system. And only within this system has a particular bit the value we give to it")C, § 410). If one is asked to describe the system of one's convictions, one may not ways be able to do so, but it is to be recognized that the system is nonetheless present *ide*, OC, § 102). The reason we may not always be able to describe our convictions is e to the fact that we have inherited our system of beliefs from a broader community, at is, we have simply taken in our language and our system of beliefs as a part of the e which surrounds us. We do not consciously subject each one of our beliefs to testing fore taking it in and making it a part of our system of beliefs; we take in numerous liefs and "light dawns gradually over the whole" (OC, § 141). The beliefs are accepted the basis of human authority; a great deal of what we learn is simply taken for granted; s not questioned (*vide*, OC, § 161). As the later Wittgenstein states,

> In general I take as true what is found in text-books, of geography for example. Why? I say: All these facts have been confirmed a hundred times over. But how do I know that? What is my evidence for it? I have a world-picture. Is it true or false? Above all it is the substratum of all my enquiring and asserting. The propositions describing it are not all equally subject to testing. (OC, § 162)

addressing the matter of testing statements, Wittgenstein maintains, "What counts as adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the guage-game" (OC, § 82). The adequate test of a proposition is no longer solely the nner in which the picture obtains, the manner in which it pictures reality, as in the *actatus*. In contrast, attention shifts to the broader frame of reference: "The truth of

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tain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference" (OC, § 83). While the th of certain empirical propositions is connected to, or is bound to, our frame of erence, this does not alter Wittgenstein's analysis of what it means to say of something t it is true. Rather it tells us how we must set about determining if certain empirical positions are true.

The later Wittgenstein further holds that the manner in which we back up or tify a knowledge claim depends upon the language-game; justification of knowledge ims differs from one language-game to another (*vide*, OC, § 560). Wittgenstein points some of the different senses associated with the use of "I know" when he says: "Instead I know it' one may say in some cases 'That's how it is--rely on it.' In some cases, vever 'I learned it years and years ago'; and sometimes: 'I am sure it is so'" (OC, §). In a discussion concerning the role of experience in regard to knowledge claims, tgenstein remarks:

> We say we know that water boils when it is put over a fire. How do we know? Experience has taught us.--I say "I know that I had breakfast this morning"; experience hasn't taught me that. One also says "I know that he is in pain". The language-game is different every time, we are *sure* every time, and people will agree with us that we are *in a position* to know every time. And that is why the propositions of physics are found in textbooks for everyone.
>
> If someone says he *knows* something, it must be something that, by general consent, he is in a position to know. (OC, § 555).

ough the language-game differs in each case, the individual who is correctly said to w something is in a proper position to know it. Knowledge differs from belief cisely because the agent is in a position to know: "One doesn't say: he is in a position elieve that. But one does say: It is reasonable to assume that in this situation' (or 'to eve that')" (OC, § 556).

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The fact that one must be in a position to know something points to the relational pect of knowledge. If one does not stand in a proper or right relationship with what is nown, one is not in a position to know. Wittgenstein sets forth the view that knowledge aims express a relationship in the following manner:

> "I know" has a primitive meaning similar and related to "I see" ("wissen", idere"). And "I knew he was in the room, but he wasn't in the room" is like "I saw him the room, but he wasn't there". "I know" is supposed to express a relation, not between e and the sense of a proposition (like "I believe") but between me and a fact.... (OC, §)

ne relational aspect of knowledge points out another important difference between owing and believing. When one claims to know something, because the claim ex-esses a relationship, one must be able to provide adequate justification for the claim: "'I ow it' I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. But there is none for my lief" (OC, § 175).

What is the nature of this justification? In the case of knowledge, justification rries with it the notion that one can give compelling grounds; this does not hold in the se of belief. As the later Wittgenstein observes,

> One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming that he is convinced of it.
>
> But if what he believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes. (OC, § 243)

e standard of whether something is a telling ground is not some subjective or personal ndard; it is rather a standard which is impersonal and objective: "What counts as a ling ground for something is not anything I decide" (OC, § 271). Others must be able of standing in a proper relationship to what is claimed by the one who professes

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> "I know" has a primitive meaning similar and related to "I see" ("wissen", "videre"). And "I knew he was in the room, but he wasn't in the room" is like "I saw him in the room, but he wasn't there". "I know" is supposed to express a relation, not between me and the sense of a proposition (like "I believe") but between me and a fact.... (OC, § 90)

The relational aspect of knowledge points out another important difference between knowing and believing. When one claims to know something, because the claim expresses a relationship, one must be able to provide adequate justification for the claim: "'I know it' I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. But there is none for my belief" (OC, § 175).

What is the nature of this justification? In the case of knowledge, justification carries with it the notion that one can give compelling grounds; this does not hold in the case of belief. As the later Wittgenstein observes,

> One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming that he is convinced of it.
>
> But if what he believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes. (OC, § 243)

The standard of whether something is a telling ground is not some subjective or personal standard; it is rather a standard which is impersonal and objective: "What counts as a telling ground for something is not anything I decide" (OC, § 271). Others must be capable of standing in a proper relationship to what is claimed by the one who professes

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The later Wittgenstein further observes that what one knows, one will also lieve: "What I know, I believe" (OC, § 177). However, the converse, "What I believe, I ıow," does not follow. Belief does not stand in the same relationship to one who lieves as does knowledge to one who knows. Wittgenstein further demonstrates the fference between belief and knowledge by noting that one who claims to believe mething may be said to possess subjective truth, but the same does not hold for one ıo claims to know something: "It would be correct to say: 'I believe..." has subjective ıth; but 'I know...' not" (OC, § 179, cf. OC, § 42). On this basis, one may be inclined to ink that the difference between knowledge and belief is a matter of differing mental ıtes. But according to the later Wittgenstein, the difference between knowledge and lief is not due to differing mental states:

> One may for example call "mental state" what is expressed by tone of voice in speaking, by gestures etc. It would thus be *possible* to speak of a mental state of conviction, and that may be the same whether it is knowledge or false belief. To think that different states must correspond to the words "believe" and "know" would be as if one believed that different people had to correspond to the word "I" and the name "Ludwig", because the concepts are different. (OC, § 42)

ittgenstein further emphasizes the view that beliefs and knowledge claims are differ- tly related to one who holds them when he observes that we need not always be capable answering the question concerning why someone believes something, but we must be le to answer the question concerning how one knows something (*vide*, OC, § 550).

Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein are in agreement that one who claims to ow something must stand in the proper relationship to what is known. As was noted lier, Kierkegaard maintains that the knower must be "in the truth": in the case of

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objective reflection, the subject is in the truth provided the object to which the knower is related is the truth; in the case of subjective reflection, the subject is in the truth in the event that the mode of the relationship (the manner in which one conducts the inquiry) is in the truth (*vide*, CUP, p. 178). Once again, it should be noted that the later Wittgenstein does not extend his investigation to a consideration of subjective reflection as does Kierkegaard.

Belief, Doubt, and Certainty

Kierkegaard's analysis of belief, doubt, and certainty occurs primarily within the context of discussion surrounding the matter of how we apprehend the past, and of the relevance of these considerations for one who would make a Christian commitment. Kierkegaard begins his analysis by noting that "Nature, as the spatial order, has only an immediate existence" (PF, p. 97). However, "everything that admits of a dialectic with respect to time is characterized by a certain duality, in that after having been present it can persist as past" (PF, p. 97). The historical consists of the past, and as the past, the historical has its own actuality; "the fact that it has happened is certain and dependable" (PF, 98). Although Kierkegaard acknowledges this certainty which attaches to the past, he further notes that there is a mode of uncertainty which attaches to the past as it was previously part of the process of becoming. As already noted, the process of becoming never occurs of necessity, but is shot through with contingency. For this reason, the past is engaged in a conflict between certainty and uncertainty, and may be understood only in terms of this conflict (*vide*, PF, p. 98).

Since our apprehension of the past is always tied up with this conflict between

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certainty and uncertainty, Kierkegaard advises us that the appropriate emotion for the consideration of the past is that of wonder, the passion befitting the historian. Alluding to Hegel, Kierkegaard notes that "if the philosopher never finds occasion to wonder (and how could it occur to anyone to wonder at a necessary construction, except by a new kind of contradiction?) he has *eo ipso* nothing to do with the historical" (PF, p. 99). Since the historical movement does not unfold of necessity, since it is not a necessary construction, contrary to what Hegel held, but rather develops through contingency, its *telos* lies outside itself. If the *telos* were inside historical movement, then it would unfold of necessity like an "immanent progression" (*vide*, PF, p. 100). The immutability of the past is therefore different from that of necessity, for the past came into existence through change and could have occurred in a different fashion. In contrast, the necessary, because it *is*, excludes all change (Nielson, 1983, p. 125).

In considering the question of whether we have knowledge of the past, Kierkegaard points out, "The historical cannot be given immediately to the senses, since the *elusiveness* of coming into existence is involved in it" (PF, p. 100). Kierkegaard further reasons that immediate impressions of events can never be impressions of the historical, for the historical always possesses a "*coming into existence*" which is incapable of being sensed immediately. The only thing that can be sensed immediately is immediate presence.

Given that the historical possesses the elusiveness of coming into existence, and can hence deceive, the historical is not a part of immediate sensation or of immediate cognition, for as Kierkegaard noted, these are incapable of deception. Kierkegaard

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aracterizes the quality of the elusiveness associated with coming into existence in the llowing manner:

> As compared with the immediate, coming into existence has an elusiveness by which even the most dependable fact is rendered doubtful. Thus when the observer sees a star, the star becomes involved in doubt the moment he seeks to become aware of its having come into existence. It is as if reflection took the star away from the senses. (PF, p. 100)

In continuing his investigation surrounding the means by which we apprehend the storical, Kierkegaard asserts that the organ of apprehension must have a structure which rresponds to the historical, for apart from such a structure it could not "repeatedly gate in its certainty the uncertainty that corresponds to the uncertainty of coming into istence" (PF, pp. 100-101). The uncertainty associated with coming into existence has o essential aspects: "the nothingness of the antecedent non-being" and the "annihilation the possible" by which every other possibility is also annihilated (PF, p. 101). Stated mewhat differently, when something comes into existence, two things are negated: ere is a negation of the antecedent nothingness and a negation of all other previously sociated possibilities.

According to Kierkegaard, the organ by which we apprehend the historical is ith" or "belief." [6] Faith negates the uncertainty associated with the past, the uncertainty sociated with all coming into existence. What one sees (the immediate), one knows th certainty, e.g., that the star is present in one's visual field. Faith enables one to

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[6] The Danish word "*Tro*" means both "faith" and "belief." As Howard V. Hong s noted in the *Philosophical Fragments* (p. 101), belief in this context is understood "*belief* or "faith...in a direct and ordinary sense,' as distinguished from Faith 'in eminent sense.'"

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believe the unseen, the mediate, with certainty, e.g., that the star came into existence. Belief functions in such a manner that it brings what is in the past "into the person's presence and, in so doing, makes it immediate cognition" (Pojman, 1984, p. 97).

Kierkegaard holds that comparison of belief and doubt must take place in light of the recognition that "immediate sensation and immediate cognition cannot deceive" (PF, p. 101). The Greek skeptics, Kierkegaard reminds us, acknowledged the veracity associated with immediate sensation and immediate cognition. In contrast to the universal doubt postulated by Hegelian philosophy, the doubt associated with Greek skepticism was of the retiring kind wherein "the Greek skeptic did not doubt by virtue of his knowledge but by an act of will" which involved the refusal to grant assent (PF, p. 102). The skeptic's refusal to grant assent derives from his desire to live error-free. Error, according to the Greek skeptic, results from drawing conclusions which go beyond what is contained in immediate sensation or immediate cognition. If one refuses to draw such conclusions, then one can live error-free. Accordingly, the Greek skeptic keeps his or her mind in suspense and wills to maintain this frame of mind.

How then are we to understand belief and knowledge on Kierkegaard's account? Kierkegaard's treatment of doubt and skepticism is for the purpose of showing how belief is markedly different from knowledge: "By way of contrast, it now becomes easy to see that belief is not a form of knowledge, but a free act, an expression of the will" (PF, p. 103).

The sense of what Kierkegaard is driving at becomes clearer in his analysis of the limitations of knowledge associated with one who is confronted with a fact which admits

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a sense of the historical. Consider again his example of one who sees a star, and who gins to wonder concerning its having come into existence. As previously noted, the mediate sensation of seeing the star is certain, but doubt attaches to its having come ɔ existence due to the uncertainty associated with all coming into existence. As ɜrkegaard mentions, we cannot know by immediate cognition or by necessity that the torical fact has come into existence (*vide*, PF, p. 104). According to Kierkegaard, torical facts always carry with them a sense of doubt associated with having come into stence which is ultimately overcome by the resolution to believe:

> The moment faith believes that its fact has come into existence, has happened, it makes the event and the fact doubtful in the process of becoming and makes its "thus" also doubtful through its relation to the possible "how" of the coming into existence. The conclusion of belief is not so much a conclusion as a resolution, and it is for this reason that belief excludes doubt (PF, p. 104).

ɜ chooses to believe, or to doubt, through a resolution of the will, and when one oses to believe, doubt is dispelled. Kierkegaard further acknowledges that it may ear as though anyone who infers from something's existence that it must have come existence is reasoning from effect to cause. As he points out, this cannot be the case, one "cannot sense or know immediately that what I sense or know immediately is an ct, since for the immediate apprehension it merely is" (PF, p. 104). For this reason, n one believes that something is an effect, one has already subjected the effect to the ɔt associated with the uncertainty of having come into existence and has chosen to el this doubt by an act of the will. It is for these reasons that Kierkegaard concludes:

> Belief is the opposite of doubt. Belief and doubt are not two forms of knowledge, determinable in continuity with one another, for neither of them is a cognitive act; they are opposite passions. Belief is a sense for coming into existence, and doubt is a protest against every conclusion that transcends immediate sensation and

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Kierkegaard's conception of belief and doubt as affective passions as opposed to ›gnition makes even more sense in the face of claims to doubt everything. In *De nnibus dubitandum est* (also entitled *Johannes Climacus*), Kierkegaard sets forth the tuation of a young man who would doubt everything at the bidding of his teacher. oung Johannes Climacus ultimately comes to the realization that if he is to doubt erything, then he must also doubt the words of the teacher and the teacher's insistence at everything is dubitable. As will be discussed below, the fact that not everything is pable of being doubted is a fundamental point of agreement for Kierkegaard and the ter Wittgenstein.

Nielson captures the significance of Kierkegaard's position in a manner which is ghly informative:

> Belief or faith, then, in this nonreligious sense, comes into its certainties by *willing* doubt out of the picture or by *refusing* to acknowledge doubt's pleas without a sufficient positive reason for reopening the closed case. By using these expressions of volition, Climacus means to keep our apprehension of the past distinct from the passive sort of apprehending that he calls 'immediate', where the knower is helpless but to acknowledge what he perceives, and distinct also from the apprehension of what *must* be so, for example, the relations between signs--or 'essences' in another terminology--within a calculus. (1983, p. 144)

an analysis of these problems reveals, differences exist among our apprehension of the st, of the immediate, and of the logically necessary. Kierkegaard's analysis reflects an empt to clarify the nature of our reason (of our thought and language) as it relates to h logical problems.

Because all coming into existence involves the historical, is excluded from what is essary, and consequently bears a degree of uncertainty, all historical knowledge is at

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best an approximation. Kierkegaard states: "Nothing is more readily evident than that the greatest attainable certainty with respect to anything historical is merely an *approximation*" (CUP, p. 25). As the historical always ends in approximation, one who is confronted with a historical problem can never achieve an objective decision which is so certain as to be indubitable (*vide*, CUP, p. 41).

By now one may be wondering what we are to make of historical facts in light of what Kierkegaard has to say about doubt and belief. Kierkegaard observes that historical accounts consist of the testimony of those who were contemporary with historical events. The successor believes, according to Kierkegaard, upon the basis of the testimony from the contemporary; but his belief is akin to that of the contemporary who believes on the basis of immediate sensation and immediate cognition. However, just as the contemporary could not believe that the object of immediate sensation and immediate cognition has come into existence by virtue of immediacy alone, so the successor cannot believe solely on the basis of the immediacy of the testimony (*vide*, PF, p. 106).

In remarks concerning the implication of the discussion surrounding his view of belief and doubt, Kierkegaard urges the reader to return to the "hypothesis that the God *has been*" (PF, pp. 107-108), that is, that God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. As Kierkegaard points out, the fact that God *has been* differs from the ordinary form of the historical fact for it cannot present itself to us in the form of immediate sensation or immediate cognition, whether we are a contemporary or a successor of this purported event. The fact associated with the Incarnation differs from other ordinary historical facts, for it is based upon a contradiction. Kierkegaard further notes that this historical fact, i.e.,

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the Incarnation, can only be apprehended by "Faith" (*vide*, PF, p. 108). And here by "Faith," as Kierkegaard points out, he means both faith "in the direct and ordinary sense [belief], as the relationship of the mind to the historical" and "in the eminent sense, the sense in which the word can be used only once, i.e., many times, but only in one relationship" (PF, p. 108). The contemporary of Christ, e.g., one of the apostles, experienced Jesus Christ immediately, but was still confronted with the historical problem of Christ's becoming, with his having come into existence. Kierkegaard's analysis of belief in relation to the historical is an attempt to establish that the non-contemporary who confronts the historical report of the contemporary (the apostle) confronts the report immediately; even so, the non-contemporary must assent to the report, and is thereby confronted with the same uncertainty associated with Christ's having come into existence as was the contemporary.

While both the early and the later Wittgenstein acknowledge the difference between statements concerning one's immediate experiences and historical statements (as does Kierkegaard), surely neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein would have accepted Kierkegaard's analysis of belief as "an organ of apprehension" or, for that matter, the notion that there is a sense of uncertainty which attaches to all coming into existence. Both the early and the later Wittgenstein are more concerned with the nature of verification associated with historical propositions.

The early Wittgenstein points out that historical propositions have their sense in a more indirect manner than do propositions associated with one's immediate experience. In his analysis of the belief associated with the historical proposition, "Julius Caesar

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rossed the Alps," Wittgenstein observes that propositions associated with people are apable of being verified in different ways. For instance, it is conceivable that we might nd Julius Caesar's corpse, or that we might find a manuscript which reports that the life f Julius Caesar is fictive, that it was created as part of a grandiose political plot. The dmission of these possibilities is part and parcel of what it means to talk of Julius aesar, and verification of the proposition "Julius Caesar crossed the Alps" must allow r such possibilities. In contrast, if one utters a proposition of immediate experience, to se Wittgenstein's example, "I can see a red patch crossing a green one," the possibilities ssociated with a proposition such as "Julius Caesar crossed the Alps" are not present. nd in this sense, propositions about persons possess their sense very differently than do ropositions about immediate experience (*vide*, PR, § 56).

The early Wittgenstein further says, "Everything which, if it occurred, would gitimately confirm a belief...shows something about the logical nature of the belief" R, § 56). In this respect, the proposition about Julius Caesar is to be considered as a amework which "admits of widely differing interpretations," though not those inter-etations we would employ for people who were still living (PR, § 56). While the later ittgenstein would also hold to this view of verification, he also acknowledges that a ast amount of what we believe is believed on the basis of the manner in which it has een transmitted to us, including geographical, chemical, and historical facts (*vide*, OC, § 70). These facts have been learned and we routinely say that we know such facts.

Both the early and the later Wittgenstein would take issue with Kierkegaard's sertion to the effect that there is a sense of uncertainty which attaches to all historical

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assertions, i.e., the sense of uncertainty which attaches to all coming into existence. Both would hold that the certainty associated with historical statements is a matter of the degree to which such statements may be properly verified. Some historical propositions may not admit of a proper degree of verification, but others are well established and are part of the vast system of beliefs which we inherit and appropriate.

In comparison to what the later Wittgenstein says concerning belief, doubt, and certainty, the early Wittgenstein says surprisingly little. This is undoubtedly a reflection of the early Wittgenstein's analysis of language in accordance with the principle of extensionality, whereupon all propositions are either elementary propositions or are propositions composed of truth functions and other elementary propositions.

In the *Tractatus*, certainty was understood in terms of logical certainty: "...what is certain a priori proves to be something purely logical" (TLP, 6.3211). Given this fact, certainty was viewed as a property of tautologies: "A tautology's truth is certain, a proposition's possible, a contradiction's impossible" (TLP, 4.464).

The early Wittgenstein's consideration of doubt appears within comments which address the untenability of skepticism: "Skepticism is *not* irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked" (TLP, 6.51). According to Wittgenstein, doubt makes sense only when an appropriate question can be raised, and a question may be raised only when it is possible to provide an answer, and an answer can be given only in the event something is capable of being said (*vide*, TLP, 6.51).

The early Wittgenstein's considerations of certainty, doubt, and belief appear

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ithin a radically different context than do Kierkegaard's considerations of these topics. Vittgenstein was attempting to provide an analysis of language which clearly demarcated ıe sayable from the unsayable, to show that certain of our propositions fail to convey ense or meaning. In contrast, Kierkegaard was attempting to demonstrate that the nature f the belief required for Christian commitment was radically different from that associ-ted with everyday knowledge; that what is required of the one who would become a hristian is an appropriation-process as opposed to the approximation-process associated ith objective knowledge.

The later Wittgenstein's rejection of the Tractarian view of language in favor of a iew of language which recognized the richness and complexity of a multiplicity of nguage-games ultimately leads to a much deeper consideration of certainty, doubt, and elief. And it is here that we find more affinities with Kierkegaard's consideration of ıese topics.

Many of the later Wittgenstein's remarks concerning certainty, doubt, and belief ppear within the context of discussion surrounding the nature of the vast system of eliefs which we inherit from the time we are children and onward. The child simply ccepts a multitude of beliefs and learns how to act upon those beliefs. In this process, e are not first taught a series of rules to be employed in making empirical judgments; ther, "we are taught *judgments* and their connexion with other judgments. A *totality* of dgments is made plausible to us" (OC, § 140).

In further addressing the manner in which we acquire this system of beliefs, ittgenstein observes that we do not take in single propositions, after we have adjudged

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them to be true or false, with the goal of accumulating a body of knowledge for which we have adequate justification. On the contrary, we take in numerous propositions at once and only later do we come to realize the extent of their interconnectedness and mutual support:

> When we first begin to *believe* anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of propositions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.)
>
> It is not single axioms that strike me as obvious, it is a system in which consequences and premises give one another *mutual* support. (OC, §§ 141-142)

Wittgenstein further notes that in the process of acquiring this system of knowledge we do not typically inquire into the reliability of persons in authority (e.g., parents and teachers) who provide us with this information. It is only later that the child comes to realize that such persons are reliable or unreliable:

> I am told, for example, that someone climbed this mountain many years ago. Do I always enquire into the reliability of the teller of this story, and whether the mountain did exist years ago? A child learns there are reliable and unreliable informants much later than it learns facts which are told it. It doesn't learn *at all* that that mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with *what* it learns. (OC, § 143)

It is important to note that there are numerous consequences which attend what is learned and which the child simply swallows down without any awareness of doing so. Children learn through accepting what the adult says, and only later does the child learn to doubt what it has been taught: "The child learns by believing the adult. Doubt comes *after* belief" (OC, § 160).

In another instance, the later Wittgenstein notes that it may be somewhat incorrect to speak of the child as "learning" the system: "This system is something that a human

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being acquires by means of observation and instruction. I intentionally do not say 'learns'" (OC, § 279). Admittedly, parts of the system of propositions would be learned in the sense that the child is taught facts and the manner in which those facts cohere to other facts, but much of the system is simply acquired in much the same fashion as one naturally acquires the grammar of a language when one begins to speak it. Formal instruction in grammar comes long after the child has learned to speak the language. This again reveals the extent to which much of the system is a part of our natural history.

According to Wittgenstein, we have no grounds for doubting this body of knowledge; to the contrary, we have all kinds of reasons for accepting it which stem from repeated confirmation:

> I know, not just that the earth existed long before my birth, but also that it is a large body, that this has been established, that I and the rest of mankind have forebears, that there are books about all this, that such books don't lie, etc. etc. etc. And I know all this? I believe it. This body of knowledge has been handed on to me and I have no grounds for doubting it, but, on the contrary, all sorts of confirmation.
>
> And why shouldn't I say that I know all this? Isn't that what one does say?
>
> But not only I know, or believe, all that, but the others do too. Or rather, *I believe* that they believe it. (OC, § 288)

There is no doubt, or question, that we know this body of knowledge; it is routinely accepted that we know these things.

Concerning the nature of doubt, the later Wittgenstein held that the language associated with doubt requires that doubt have a foundation upon which it may legitimately build, that certain things be beyond doubt: "something must be taught us as a foundation" (OC, § 499); "doubt that doubted everything would not be a doubt" (OC, § 450). There are certain things within the inherited system which stand fast:

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> Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand unshakably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing: it is rather held fast by what lies around it. (OC, § 144)

Vittgenstein reminds us, if we are to doubt the beliefs that are part of our inherited ystem of beliefs, e.g., that every human being has ancestors, then we would have to oubt numerous things which stand fast for us (*vide*, OC, § 234).

The significance of the fact that certain things must stand fast becomes apparent vhen one realizes that the logic of the language-game surrounding scientific nvestigation requires that many things be beyond doubt:

> That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.
>
> That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted.
>
> But it isn't that the situation is like this: We just *can't* investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumptions. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put.
>
> My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things. (OC, §§ 341-344)

Wittgenstein's simile is a powerful one: there are propositions which stand fast like the hinges upon which a door turns. These propositions which stand fast do not reflect any failure to adequately investigate them. Rather, they are what allows investigation to proceed; they are part and parcel of the language-game associated with investigation. As they are the axes upon which any investigation turns, they are not learned explicitly before one proceeds with investigation, but they are rather discovered as one engages in the actions associated with investigation (*vide*, OC, § 152).

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The fact that investigation proceeds by means of propositions which stand fast points to the fact that doubting behavior rests upon non-doubting behavior: "Doubting and non-doubting behaviour. There is the first only if there is the second" (OC, § 354). Certain things simply are not doubted, for instance, the very words that we use in our language-games:

> Every language-game is based on words 'and objects' being recognized again. We learn with the same inexorability that this is a chair as that 2 X 2 = 4.
>
> If, therefore, I doubt or am uncertain about this being my hand (in whatever sense), why not in that case about the meaning of these words as well? (OC, §§ 455-456)

Certain things must stand fast if doubt is to possess any meaning at all. As the later Wittgenstein observes, the fixed and indubitable meaning of the words we use reveals that the absence of doubt is the essence of the language-game:

> The fact that I use the word "hand" and all the other words in my sentence without a second thought, indeed that I should stand before the abyss if I wanted so much as to try doubting their meanings--shews that absence of doubt belongs to the essence of the language-game, that the question "How do I know..." drags out the language-game, or else does away with it. (OC, § 370)

Simply put, the language-game requires that certain things stand fast.

As previously noted, Kierkegaard came to a similar conclusion concerning the limitations of doubt when he said that if his teacher were to encourage him to doubt everything, he must also doubt the words of his teacher, and his teacher's insistence that everything should be doubted. With respect to recognizing the limitation of doubt, Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's views of doubt directly parallel each other.

Although there is a close affinity of viewpoint concerning the limit of doubt, a significant difference between Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's views of doubt

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becomes apparent when we consider the nature of doubt. Here we need to recall Kierkegaard's insistence that doubt comes in the moment faith stops to reflect upon the fact that something has come into existence, for a sense of uncertainty attaches to all coming into existence. The later Wittgenstein would likely take issue with Kierkegaard on this point for, as we have already seen, Wittgenstein held that we inherit a vast system of knowledge from those in authority and we simply swallow down numerous associated consequences.

Another difference between Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's accounts of belief concerns the role of the will. Kierkegaard held that we will to believe, that belief is a free act, an expression of the will, that the conclusion of belief is not so much a conclusion as it is a resolution. As the reader may recall, both belief and doubt are seen as passionate commitments of the will. The later Wittgenstein would say that it is not a matter of willing to believe, or willing to cast doubt aside. In many instances, doubt simply is not there, so there is no doubt to be cast aside, e.g., "I shall get burnt if I put my hand in the fire: that is certainty. That is to say: here we see the meaning of certainty. (What it amounts to, not just the meaning of the word "certainty")" (PI, § 474).

Numerous references to certainty occur throughout the preceding explication of doubt. How are we to understand certainty within the context of the later Wittgenstein's epistemology? The later Wittgenstein holds that certainty (and doubt) are associated with particular language-games. In the language game associated with science, with hypotheses and the testing of hypotheses, it makes sense to speak of approximating certainty. But in the case of G. E. Moore's "I know this is a hand," in a case where the

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idea of being mistaken makes no sense, we would not speak of approximating certainty: "Or are we to say that *certainty* is merely a constructed point to which some things approximate more, some less closely? No. Doubt gradually loses its sense. This language-game just *is* like that" (OC, § 56). Given standard conditions of observation, if familiar objects are not recognized with certainty, if words are not used with certainty, then one is improperly playing the language-game:

> But why *am* I so certain that this is my hand? Doesn't the whole language-game rest on this kind of certainty?
>
> Or: isn't this 'certainty' already presupposed in the language-game? Namely by virtue of the fact that one is not playing the game, or is playing it wrong, if one does not recognize objects with certainty. (OC, § 446)

Certainty is reflected in the way we live. One's actions reveal one's certainty, e.g., one's telling a friend to be seated reveals one's certainty of the presence of a chair (*vide*, OC, § 7). When we make statements related to what stands fast in the inherited system of beliefs, e.g., "I know that I have ancestors," etc., statements of which we would readily say, "We are quite sure of it," we recognize such statements not only reflect the fact that everyone holds this to be a certainty, but also the fact that "we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education" (OC, § 298). Such statements are not to be seen as attempts to express a greater degree of subjective certainty; in contrast they are to be seen as indicating that "certain propositions seem to underlie all questions and all thinking" (OC, § 415).

As was previously mentioned, knowledge differs from belief because knowledge reflects a relationship between a person and a fact or actual state of affairs, whereas belief reflects a relation between a person and a proposition. Adequate justification is present

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for knowledge claims, but not for beliefs (OC, § 175). The later Wittgenstein says,

> One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming he is convinced of it.
>
> But if what he believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertions, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes. (OC, § 243)

In this respect, Wittgenstein observes that Moore's statement, "I know that I have two hands," is a knowledge claim for which he cannot give compelling grounds. Since Moore can be no more certain of the statement after having looked at his hands than he was before having looked at them, the most that Moore can claim is that his belief that he has two hands is an irreversible belief (*vide*, OC, § 245). Moore cannot legitimately claim to know that he has two hands.

Wittgenstein further considers the grammar associated with knowledge and certainty in the context of the expression, "I know that he is in pain." Wittgenstein asks if this means the same thing as "I am sure that he is in pain" to which he responds: "No. 'I am sure' tells you my subjective certainty. 'I know' means that I who know it, and the person who doesn't are separated by a difference in understanding. (Perhaps based on a difference in degree of experience)" (OC, § 563). The difference in the degree of experience is reflected in the fact that one who claims to know something must stand in the proper relationship to what is known, that is, the experience enables one to make such a knowledge claim.

As mentioned before, one says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. One can also talk of compelling grounds in the case of certitude, and in such a case the compelling grounds make the certitude objective (*vide*, OC, § 270). However, *I*

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do not decide what constitutes compelling grounds for something (*vide*, OC, § 271); on the contrary, there must be agreement in the community concerning what counts as compelling grounds. Although Wittgenstein acknowledges that questions may arise concerning whether or not something is objectively certain, he also points out that numerous empirical propositions are simply accepted as certain:

> But when does one say of something that it is certain?
>
> For there can be disputes whether something *is* certain; I mean, when something is *objectively* certain.
>
> There are countless general empirical propositions that count as certain for us. (OC, § 273)

Here Wittgenstein has in mind propositions such as, "If someone loses an arm, it will not grow back again," "Everyone has ancestors," etc. Such empirical propositions are widely accepted by the community and are passed on as part of the vast interconnected system of beliefs which we inherit. Additionally, such empirical propositions are interconnected; they provide mutual support (*vide*, OC, § 274). The cumulative past experience of the community serves as the ground for our certainty (*vide*, OC, § 275).

The later Wittgenstein's acknowledgment that we do possess objective certainty in many of our knowledge claims, and that such objective certainty has compelling grounds, points to another disaffinity with Kierkegaard's epistemology for Kierkegaard held objective certainty to be an illusion. Kierkegaard held the positiveness of sense-perception, of historical knowledge, and of the results of speculative philosophy to be sheer falsity (*vide*, CUP, p. 75). Certainty in these areas is an impossibility, for certainty only applies to the infinite; the subject in these areas "moves constantly in the sphere of approximation-knowledge, in his supposed positivity deluding himself with the

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semblance of certainty, but certainty can be had only in the infinite" (CUP, p. 75). In contrast, the later Wittgenstein held that we possess certainty regarding many "finite" beliefs, that certainty is not limited to the infinite as Kierkegaard maintains.[7]

The difference between Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein concerning certainty is undoubtedly a reflection of the subject matter with which they worked and their related goals. According to Kierkegaard, in the face of decisions that require that one act "infinitely-decisively," reason can at best offer probability and uncertainty. Kierkegaard held that one cannot attain the eternal happiness which Christianity affords through an historical approach to the Gospels. Belief associated with such historical accounts is characterized by an approximation process which can only yield uncertainty. In contrast, the essential subjective expression of the Christian faith requires the certainty which can be attained only through the appropriation process, and this involves subjectivity as opposed to objectivity. As Kierkegaard points out, when we are subjectively concerned with the truth, when truth is a matter of appropriation, our conceptual deliberations must "include an expression for the antithesis to objectivity" (CUP, p. 182). The subjective truth, as it relates to Christianity, calls us to embrace an "objective uncertainty," namely, the fact that God entered history in the form of Jesus Christ. It is within this context that Kierkegaard offers his famous definition of subjective truth: "*An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth*, the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual"

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[7] It bears noting here that Wittgenstein does acknowledge the sense of certainty which attaches to faith (vide, CV, 1937, pp. 32e-33e). More will be said concerning the later Wittgenstein's view of faith and certainty in the next chapter.

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(CUP, p. 182; original italicized). As Kierkegaard notes, this definition is an equivalent definition for faith, understood in the religious sense.

Language

Although Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein address considerations surrounding the adequacy of language to convey thought, it bears noting that their projects, and hence, the questions they chose to address, possess some striking differences. Kierkegaard's critique of language must be seen as part of his broader critique of reflection (reason). As has already been noted, Kierkegaard's critique of reason is undertaken with the intention of showing the insufficiency of reason for leading one to an appropriation of the Christian faith. Likewise, it may be said that Kierkegaard's critique of language is undertaken with the aim of revealing that language is incapable of adequately portraying the nature of human existence or of communicating the fundamental concerns of our existence.

Kierkegaard was also highly critical of the manner in which many linguistic terms were being reinterpreted by German Idealism. Echoing the warnings of Matthew 7:15, Kierkegaard warns: "Beware of false prophets who come to you in wolves' clothing but inwardly are sheep--that is the phrasemongers" [II A 176 (J&P, 3255)]. In the next journal entry Kierkegaard elaborates further: "That is to say, the systematic wolves" [II A 177 (J&P, 3256)]. Kierkegaard develops these ideas more fully in a passage which puts one in mind of Wittgenstein's desire that certain words be removed from common usage and sent out for cleaning:

> In vain do great men seek to mint new concepts and to set them in circulation -- it is pointless. They are used only for a moment, and not by many either, and they merely contribute to making the confusion even worse, for one idea seems to have become the fixed idea of the age: to get the better of one's superior. [I A 328

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In the same journal entry, Kierkegaard further observes that such practices have had a deleterious effect upon Christianity, for "every Christian concept has become so volatilized, so completely dissolved in a mass of fog, that it is beyond all recognition" [I A 328 (J&P, 5181)]. It was Kierkegaard's desire that "powerfully equipped men might emerge who would restore the lost power and meaning of words, just as Luther restored the concept of faith for his age" [I A 328 (J&P, 5181)].

The early and the later Wittgenstein share a similar concern. They hold that our use of language leads to philosophical problems because it is tremendously complicated, so much so that it is impossible to immediately discern the logic of our language, and language disguises thought. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein states:

> Everyday language is a part of the human organism and is no less complicated than it.
>
> It is not humanly possible to gather immediately from it what the logic of language is.
>
> Language disguises thought. So much so, that from the outward form of the clothing it is impossible to infer the form of the thought beneath it, because the outward form of the clothing is not designed to reveal the form of the body, but for entirely different purposes.
>
> The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated. (TLP, 4.002).

Immediately following this passage, Wittgenstein notes that most of our philosophical problems are nonsensical; they result from our failure to adequately "understand the logic of our language" (*vide*, TLP, 4.003). Both the early and the later Wittgenstein aim, through describing the manner in which we use language, to reveal the traps which our language sets for us.

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understand the logic of our language also appears in the *Philosophical Investigations*, where the later Wittgenstein observes:

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

The aim of philosophy, according to the later Wittgenstein, is to untie the knots in our understanding, that is, "To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (PI, § 309).

Kierkegaard makes a number of criticisms of language, some of which are also noted by the early or the later Wittgenstein. First, Kierkegaard observes that the process of finding the correct expression with which to communicate the concern shifts the focus away from the concern to the manner in which the concern may best be communicated. Garelick characterizes this aspect of language in the following manner: "Direct, external communication between man and man transforms an incomplete, inner dialogue of the individual into concrete results" (Garelick, 1965, p. 10). Confronted with the desire to communicate some concern, one seeks the words with which to communicate the concern, and in so doing, one immediately begins to move away from the concern, and one's focus shifts from the concern to the expression of the concern (*vide*, Garelick, 1965, p. 10). For much of our routine, everyday discourse, this shift is not problematic; communication of ordinary consequences and conclusions is rather straightforward. Language is capable of transmitting such messages with little difficulty. But when one attempts to communicate "processes of existence and inner states of feeling" one encounters problems, for language is incapable of adequately communicating such subjective concerns (*vide*, Garelick, 1965, p. 10).

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Kierkegaard distinguishes between forms of communication associated with objective reflection, wherein one attempts to communicate results, as opposed to subjective reflection, wherein one attempts to communicate existential concerns and subjective feelings. Since objective reflection is wholly concerned with the object of reflection, it is indifferent to subjectivity, inwardness, and appropriation; the "mode of communication is therefore direct....It can be understood directly and recited by rote" (CUP, p. 70). In contrast, when the subjective is of crucial importance in communication, when appropriation on the part of the hearer is the desired effect, "the process of communication is a work of art, and doubly reflected" (CUP, p. 73). According to Kierkegaard, in subjective communication, the communicator's goal is that the hearer experience a double reflection which involves reflection upon the communication itself and reflection upon the significance of the communication for his or her own existence. The process of communicating in a manner that brings about a double reflection is an art which skillfully employs irony, humor, stories and parables.

Ordinary, direct communication associated with objective thinking is results-oriented and "has no secrets" (CUP, p. 73); only the indirect communication associated with "doubly reflected subjective thinking" has secrets. As Kierkegaard observes:

> The entire essential content of subjective thought is essentially secret, because it cannot be directly communicated. This is the meaning of the secrecy. The fact that the knowledge in question does not lend itself to direct utterance, because its essential feature consists of the appropriation, makes it a secret for everyone who is not in the same way doubly reflected within himself. And the fact that this is the essential form of such truth, makes it impossible to express it in any other manner. (CUP, p. 73)

Although subjective truths concerning states of feeling or existential concerns can only be

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communicated indirectly, via indirect communication, we are not to assume that the indirect form of communication is some higher order language form capable of conveying existence and feelings (*vide*, Garelick, 1965, p. 11). Rather, Kierkegaard says indirect communication should cause us to reflect upon the potential for our own existence; it should serve to confront us with a choice which calls forth a leap. And in this respect it is related to Kierkegaard's stages of existence, for indirect communication should assist us in seeing the futility of the aesthetic stage of existence and in recognizing the potentiality present within the ethico-religious stages. More will be said concerning the need for indirect communication later.

A second problem with language, related to the first, which Kierkegaard also addresses, is the fact that language is incapable of adequately conveying what is truly unique. Garelick (1965, p. 11) comments upon this inadequacy as follows: "To convey something unique, something *sui generis*, we are compelled to communicate it in the same form, using the same words as in ordinary conversation." Our attempts to express what is truly unique, for example, existence itself, or the *mysterium tremendum* of the genuinely religious person, always end up in trivialization; such attempts are confined to using the same language we employ to express everything else about which we discourse (*vide*, Garelick, 1965, p. 11). To put this somewhat differently, we can never escape or transcend the generality associated with our ordinary language to arrive at some superior language which could be employed to convey what is truly unique. If the existing individual is unique, then this uniqueness cannot adequately be conveyed by language. Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein acknowledge that we

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Furthermore, according to Kierkegaard, the concept of existence, understood ethically, is incapable of direct expression in any rational, systematic, representational scheme, for the system always demands completion. And such completion always takes place at the expense of personal existence because it fails to recognize the on-going nature of existence. Kierkegaard believes that emphasis on existence must be expressed in an essential form, that it must be communicated as something of ultimate importance, and for this reason such communication will be indirect and apart from any system (*vide*, CUP, p. 111). One who would communicate existence must realize that existence cannot be expressed by means of a paragraph in a system; and that is another reason why representational language and thought are incapable of conveying the uniqueness of existence.

Kierkegaard's view that language is incapable of fully communicating the nature of personal existence has it counterpart in the *Tractatus* and in the *Lecture on Ethics*. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein holds that "all propositions are of equal value" (TLP, 6.4), and that propositions are incapable of expressing ethics or the sense of life (*vide*, TLP, 6.42; TLP, 6.521). In the *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein acknowledges that the language associated with religious belief and with ethics represents our tendency "*to go beyond* the world...beyond significant language" (LE, p. 11). The later Wittgenstein also recognizes the distinctive use of language associated with religious discourse, for he sees religious language to function far differently from language associated with other more ordinary beliefs (*vide*, LC, pp. 54-59). Both the early and the later Wittgenstein would admit that

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we do convey what is unique, but we convey this by means of poetry, stories, pictures, etc. But these are the indirect modes of communication which Kierkegaard has in mind when he says that the uniqueness of personal existence cannot be communicated directly.

A third criticism of language is found in Kierkegaard's insistence that language abstracts from existence in a manner which loses some of the aspects of existence. As Garelick puts it, "Ordinary communication...foreshortens existence but at a prohibitive cost to certain feelings and qualities of existence" (1965, p. 11). Reason abstracts the momentary from the process of existence and in so doing, it captures only portions of existence. The abstraction of the momentary is reflected in our language. Hence, language is incapable of conveying existence in its totality, or of conveying the exact nature of existence. While the use of reason and language enable us to operate effectively by means of organizing and manipulating our reality, their use also prohibits us from understanding the true nature of our existence: "Language condenses; but existence is a continued persistence in unabridged time and space; to translate one into the other is to lose the quality of becoming" (Garelick, 1965, p. 12).

Kierkegaard's remarks concerning this aspect of language appear in the context of his discussion of the difficulty one encounters when one desires to communicate the persistence of the suffering which accompanies one who exists in a God-relationship. This suffering stems from the fact that, viewed religiously, the individual is absolutely committed to relative ends, whereas the task of the individual is to understand that one must exist before God, and in so existing, one must be absolutely committed to absolute ends (*vide*, CUP, p. 412). In addressing the difficulty involved in communicating

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existential truths associated with this suffering, Kierkegaard states:

> But the suffering is nevertheless there, and may continue as long as a man exists; for though one may quickly say that a man is nothing before God, it is so difficult existentially to express it. But more concretely to describe and sketch this is again difficult, because speech is after all a more abstract medium than existence, and all speech in relation to the ethical is something of a deception, because discourse, in spite of the most subtle and thoroughly thought out precautionary measures, still always retains an appearance of the foreshortened perspective. So that even when the discourse makes the most enthusiastic and desperate exertions to show how difficult it [to become wholly nothing and to exist before God] is, or attempts its utmost in an indirect form, it always remains more difficult to do than it seems to be in the discourse. (CUP, p. 414)

In this passage Kierkegaard is noting that the discourse we employ in telling someone about the nature of the suffering associated with the existence of one who stands in a God-relationship simply fails to convey the richness of the experience; it cannot adequately convey what the person is actually experiencing. Kierkegaard further warns his reader that even if one is fortunate enough to hit upon ways to successfully communicate the nature of existence via indirect communication, one must guard against the degeneration of such means of communication into precise formulae. Guarding against this degeneration is of crucial importance, and in point of fact, may never be entirely adequate as may be seen in the continuing necessity of making the message of Christianity relevant for the current time and age. The indirect communication associated with existence requires that "the indirect character of the expression will constantly demand renewal and rejuvenation in the form" (CUP, p. 111).

Another example of the foreshortened nature of speech in regard to existence may be helpful. Christianity teaches that we are to forgive others when they wrong us and do us harm. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "And forgive our trespasses as we forgive those

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who trespass against us." The discourse which we employ fails to convey what a struggle this may be; it may sound easy enough, but the one who really tries to live this ideal will find that it is anything but easy.

As I have previously pointed out, the early Wittgenstein also noted the limitations of language. His view accords with Kierkegaard's statement mentioned previously that "all speech in relation to the ethical is something of a deception" (CUP, p. 414). In the *Lecture on Ethics*, we read, "Now I want to impress on you that a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions" (LE, p. 9). Concerning the use of language in relation to the religious or the ethical, Wittgenstein writes:

> My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely, hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it. (LE, pp. 11-12)

More will be said concerning this limitation of language when Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's views of ethics and religion are considered.

Kierkegaard's third criticism of language, his insistence that language distorts the nature of existence, is of considerable importance to his overall project and critique of rationality. As noted before, language cannot adequately portray what is involved in the notion of existing within a suffering relationship as one stands before God;[8] it cannot

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[8] Kierkegaard holds the essential expression, or the pathos, of the religious to be suffering, but, since this suffering provides the assurance that one is properly related to

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The last of Kierkegaard's criticisms of language concerns the fact that "languages force distinctions upon existence where there are none" (Garelick, 1965, p. 12). On this view, existence is a unified whole which is acted upon by reason and language in such a way that its immediacy is annulled. Kierkegaard sets forth the nature of this immediacy as it would be confronted by a child's mind prior to the acquisition of language:

> How then is the child's consciousness to be described? It is essentially quite indefinite, a fact we can also state by saying that it is "immediate." *Immediacy is indefiniteness*. In immediacy relationships are absent; for as soon as relationships exist, immediacy is annulled. *In immediacy therefore everything is true*; but this truth is straightway untrue; for *in immediacy everything is untrue*, [because not reflected upon. What is outside reflexion is as much true as untrue--till we reflect]. If consciousness can remain in immediacy then the whole question of truth is done away. (*Johannes Climacus*, p. 147)

Kierkegaard later asserts that speech annuls immediacy (*vide*, *Johannes Climacus*, p. 148), that is, relationships become present in speech. If consciousness were to remain in immediacy, there would be no language, and hence, no questions of truth or falsehood. According to this view, language abstracts discrete objects and moments from the immediacy of our existence; language is incapable of capturing reality or existence as it actually is.

Neither the early Wittgenstein nor the later Wittgenstein would have accepted Kierkegaard's view that language is incapable of capturing reality as it actually is. In contrast to Kierkegaard's view, the early Wittgenstein held that a proposition pictures or models reality: "A proposition *shows* how things stand *if* it is true. And it *says that* they

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do so stand" (TLP, 4.022b). Here it must be remembered that there are false propositions which do not properly represent actual states of affairs in reality. Only those propositions which are true show how things stand.

The later Wittgenstein observes that thought never strikes us as queer when we are thinking some thought, but only when we retrospectively consider the nature of thought: "Thought does not strike us as mysterious while we are thinking, but only when we say, as it were retrospectively: 'How was that possible?' How was it possible for thought to deal with the very object *itself*? We feel as if by means of it we had caught reality in our net" (PI, § 428). According to the later Wittgenstein, the agreement of thought with reality consists in the fact that "if I say falsely that something is *red*, then, for all that, it isn't *red*. And when I want to explain the word "red" to someone, in the sentence, "That is not red", I do it by pointing to something red" (PI, § 429). Both the early and the later Wittgenstein stress that thought is in harmony with reality provided that the proposition under consideration is a true proposition.

There is another sense, a more fundamental sense, in which the early Wittgenstein differs with Kierkegaard's view that language annuls the immediacy of existence. I think Wittgenstein would hold Kierkegaard guilty of attempting to express something about the essence of the world, which Wittgenstein held cannot be expressed by language (*vide*, PR, § 54).

The significance of Kierkegaard's critique of reason and of language in light of his aims and objectives has repeatedly been stressed. Given his aim of revealing that one could not attain Christianity and the eternal happiness it claims to afford through reason,

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it is essential that he demonstrate the failure of reason and the inadequacies of language. And thus far, a number of affinities and disaffinities to the early and the later Wittgenstein have already been noted in light of Kierkegaard's overall project. Nonetheless, one disaffinity remains to be considered, namely, both the early and the later Wittgenstein do not share Kierkegaard's highly critical view of language. With respect to these criticisms, it should be noted that Kierkegaard is more of a traditional philosopher who is operating within the Cartesian tradition. In contrast to Kierkegaard, both the early and the later Wittgenstein hold that our ordinary language is in order as it is. The later Wittgenstein says our problems do not so much stem from the fact that our language is imperfect as from the fact that we fail to pay attention to the workings of our language: "The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work" (PI, § 132). Nor does Wittgenstein believe we need to create some new language which is more adequate to the job at hand; in point of fact, we cannot do this because, as Wittgenstein says, "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it" (PI, § 124). Both the early and the later Wittgenstein hold that our task is to understand the workings of our language in such a way that we are not deceived.

Summary of Affinities and Disaffinities Related to Epistemology

The preceding analysis of Kierkegaard's and the early and later Wittgenstein's views on various epistemological topics has revealed a number of affinities and disaffinities. The following summary, which proceeds on a topic-by-topic basis in order of appearance, is provided to assist the reader in reviewing the findings to this point in the

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Logic

1. The early Wittgenstein shares Kierkegaard's conception of logic as it relates to the categories of necessity, actuality, and possibility.

2. Kierkegaard and the early and the later Wittgenstein are in agreement that change never occurs of necessity; since the only necessity is logical necessity, the existence of any necessary connection between two states of affairs is denied.

The Limit

1. Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein acknowledge a limit to which reason and language repeatedly arrive, although it should be noted, the early Wittgenstein did not conceive of the limit in quite the same manner as did Kierkegaard, who held that the limit is the Unknown (God).

Justification

1. Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein believe that justification and reasons must come to an end. Kierkegaard emphasizes they must end if one is to act decisively in the ethical and religious spheres. The early Wittgenstein is in agreement with Kierkegaard on this point, for he also held that nothing we do can ever be defended absolutely (*vide,* CV, 1931 p. 16e). The later Wittgenstein's analysis of justification is more concerned with epistemic issues, but his comments in *Lectures and Conversations* pertaining to use of religious similes reflect an affinity of view.

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Knowledge and Truth

1. Although considerations of knowledge and truth appear in radically different contexts, there is an affinity of view concerning the nature of truth which holds among Kierkegaard and the early and the later Wittgenstein, so long as truth is limited to objective truth. This is to be expected for their views rest upon an acceptance of the three laws of thought.

2. Kierkegaard's insistence that one who claims to know something must stand in a proper relationship to what is known is analogous to the later Wittgenstein's view that when one claims to know something, he or she must, by common consent, be in a position to know. It bears noting that Kierkegaard stresses this point in relationship to objective and subjective knowledge, whereas Wittgenstein emphasizes this point when speaking of empirical knowledge.

Belief, Doubt, and Certainty

1. The early and the later Wittgenstein's analysis of historical statements differs considerably from Kierkegaard's analysis, for both the early and the later Wittgenstein acknowledge that we have certainty concerning a vast body of statements, many of which are historical. Kierkegaard is more skeptical, for he holds that the uncertainty associated with all coming into existence attaches to historical statements.

2. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein are in agreement that doubt, if it is to be meaningful, must have limits.

3. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein disagree concerning the role of the will in doubting and believing. Kierkegaard holds that one must will to doubt or to believe,

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4. It is also doubtful that the later Wittgenstein would accept Kierkegaard's analysis of belief as an "organ of apprehension" for the historical.

5. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein differ concerning objective certainty. Kierkegaard holds that objective certainty is an illusion, whereas the later Wittgenstein acknowledges that we do have objective certainty.

Language

1. Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein agree that a characteristic misuse of language runs through all ethical and religious expressions.

2. Both the early and the later Wittgenstein disagree with Kierkegaard's assertion that language is incapable of capturing reality as it actually is. Wittgenstein believes that there is a direct agreement between language (thought) and reality, provided the propositions under consideration are true propositions.

3. Neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein shares Kierkegaard's harsh critique concerning the limitations of language. According to Wittgenstein, language is in order as it is; what is necessary is that we understand the workings of our language despite the urge to misunderstand.

As may be seen, there exist numerous affinities and disaffinities, the consideration of which may be instructive. Further consideration along these lines will appear at the close of this study. As I have mentioned on a number of occasions, Kierkegaard's and the early and the later Wittgenstein's views of epistemology have ramifications for their

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consideration of ethics and religion. It is time to consider their views on these topics.

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CHAPTER III

KIERKEGAARD AND WITTGENSTEIN ON ETHICS AND RELIGION

The preceding chapter considered Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's view of epistemology. Assuming that one's epistemology will have ramifications for one's view of ethics and religion, the aforementioned affinities and disaffinities among the epistemological views of Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein should have counterparts in their views of ethics and religion. To determine if this is the case, I will begin this chapter by comparing the senses in which Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein employ terms such as "ethics" and "the ethical." I will then consider these philosophers' views concerning the use of language and communication within ethics and religion, and building upon this analysis, I will further investigate what they have to say about knowledge claims within ethics and religion.

The Senses of "Ethics" and "the Ethical"

Recognizing that Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein may well use "ethics" and "the ethical" in different senses, it is necessary to consider the manner in which they employ these terms to determine the extent to which any further comparisons may be made. Investigation into the varied senses in which Kierkegaard employs these terms reveals a

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considerable amount of ambiguity. One must recognize that Kierkegaard uses "Ethics" as a noun, "ethical" as an adjective, as in "ethical truths", and "the ethical" wherein "ethical" undergoes a functional shift and is used in a nominative sense with various meanings.

If one is to understand what Kierkegaard means by "Ethics", one must possess an awareness of his anthropological view of human nature, a view which holds that persons are a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, that they possess self-consciousness, and are thereby capable of recognizing and reflecting upon their own nature. This synthesis of the finite and the infinite sets persons apart from the wholly finite character of the animal kingdom and the wholly infinite character of God. Because creatures which are wholly finite do not possess self-consciousness, they are incapable of reflection upon what they ought to become; and the wholly infinite (God) does not share this concern, for God transcends all becoming, and hence needs not choose among possibilities. Ethics is born in the tension between the finite and infinite, a tension which requires that the individual choose whether he or she will maximize the finite or the infinite side of his or her human nature.

Although Kierkegaard recognizes the existence of various moral codes and social conventions, he does not consider these to be ethics proper, for these have a *telos* which is grounded in temporality as opposed to the eternal. Kierkegaard reserves the term "ethics" to refer to a higher form of ethics which incorporates "the consciousness of the eternal" (Malantschuk, 1971, p. 77). In many instances, Kierkegaard personifies "ethics" by using the form "Ethics", e.g., "But since Ethics regards every existing individual as its bond servant for life..." (CUP, p. 377). In another instance, Kierkegaard speaks of Ethics as

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levying an "indefeasible claim upon every existing individual" (CUP, p. 119). Since Kierkegaard holds that persons are created in the image of God, that they have the eternal and the infinite within them, and since Ethics incorporates the consciousness of the eternal, Ethics may be viewed as a God-given.

Kierkegaard uses "the ethical" in at least three distinctly different senses: (1) "the ethical" as one of the stages of existence; (2) "the ethical" as an expression for the universal; and (3) "the ethical" as subjectivity, or as the task of becoming subjective. As further explication will reveal, all of these senses reflect Kierkegaard's concern for consciousness of the eternal.

Kierkegaard sets forth three distinct stages of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. According to Kierkegaard, one moves from one stage to another as a result of a crises, or a breach of continuity. Swenson (1941/1983, pp. 162-63) notes the notion of a breach of continuity carries with it three related ideas. First, what is valued in each stage is a reflection of a passion or an enthusiasm which, in each case, is qualitatively different. Kierkegaard characterizes these differences in passion as follows: "While aesthetic existence is essentially enjoyment, and ethical existence, essentially struggle and victory, religious existence is essentially suffering, and that not as a transitional moment, but as persisting" (CUP, p. 256); or, more briefly put, "enjoyment-perdition; action-victory; suffering" (CUP, p. 261). Second, a person enters a higher stage only by means of an act of will as opposed to a process of reflection. As noted in the previous chapter, Kierkegaard holds that reflection must be halted by an act of the will before one can act decisively. Third, the transition from one stage to another stage, in that it always involves

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a process of becoming, takes place of contingency as opposed to necessity. Again, as noted in the previous chapter, Kierkegaard holds that necessity is limited to logical necessity, that change never occurs of necessity.

One gains a better sense of the ideas associated with a breach of continuity, and a better sense of Kierkegaard's use of "the ethical" to denote a stage of existence, by considering what is involved in the transition from the aesthetic stage to the ethical stage. The person who is living in the aesthetic stage "is quite in order to wish for wealth, good fortune, and the most beautiful of damsels" (CUP, p. 351). In the aesthetic stage, pathos is associated with immediate gratification. If a pleasure is deferred, it is for the purpose of heightening the level of gratification. One seeks out pleasures in the expectation that these pleasures will provide one with a meaningful and satisfying existence. However, the aesthetic stage ultimately leads to a crisis of despair, for although the aesthetic stage of existence may satisfy the finite element of our nature, the infinite element remains unsatisfied and malnourished. One who encounters such a breach in continuity is then confronted with a choice of continuing to live in despair or to leap to the ethical stage of existence by means of a passionate resolution of the will.

When one chooses the ethical stage of existence, one wills to begin the journey into selfhood, i.e., one chooses to forgo the maximization of one's finite element in favor of the infinite element. The ethical stage is characterized by a two-fold struggle. First, one struggles and gains the victory over the aesthetic stage by willfully subordinating one's own pleasures to the dictates of universal ethical principles which, according to Kierkegaard, are God-given. And second, one also struggles to defend oneself against the

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encroachment of the religious stage (CUP, p. 262).

The requirement that one subordinate one's own pleasures to the dictates of universal ethical principles, a requirement which characterizes the ethical stage of existence, naturally leads to consideration of the second sense of "the ethical"--"the ethical" as the universal. Kierkegaard fully develops this sense of the ethical in *Fear and Trembling*, a work which explores the paradoxical nature of faith by considering three problems surrounding God's requirement that Abraham sacrifice Isaac.

First, Kierkegaard asks, "Is there such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical?" (FT, p. 64). In addressing this question, Kierkegaard observes that the ethical as the universal "applies to everyone" at "every instant" (FT, p. 64). As the universal, the ethical has no external *telos*; to the contrary, the ethical is the *telos* for everything external to the ethical. So understood, the ethical requires of every individual that he or she impose a teleology upon his or her own existence, a teleology which not only reflects the universal but also abolishes the individual's particularity. Any assertion of the individual's particularity over and against the universal must be viewed as sin; if the individual has already entered the universal, and then comes to feel an impulse to assert his or her particularity, then the individual experiences temptation.

But in the case of Abraham, as Kierkegaard points out, the ethical as universal is the temptation, for the ethical as universal demands that Abraham fulfill his duty to his son. In the case of Abraham, God, the author of the ethical, calls Abraham out from the *telos* of the ethical as universal to a higher *telos* which suspends the *telos* of the ethical as universal. According to Kierkegaard, the paradox of faith is that the "individual as the

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particular is higher than the universal, is justified over against it" (FT, p. 66). The individual is justified over against the ethical universal for his or her existence now expresses a higher universal, one in which the "individual as particular now stands in an absolute relation to the absolute" (FT, p. 66). As such, faith entails a teleological suspension of the ethical as universal.

Second, Kierkegaard asks, "Is there such a thing as an absolute duty toward God?" (FT, p. 78). In addressing this question, Kierkegaard sets forth another attribute of the ethical as the universal, namely that the ethical is divine. From this position, Kierkegaard reasons that one may say that every duty is a duty toward God, but if one can say no more than this, then one has reduced the concept of "God" to an abstract sense of the divine, or the universal, or of duty. If God is equated with the ethical, the universal, the divine, or duty, then Abraham must be viewed as a murderer. In contrast to this view, the individual enters into a direct relationship with the deity (FT, p. 70). The paradox of faith requires that Abraham be seen as possessing an absolute duty toward God, which again reflects the idea that the individual, related absolutely to the absolute, is higher than the universal.

Third, Kierkegaard asks, "Was Abraham ethically defensible in keeping silent about his purpose before Sarah, before Eleazor, before Isaac?" (FT, p. 91). Kierkegaard's consideration of this question points to another feature of the ethical as the universal, namely that it is "the manifest, the revealed" (FT, p. 91). In contrast, Kierkegaard claims, the individual is the hidden, the concealed. As such, the task of the individual is to forfeit this concealment and to become fully revealed in the universal. The ethical as the universal demands that Abraham speak, thereby translating his actions into the universal.

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But in this case, Abraham cannot speak, for the trial which confronts him demands that he leave the ethical as universal behind, that he stand as a particular in an absolute relation to the absolute.

To summarize, Kierkegaard's use of the ethical as the universal entails the following ideas: first, the ethical as universal applies to everyone at every instant and it demands that the individual impose a teleology upon one's existence; second, the ethical as the universal carries with it the notion of the divine, of duty toward God; and third, as the ethical as universal is the revealed, the manifest, the ethical task is that one forego his or her concealment in order that one may be fully revealed in the universal. By addressing the problems in this manner, Kierkegaard demonstrates the ethical (as universal) and faith are distinctly different categories and shows us that faith is higher than the ethical.

Kierkegaard's recognition that the individual can stand absolutely related to the absolute presents us with the third sense of the ethical, the ethical as subjectivity, or the ethical as the task of becoming subjective. Kierkegaard's use of "the ethical" in this sense considers many features associated with the form of ethical existence, i.e., the mode of acquisition whereby one attains an eternal happiness, as opposed to the content of ethical existence. First, it should be noted, the ethical as the task of becoming subjective always takes place before God: "The ethical development of the individual constitutes the little private theater where God is indeed a spectator....All ethical development consists in becoming apparent before God" (CUP, p. 141). Second, so understood, the ethical "is and remains the highest task of every human being" CUP, p. 135). Correspondingly, the highest reward, the reward of an eternal happiness, is granted only to those who become

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subjective (*vide*, CUP, p. 146). As Kierkegaard further notes, immortality and eternal life are to be found only in the ethical (*vide*, p. 137). Third, the ethical task of becoming subjective provides one with enough to last for a lifetime: "To be finished with life before life has finished with one, is precisely not to have finished the task" (CUP, p. 147). Fourth, it is the individual's task to always "cling to the ethical, making absolutely no demands, but continuing to find...enthusiasm in the ethical relationship to God" (CUP, p. 125). Fifth, the notion of clinging to the ethical carries with it the "ideal of a persistent striving" which "expresses the existing subject's ethical view of life" (CUP, p. 110).

Considerable confusion could have been avoided had Kierkegaard consistently used terms such as "the ethical stage," "the ethical as universal," and "the ethical life" when referring to these distinctly different senses of "the ethical." In the discussion which follows, I will employ these terms to clarify the sense Kierkegaard has in mind when he refers to "the ethical."

The early Wittgenstein's use of "ethics" and "the Ethical" are also problematic, for the Tractarian view of language disavows that there can be any propositions of ethics: "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental" (TLP, 6.421). As far as the early Wittgenstein was concerned, the *Tractatus* drew "limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside" (LLW, p. 143). The early Wittgenstein maintains that the tendency on the part of those who attempt "to write or talk Ethics or Religion" is "to run up against the boundaries of language" (LE, p. 12): "This thrust against the limits of language is *ethics*" (LE, p. 13). In another instance, the early Wittgenstein characterized his view of ethics as follows: "What is good is also divine. Queer as it sounds, that sums

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At first glance it may appear that the limitations imposed upon the early Wittgenstein's consideration of ethics by the Tractarian view of language preclude any comparison between the early Wittgenstein's and Kierkegaard's view of ethics. Despite the early Wittgenstein's having said so little about ethics, it appears that there is some commonality of meaning to be found in Kierkegaard's insistence that ethics embodies consciousness of the eternal and in the early Wittgenstein's insistence that the good is the divine and that "only something supernatural can express the Supernatural". Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein are acknowledging that ethics possesses a transcendent feature. The early Wittgenstein's view is akin to Kierkegaard's view that the ethical is "Unknown" and unspeakable (*vide*, PF, p. 55). Although this correspondence is present, it does not allow for a direct correlation of meaning of their use of "ethics."

The later Wittgenstein has very little to say about ethics or the ethical per se. He is more concerned to investigate the usage of ethical terms such as "good" (*vide*, PI, § 77) and the nature of ethical judgments.

Although the early Wittgenstein makes a few remarks pertaining to the meaning of life, neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein addresses the nature of ethical existence as does Kierkegaard. Notwithstanding the lack of commonality of usage of terms such as "ethics" and "the ethical," Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein do hold a number of views in common concerning the use of language and communication within ethics, the inappropriateness of scientific inquiry into ethics, and

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knowledge of the ethical. While some of these topics were briefly touched upon, or alluded to, in the preceding chapter, the following discussion more fully investigates the epistemological ramifications associated with these topics.

Kierkegaard: Ethical and Religious Communication

As noted in the previous chapter, Kierkegaard differentiates between objective and subjective reflection, which yield, respectively, accidental and essential knowledge. And as was noted, accidental knowledge is characterized by objectivity; it is indifferently related to the knowing subject's existence. In contrast, essential knowledge is characterized by subjectivity and is inwardly related to the knowing subject's existence.

According to Kierkegaard, communication practices associated with accidental and essential knowledge differ radically: communication of accidental knowledge employs an objective (direct) form, whereas communication of essential knowledge must employ a subjective (indirect) form. The difference between these forms of communication further becomes apparent, for "*The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said*" (CUP, p. 181). The sense of the direct/indirect distinction becomes clearer in light of Kierkegaard's analysis of communication.

The modern age, Kierkegaard believes, has become so preoccupied with the objective *WHAT* of communication as to have forgotten the subjective *HOW*. Given this deficiency, the modern age needs to consider the more basic, "primitive" question of what it means to communicate [*vide*, VIII^2 B 89 (J&P, 657)].

Kierkegaard addresses this question and identifies four parts of the communication process: "1) *the object*, 2) *the communicator*, 3) *the receiver*, 4) *the*

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communication" [VIII^2 B 89 (J&P, 657)]. Kierkegaard's analysis of the communication process focuses upon three distinctions [*vide*, VIII^2 B 83 (J&P, 651)]. I will briefly set forth the manner in which Kierkegaard draws these distinctions and I will further develop the ramifications for ethical and religious communication.

The first of these distinctions involves reflection upon "the object" of communication. Kierkegaard distinguishes between communication in which there is an object and communication in which there is no object. This distinction becomes clearer in light of several comments which Kierkegaard makes concerning the nature of the object of communication. Kierkegaard believes reflection reveals the object of communication is either knowledge about something or self-knowledge. When Kierkegaard speaks of knowledge about something he has in mind knowledge which ranges "all the way from the empirical to the highest sciences," e.g., philosophy [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

In clarifying what is meant by communication without an object, Kierkegaard asks that we suppose there is some knowledge--without telling us what he has in mind--which everyone already possesses. As he observes, granted this supposition, three implications are present for the dialectic of communication: first, since everyone already possesses this knowledge, it cannot be communicated to another, so the object drops out; second, since this knowledge cannot be communicated, the concept of the communicator drops out; and third, as everyone already is in possession of this knowledge, the concept of receiver also drops out [*vide*, VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)]. Kierkegaard further reasons, since everyone is in possession of this knowledge, it must have been communicated by someone at some time and in some manner, so the only communicator remaining is the

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Kierkegaard next raises the question as to whether this knowledge is knowledge of the ethical; he inquires "What, specifically is the ethical?" As he observes, to raise the question in this manner is to inquire unethically of the ethical because it assumes that the ethical may be investigated in a scientific manner. Since the ethical (as universal) levies a demand upon each and every person, Kierkegaard concludes that everyone must already know the ethical. Consequently, the ethical does not result from overcoming ignorance; on the contrary, it "begins with a knowledge and demands a realization" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)], and so its communication at the same time announces a capability.

Kierkegaard's second distinction involves reflection upon "the communication" and the corresponding medium through which the communication is accomplished. The medium of communication differs depending upon whether one would communicate knowledge or capability. Since reality is not thought or understood until its essence has been resolved into possibility, communication of knowledge employs the medium of imagination, whereby various possibilities are imagined, considered, and accepted or rejected. In contrast, communication of capability employs the medium of actuality in two different senses: first, the communicator must already exist in the actuality which he or she would communicate, and second, the capability which is being communicated carries with it the notion of transforming a possibility for the life of the receiver into actuality [*vide*, VIII^2 B 83 (J&P, 651)]. In another instance, Kierkegaard characterizes this distinction in terms of "communicating as a science" as opposed to "communicating something as an art" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

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Kierkegaard's third distinction applies exclusively to communication of capability and considers the relationship between the communicator and the receiver. When aesthetic capability is being communicated, there is an equal emphasis upon the communicator and the receiver because the communication involves the direct communication of capability. In the case of ethical capability, the emphasis is primarily upon the receiver because the communication serves a maieutic function in which the ethical is drawn out of the receiver; in this respect, the communicator steps aside. And in the case of religious capability, the emphasis is primarily upon the communicator because the communicator possesses the knowledge of Christianity which must be communicated first [*vide*, VIII[2] B 83 (J&P, 651)].

When Kierkegaard says that the subjective accent falls on "how" something is said, he is not referring to tonality, demeanor, expression, etc., but is rather referring "to the relationship sustained by the existing individual, in his own existence, to the content of his utterance" (CUP, p. 181). Because the accent of subjective communication concerns "how" the essential truth is to be communicated, because essential truths may only be communicated indirectly, indirect communication is an art which is to be employed for the purpose of communicating capability. The receiver must perceive this capability as a possibility to be actualized in his or her own life: "Existential reality is incommunicable, and the subjective thinker finds his reality in his own ethical existence. When reality is apprehended by an outsider it can be understood only as possibility" (CUP, p. 320). It is this possibility which compels the other to confront the problem of existence.

The necessity of using an indirect form of communication rests upon the

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difference which Kierkegaard observes to exist between objective and subjective truth. Objective truths may be communicated directly, for they communicate results. But subjective truths, the essential truths of ethics and religion, truths which reflect inwardness, may not be communicated directly, for such truths are to be appropriated in such a manner that the attendant possibilities for existence are realized. When a subjective truth is communicated, the receiver is confronted with a possibility, which, to be realized, must be appropriated in inwardness. In this respect there is a "double reflection," for the individual first reflects upon the universal principle which calls for a response, and then reflects upon the realization of this response in inwardness (*vide*, CUP, p. 68).

According to Kierkegaard, any attempt to communicate subjective truths in a direct manner which focuses upon results, understood in terms of acquiring and dispensing systematic knowledge as, for example, in scholarship or science, is clearly mistaken:

> For if inwardness is the truth, results are only rubbish with which we should not trouble each other. The communication of results is an unnatural form of intercourse between man and man, in so far as every man is a spiritual being, for whom the truth consists in nothing else than the self-activity of personal appropriation, which the communication of a result tends to prevent. (CUP, pp. 216-217)

Essential truths cannot be directly communicated for all direct communication leads outward and away from the subject. Attempts to communicate essentially, i.e., to communicate capability, which employ a direct mode of communication are based upon a misunderstanding (*vide*, CUP, p. 223).

To further illustrate his point, Kierkegaard compares the teaching of the existential ethical to military drill training. As he observes, drill is taught as an art; there is no lengthy rational explanation of what is involved in drilling. The drill instructor draws

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upon the natural abilities of the recruit and shows him what he is to do. Communication concerning the ethical life should be conducted in the same way: "If one begins first of all with a course to instill the ethical into the individual, then the communication never becomes ethical and the relationship is disturbed from the beginning" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)]. Since direct communication of the ethical life does not lead to the realization of ethical capability, Kierkegaard concludes, "The whole modern science of ethics is, ethically understood, an evasion" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

Kierkegaard offers three reasons why ethical existence should be communicated indirectly. First, as God is the master-teacher, all persons are merely apprentices; consequently, no person can have authority over another person's ethical existence. Second, communication should be indirect because one must emphasize that the receiver already knows the ethical requirements. And third, as God is the master-teacher, everyone is presented with the same ethical task of becoming subjective, i.e., of coming "to stand alone in the God-relationship" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

Kierkegaard acknowledges that some may hold that his approach is "mere declamation," that all that he has at his "disposal is a little irony, a little pathos, and a little dialectics" (CUP, p. 137). In response, Kierkegaard states:

> "What else should anyone have who proposes to set forth the ethical?" Should he perhaps set it objectively in a framework of paragraphs and get it smoothly by rote, so as to contradict himself by his form? In my opinion irony, pathos, and dialectics are precisely *quod desideratur*, when the ethical is *quod erat demonstrandum*. Yet I do not by any means consider that I have by my scribblings exhausted the ethical, since it is infinite. (CUP, p. 137)

Since the existential ethical cannot be communicated in an objective manner, any attempt to set it into an objective framework disrespects its character; such attempts contradict the

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Kierkegaard ultimately went so far as to acknowledge that "all speech in relation to the ethical is something of a deception" (CUP, p, 414). This acknowledgment rests upon his observation that "speech is...a more abstract medium than existence," and despite our best precautionary measures to protect the content of the ethical, it "always retains an appearance of the foreshortened perspective" (CUP, p. 414), that is to say, is diminished in representation. Just as the representation of objects in a painting is something of a deception due to the foreshortened perspective, so too is all ethical discourse, for it invariably makes the ethical life seem far less difficult than it actually is (*vide*, CUP, p. 414).

A good example of indirect communication associated with the existential ethical is found in the Old Testament. Nathan, the prophet, employs indirect communication in the form of a parable when he confronts David concerning his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah:

> The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.
>
> "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."
>
> David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."
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> Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!..." (2 Samuel 12.1-7a, NIV)

In this story, David was already in possession of the essential truth, of the ethical

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requirements of God's law, but he had failed to fully appropriate this truth within his own character and actions. The use of the parable to awaken David's sense of injustice served to condemn his own actions and to bring him to repentance. One can only speculate as to the results if Nathan had chosen a direct form of communication, but it is highly likely that David, as king, would have been enraged. If so, the communication would not have worked its desired effect.

Although Kierkegaard believes all existential ethical communication should be indirect, he holds that ethical-religious communication should take a "direct-indirect" form [*vide*, VIII^2 B 89 (J&P, 657)]. Communication of the Christian faith should first be "direct," since it must begin by imparting knowledge concerning Jesus Christ, and the claims which Christ made, e.g., that he is the Son of God, and that one can receive salvation and eternal happiness through belief in Christ. After setting forth this information, the communication must then take the same "indirect" form as the ethical, for Christianity also deals with capability which calls for realization [*vide*, VIII^2 B 89 (J&P, 657)].

One gets a better sense of what Kierkegaard means when he says that religious communication must be direct-indirect by considering what Kierkegaard says concerning the nature of sermons or the religious address. Sermons should be structured in the following manner: First, one should raise the question, "*Why has Christianity come into the world?*" Kierkegaard believes this question should be raised in an effort to abolish all of the nonsense which attends the view that Christianity is merely a consolation. Second, one must proclaim that Christianity "*must be believed*," that it cannot be approached by

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means of proof. And third, one must raise the question of whether the listener has so believed, i.e., the listener must be encouraged to examine his or her life to see whether it expresses a profession of belief [*vide*, IX A 127 (J&P, 659)]. The first and second elements communicate knowledge via direct communication, whereas the third element communicates capability via indirect communication.

Kierkegaard is highly critical of attempts to explain the paradox of Christianity, for such attempts employ direct communication. He believes attempts to explain the paradox lead to nonsense and he compares them with attempts to give utterance to an unutterable joy. If a joy is unutterable, then any attempts to give it utterance must be seen as nonsensical. In many instances wherein one claims that a joy is unutterable, Kierkegaard observes, "unutterable" is being used as a clever rhetorical predicate (*vide*, CUP, p. 198). In such cases it may be said that to call something "unutterable" is somewhat of a deception similar to that employed in sleight of hand, for the joy is not really unutterable.

In contrast to this bogus unutterable joy, Kierkegaard asks that we consider a sense of unutterable joy which is not merely some clever rhetorical device:

> But suppose the inexpressible joy had its ground in the contradiction that an existing human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite situated in time, so that the joy of the eternal in him becomes inexpressible because he is an existing individual, becomes a highest breath of the spirit which is nevertheless incapable of finding embodiment, because the existing individual exists: then the explanation would be that it is unutterable, that it cannot be otherwise; no nonsense please. (CUP, p. 198)

In this case the unutterable joy derives from the realization of the infinite side of one's nature through belief in Jesus Christ, a realization attained only as a result of decisive inwardness on the part of the subject. In such a case, the unutterable joy is incapable of

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In concluding this section, it should be noted that Kierkegaard saw his own authorship as an exercise in indirect communication. In a section of *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* entitled "That 'Christendom' is a prodigious illusion," Kierkegaard notes the reactions of those who are confronted by the religious enthusiast who appears on the scene to rail against Christendom and to advise nearly all that they are not Christians. As he notes, they will calmly lay his book aside, or will employ a circuitous route to avoid hearing his public speech, or failing these, will calmly define the issue at hand and brand him a fanatic. Kierkegaard then states:

> No, an illusion can never be destroyed directly, and only by indirect means can it be radically removed. If it is an illusion that all are Christians--and if there is anything to be done about it, it must be done indirectly, not by one who vociferously proclaims himself as an extraordinary Christian, but by one who, better instructed, is ready to declare that he is not a Christian at all.* That is, one must approach from behind the person who is under an illusion. Instead of wishing to have the advantage of being oneself that rare thing, a Christian, one must let the prospective captive enjoy the advantage of being the Christian, and for one's own part have resignation enough to be the one who is far behind him--otherwise one will certainly not get the man out of his illusion, a thing which is difficult in any case. (PV, pp. 24-25)

The asterisk in the above quotation refers the reader to the following remark: "One may recall the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, the author of which, Johannes Climacus, declares expressly that he himself is not a Christian" (PV, p. 24). In his authorship of the *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard deliberately assumes the vantage point of one, Johannes Climacus, who is not a Christian, for the purpose of indirectly attacking the illusions surrounding the question of what is necessary for one to become a Christian. Several other pseudonyms were used for similar

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Early Wittgenstein: Ethical and Religious Communication

The early Wittgenstein holds that we cannot talk about ethics. As noted previously, the aim of the *Tractatus* is to draw a limit to the expression of thought, i.e., to draw the boundary between what is sayable and what is unsayable. In a letter to Ludwig von Ficker concerning Wittgenstein's view of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes:

> My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing these limits. In short, I believe that where many others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it. (LLW, p. 143).

Wittgenstein is attempting to draw the limits of language from within language. Although Wittgenstein is using propositions toward this end, the use of these propositions *shows* the limits of logic and ethics. For Wittgenstein there are only two kinds of propositions: propositions of logic (tautologies or contradictions) which say nothing, and propositions which can only express possible states of affairs in the world. Since none of these express ethical knowledge, there can be no propositions of ethics (*vide*, TLP, 6.1-6.11; TLP, 6.42).

Given the early Wittgenstein's position that there can be no propositions of ethics, one is confronted with two possible alternatives: either ethics exists but is not subject to propositional discourse or ethics does not exist. The early Wittgenstein is not denying the existence of ethics nor is he saying that there is nothing beyond what can be put into words; quite the contrary. As Wittgenstein states, "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. *They make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical" (TLP,

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The Tractarian view of language and philosophy, if rigorously applied, excludes the consideration of any philosophical questions associated with ethics or religion. According to the early Wittgenstein the correct method in philosophy would be

> to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science--i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy--and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. (TLP, 6.53)

Because ethical or religious propositions attempt to communicate something which is metaphysical, they must ultimately be viewed as nonsensical. Wittgenstein acknowledges the fact that the recipient of this method would most likely be dissatisfied, for he or she would feel that we were not teaching philosophy, but nevertheless, this would still be the only correct approach to philosophy (*vide*, TLP, 6.53).

Although the early Wittgenstein takes this position, one may reasonably argue that the *Tractatus* says far more than propositions of natural science. There is a sense in which the *Tractatus* is an indirect form of communication because it attempts to *show* something that cannot be clearly communicated. Wittgenstein acknowledges that the *Tractatus* is to be understood as a showing; the propositions contained therein serve as elucidations; they serve as a means of casting light, or of making something clear:

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them--as steps--to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)
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> He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world

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According to Wittgenstein, one who carefully works through the *Tractatus*, one who thinks with him, will come to see something which was not readily apparent before. Since Wittgenstein holds that "The world and life are one," it may be said that one may come to see life differently as a result of thinking with Wittgenstein. The sense of life may become clear, but, even so, one is at a loss when one attempts to say what constitutes the sense of life[1] (*vide*, TLP, 6.521). Wittgenstein once again points to the limitation of our language in the closing remark of the *Tractatus*: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (TLP, 7).

The early Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics*[2] sets forth a careful consideration of the nature of ethics and the limits of ethical discourse. A careful reading of the *Lecture on Ethics* reveals several significant parallel points of view between Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein. However, it should be noted at the outset, the early Wittgenstein takes a far more extreme position concerning the inability to communicate the ethical than does Kierkegaard.

By way of further setting the context for the discussion which follows, it should

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[1] Although the early Wittgenstein claims the sense of life may become clear, this should not be taken to imply that the unspeakable can become clear in a manner that permits comparison to Kierkegaard's concept of the unspeakable. Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein hold that the unspeakable is outside the domain of representational language. Consequently, direct comparison is impossible.

[2] The editors of *Philosophical Review* note that Wittgenstein prepared the lecture sometime between September 1929 and December 1930; that it was undoubtedly prepared for delivery before a society known as "The Heretics"; and that this lecture was the only popular lecture that Wittgenstein delivered.

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be noted that the early Wittgenstein acknowledges Kierkegaard's views as they relate to observations which Wittgenstein makes concerning a tendency to run up against the limits of language. Wittgenstein sees Kierkegaard's notion of running up against the paradox as possessing some affinity to his assertion that "running up against the limits of language is *ethics*" (WVC, 1979, p. 68). As noted previously, the sense of ethics which Wittgenstein is herein employing more closely accords with Kierkegaard's view of the Unknown (*vide*, PF, p. 49).

Wittgenstein's remarks were made during a meeting at Schlick's house on 30 December 1929, a date which falls within the time-frame in which it is believed that Wittgenstein prepared the *Lecture on Ethics*. Waismann records Wittgenstein's remarks as follows:

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> To be sure, I can imagine what Heidegger means by being and anxiety. Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language. Think for example of the astonishment that anything at all exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question, and there is also no answer whatsoever. Anything we might say is *a priori* bound to be mere nonsense. Nevertheless we do run up against the limits of language.... Kierkegaard too saw that there is this running up against something and he referred to it in a fairly similar way (as running up against paradox). This running up against the limits of language is *ethics*. I think it is definitely important to put an end to all the claptrap about ethics--whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable. In ethics, we are always making the attempt to say something that cannot be said, something that does not and never will touch the essence of the matter. It is *a priori* certain that whatever definition of the good may be given--it will always be merely a misunderstanding to say that the essential thing, that what is really meant, corresponds to what is expressed (Moore). But the inclination, the running up against something, *indicates something*. St. Augustine knew that already when he said: What, you swine, you want to talk nonsense! Go ahead and talk nonsense, it does not matter! (WVC, 1979, pp. 68-69)

A number of the ideas which Wittgenstein herein sets forth are developed more fully in

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After making some preliminary remarks, Wittgenstein opens the *Lecture on Ethics* by citing Moore's definition of ethics:"'Ethics is the general enquiry into what is good'" (LE, p. 4). Wittgenstein notes that a number of other synonymous expressions could be substituted for this definition, e.g., "the inquiry into what is valuable, or what is really important, or...into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living" (LE, p. 5). Each of these expressions, according to Wittgenstein, may be used in two different senses, "the trivial or relative sense on the one hand and the ethical or absolute sense on the other" (LE, p. 5).

The early Wittgenstein clarifies this distinction between the use of expressions in the trivial or relative sense, as opposed to the ethical or absolute sense, by analyzing the notion of what it means to say that something is good. In the trivial or relative sense, to say something is good means it measures up to some preconceived standard, e.g., a good chair may mean that it is comfortable and durable. To illustrate the ethical or absolute sense of good, Wittgenstein asks that we consider one who, upon being confronted with the fact that he has told a preposterous lie, replies that he knows his conduct is reprehensible but he desires to behave no better. In such a case, Wittgenstein remarks, one would likely respond by informing him that he *ought* to want to behave better (*vide*, LE, p. 5). As Wittgenstein observes, these examples reveal the difference between relative judgments of value and absolute judgments of value, a difference which reveals that all judgments of relative value may be reduced to statements of fact and may be given a form in which they lose all appearance of a judgment of value. By way of illustration,

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Wittgenstein provides the following example: "'This man is a good runner' simply means that he runs a certain number of miles in a certain number of minutes, etc." (LE, p. 6).

Wittgenstein claims one can reduce all relative judgments of value to statements of fact, but one cannot derive any judgment of absolute value from factual statements: "Now what I wish to contend is that... no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value" (LE, p. 6). By way of illustration, Wittgenstein reasons that if one were omniscient and knew all of the movements of bodies in the world and all of the states of mind of anyone who is living or who ever has lived, and if one were to write all of these things in a book such that the book contained an entire and complete description of the states of affairs of the world, the book would not contain any ethical judgments or anything from which one could imply an ethical judgment (*vide*, LE, p. 6). This position reflects the Tractarian view that there can be no propositions of ethics, that propositions are incapable of expressing anything which is higher (*vide*, TLP, 6.42).

In the *Lecture on Ethics*, the early Wittgenstein further holds that just as all the facts of the world are on the same level, so too are all the propositions of the world: "There are no propositions which, in any absolute sense, are sublime, important, or trivial" (LE, p. 6). Wittgenstein acknowledges that some may be tempted to interpret his remarks in light of Hamlet's assertion, "Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." But, Wittgenstein warns, thinking with Hamlet could lead to a misunderstanding of the sense of what Wittgenstein is saying, for Hamlet seems to be saying that good or bad do not attach to anything in the world, to any state of affairs, but are rather attributes of our states of mind (*vide*, LE, p. 6).

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On this basis, Wittgenstein asks, are states of the mind to be adjudged good or bad? Wittgenstein's position is that even states of mind, in so far as they are capable of description, may not be adjudged good or bad in any ethical sense: "But what I mean is that a state of mind, so far as we mean by that a fact which we can describe, is in no ethical sense good or bad" (LE, p. 6). By way of illustration, Wittgenstein observes that if a murder were fully described in the aforementioned hypothetical book, the description surrounding the murder would set forth all of the physical and psychological details associated with the murder, but there would be nothing in these facts which could rightly be called "an *ethical* proposition" (LE, p. 6).

Based upon his analysis, Wittgenstein is led to conclude that there can be no science of ethics:

> And now I must say that if I contemplate what Ethics would really have to be if there were such a science, this result seems to me quite obvious...that nothing we could ever think or say should be *the* thing....I can only describe my feeling by the metaphor, that, if a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts. (LE, p. 7).

As noted previously, the early Wittgenstein spoke of ethics as supernatural in the sense of the good as being divine (*vide*, 1929, p. 3e). But in this context, Wittgenstein appears to be using "supernatural" in the sense of being above the natural world.

The early Wittgenstein further addresses the limitation of our words. Wittgenstein illustrates the problems we encounter by noting the difference between expressions such as "the right road" and "the absolutely right road" and by considering what could possibly be meant by the latter expression. He suggests that it would be that

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road "which *everybody* on seeing it would, *with logical necessity*, have to go, or be ashamed for not going" (LE, p. 7). In a similar fashion, Wittgenstein suggests that "the *absolute* good, if it is a describable state of affairs, would be one which everybody, independent of his tastes and inclinations, would *necessarily* bring about or feel guilty for not bringing about" (LE, p. 7). Such states of affairs, as Wittgenstein notes, are chimeras, for "No state of affairs has, in itself, what I would like to call the coercive power of an absolute judge" (LE, p. 7). To put this somewhat differently, values are not built into reality, into the states of affairs of the world, so there is nothing in a state of affairs which is coercive; the absolute good does not exist in any state of affairs.

Noting that we continue to use expressions such as "absolute value" and "absolute good," the early Wittgenstein asks what we are doing when we use such expressions: "what have we in mind and what do we try to express?" (LE, p. 7) In addressing these questions, Wittgenstein sets forth three experiences: wondering at the existence of the world, feeling *absolutely* safe, and feeling guilty. In his analysis of these experiences, Wittgenstein notes that in each case there appears to be a characteristic misuse of language, and he adds that this misuse "runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions" (LE, p. 9).

What is the characteristic misuse of language to which Wittgenstein refers? As Wittgenstein notes, all of these expressions "*seem*, prima facie, to be just *similes*" (LE, p. 9). According to Wittgenstein, when we use words such as "right" or "good" in an ethical sense, we mean something similar to what is meant when we use these words in the trivial or relative sense. Similarly, Wittgenstein further observes, a sense of simile or

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allegory attaches to the use of religious terms. By means of example, Wittgenstein notes that the actions associated with speaking of God, and praying to God, point to an elaborate allegory in which God is typically viewed as "a human being of great power whose grace we try to win, etc., etc." (LE, p. 9). Wittgenstein holds that the aforementioned experiences of wondering at the existence of the world, of feeling *absolutely* safe, and of feeling guilty may all be understood in terms of this allegory. But, Wittgenstein points out, as customarily used, a simile or an allegory must stand for *something*; if any fact can be described by the use of simile, the simile may be dropped and the fact can be expressed apart from the simile (*vide*, LE, p. 10).[3] But in the case of these similes, once the simile is dropped, there are no facts which stand behind these experiences. Wittgenstein concludes, "what appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense" (LE, p. 10). Since people have had these experiences, they are facts, and facts may be reported about such experiences, e.g., that they occurred at a certain time and place, lasted for a certain duration, etc. But even though these experiences seem to have "in some sense an intrinsic, absolute value" (LE, p. 10), Wittgenstein concludes that it is nonsense to say that these experiences have absolute value: "It is the paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have a supernatural value" (LE, p. 10).

Wittgenstein admits that there is a way in which he is tempted to meet such a paradox, namely through considering it to be a miracle, "an event the like of which we

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[3] The early Wittgenstein is herein employing a reductionist view of metaphor or allegory which accords well with his Tractarian view of language wherein language functions to picture actual states of affairs in the world. The later Wittgenstein's view of language recognizes the fact that language can and does serve many functions, so this reductionist view of metaphor or allegory is abandoned.

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have never yet seen" (LE, p. 10). To illustrate this, Wittgenstein asks that we take some extraordinary event, e.g., that one suddenly grows a lion's head and roars. Wittgenstein says that after recovering from our surprise, we would likely call a doctor and have the case scientifically investigated to the point of vivisection. Wittgenstein then asks:

> And where would the miracle have got to? For it is clear that when we look at it in this way everything miraculous has disappeared; unless what we mean by this term is merely that a fact has not yet been explained by science which again means that we have hitherto failed to group this fact with others in a scientific system. This shows that it is absurd to say "Science has proved that there are no miracles." The truth is that the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle. (LE, pp. 10-11)

In this case, what at first appearance was a miracle has now been scientifically analyzed and has been properly placed within a system of scientific facts. But as Wittgenstein points out, "miracle" has been used in the preceding discussion in both the relative and absolute senses: in the relative sense, a miracle is simply some fact the likes of which has never before been seen and which ultimately comes to be understood and explained by means of science; in the absolute sense, a miracle is something which is brought about by superhuman agency, is contrary to the laws of science, and is not explainable in scientific terms (*vide*, LE, p. 11).

Wittgenstein says that our experience of wondering at the existence of the world may be considered in terms of seeing the world as a miracle (*vide*, LE, p. 11). Wittgenstein then states: "Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself" (LE, p. 11). Ordinarily we attempt to express the miraculous by means of language, but what we need to realize, according to Wittgenstein, is that the

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existence of language itself gives rise to our notion of the miraculous; our use of language induces us to wonder at the existence of the world as a whole. However, as Wittgenstein points out, recognition of this fact only serves to again reveal "that we cannot express what we want to express and that all we *say* about the absolute miraculous remains non-sense" (LE, p. 11).

Wittgenstein acknowledges that many will object to his conclusion on the grounds that failure to discover the correct logical analysis for ethical and religious expressions does not deny the legitimacy of such expressions, but he flatly rejects the idea that some logical analysis may ultimately be found for ethical or religious expressions, for he realizes that no description is capable of providing a logical analysis of the meaning of absolute value; and that because the absolute good does not exist in any state of affairs, and, consequently, there is nothing to describe (*vide*, LE, p. 11).

Since ethics is transcendent and cannot be put into words (*vide*, TLP, 6.421), any description which attempts to signify the sense of absolute value must be rejected because of its lack of signification; ethics is beyond signification. Having come to this realization, Wittgenstein states,

> I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. For all I wanted to do with them was just *to go beyond* the world and that is to say beyond significant language. (LE, p. 11)

These nonsensical expressions are documentations of our attempts to use language "to go beyond" the limits of our world and of our language.

Wittgenstein concludes the *Lecture on Ethics* in sentences which completely accord with Kierkegaard's position concerning the impossibility that ethics can be any

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> My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it. (LE, pp. 11-12)

While the *Lecture on Ethics* considers both ethical and religious discourse, the early Wittgenstein more directly addresses the nature of religious discourse in a conversation which occurred at Schlick's house on 17 December 1930, a conversation which was recorded by Waismann:

> *Religion*. Is speech essential for religion? I can quite well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrines, and hence nothing is said. Obviously the essence of religion can have nothing to do with the fact that speech occurs--or rather: if speech does occur, this itself is a component of religious behavior and not a theory. Therefore nothing turns on whether the words are true, false, or nonsensical.
>
> Neither are religious utterances *figurative*, for else they should also be expressible in prose. Thrusting against the limits of language? Language is not a cage. (LE, II, p. 16)

This passage reveals considerable development in Wittgenstein's view because it reflects movement away from the representational theory of language encountered in the *Tractatus*. The Tractarian view of language holds that language pictures states of affairs in accordance with a truth-functional calculus. Now Wittgenstein views religious language as a form of religious behavior which is not in any way attempting to express a scientific theory or to represent states of affairs in a truth-functional mode. And, inasmuch as religious language is not an expression of a scientific theory, "truth," "falsehood," and "nonsense," as these terms are understood from within the objective,

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scientific framework, are not applicable. Furthermore, Wittgenstein's recognition that language is not used solely for representational purposes, that language has a multiplicity of uses, leads him to reject the idea that attempts to write or to talk ethics or religion run up against the limits of language. Since language is no longer limited to representational usage, it is no longer necessary to view language as a cage.

Kierkegaard and the Early Wittgenstein: Comparisons on Ethical and Religious Communication

An affinity between Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein becomes apparent when one recognizes the extent to which they perceived as ethical the problems associated with the propensity to misuse language. Kierkegaard warned of "false prophets who come...in wolves' clothing but inwardly are sheep--that is the phrasemongers...the systematic wolves" [II A 176-177 (J&P, 3255-3256)]; he was concerned that every Christian concept had become so volatilized through the inappropriate use of language as to have become unrecognizable [*vide*, I A 328 (J&P, 5181)]. In another journal entry [*vide*, XI^2 A 128 (J&P, 2334)], Kierkegaard states that while flesh and blood are usually perceived to be man's enemy, the ability to speak, to use language, may be more dangerous or as dangerous. In this vein, he cites the ancient view that character training rightly begins with silence, a view espoused by Pythagoras. As Kierkegaard observes, there is a temptation just as great, if not greater, than any flesh and blood temptation, namely the temptation to take the loftiest of expressions, to further inflate them and to give the appearance that one's life conformed with these expressions. Kierkegaard considered this to be the "sin of using language dishonestly," a sin which was just as dangerous as poisoning the wells of a city or country; the only difference between poisoning wells and

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using language dishonestly is that the latter is not to be acknowledged or talked about [*vide*, XI^2 A 128 (J&P, 2334)].

Kierkegaard believes that the dishonest use of language and the refusal to acknowledge the same are the causes for the human race sinking further and further into dishonesty. It is this fact, according to Kierkegaard, which accounts for the nonsense one encounters in Christendom and which promotes the "prodigious illusion" of Christendom. This illusion has been fostered, according to Kierkegaard, by the gradual reduction of what it means, or of what it costs, to become a Christian [*vide*, XI^2 A 128 (J&P, 2334)]. If one is to be a true Christian, Kierkegaard argues, one must pay the full price. Through the dishonest use of language spanning several generations, the price of being a Christian had become so eroded as to make the concept virtually worthless. It is for this reason that Kierkegaard longed, as mentioned previously, that "powerfully equipped men might emerge who would restore the lost power and meaning of words" [I A 328 (J&P, 5181)].

In a marginal notation to the journal entry concerning the dishonest use of language, Kierkegaard compares the one who uses language dishonestly to the one who *falsifies* road signs rather than simply moving them: "A big uproar is made about moving road signs--but the person who treats language dishonestly actually falsifies the road signs" [XI^2 A 129 (J&P, 2335)]. Kierkegaard's use of this metaphor is mindful of remarks which the early Wittgenstein makes to the effect that "language sets everyone the same traps," that it is "an immense network of easily accessible wrong turnings" (CV, 1931, p. 18e). Wittgenstein sees his task as "erecting signposts at all the junctions where there are wrong turnings so as to help people past the danger points" (CV, 1931, p 18e). One

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notable difference stands out: while Kierkegaard sees the roadsigns as having been deliberately falsified and as needing repair, Wittgenstein simply begins by noting that language does indeed set traps for us which requires that we construct signposts.

Another affinity of view is present in Kierkegaard's and the early Wittgenstein's recognition of the need for, and employment of, indirect communication. As mentioned previously, the *Tractatus* may be viewed as an exercise in indirect communication, for, as Wittgenstein maintained, one must transcend the propositions of the *Tractatus* if one is to see the world aright (*vide*, TLP, 6.54).

However, one must be careful not to equate Kierkegaard's distinction between direct and indirect communication with the early Wittgenstein's distinction between saying and showing. Although these distinctions are related because both address limitations in the use of language, the limitations which these distinctions address are very different. At the same time, it must be remembered that the early Wittgenstein thinks religious language involves the use of untranslatable similes, rather than direct (in the sense of literal) language, and that is similar to Kierkegaard's notion of indirection.

Kierkegaard is concerned to show the limitation of direct discourse for communicating existential ethical and religious truths; if such truths are to have their desired effect, if they are to promote the realization of capability on the part of the individual, then indirect communication is more likely to succeed. Although universal ethical truths can be communicated directly, one can obtain better pedagogical results by telling a story, e.g., Nathan's use of a parable when confronting David concerning his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. In this respect, it may be said, Kierkegaard is more concerned with

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In contrast, the early Wittgenstein is concerned to demonstrate that propositions are incapable of representing the logical form of reality. In the *Tractatus* we read:

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

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

The logical form of reality cannot be directly expressed by means of language; it may only be shown through a consideration of the nature of propositions.

Notwithstanding the difference between these distinctions, the early Wittgenstein's comments pertaining to art and ethics further indicate that he recognizes the role of indirect communication which Kierkegaard has in mind. Wittgenstein observes that art is a form of expression (*vide*, NB, p. 83e). Wittgenstein's tremendous respect and appreciation for Tolstoy's *Twenty-Three Tales* provides us with an example of what Wittgenstein has in mind. Tolstoy employs story as an art form for the purpose of communicating existential ethical possibilities. These stories are examples of indirect communication, for they *show* the existential ethical possibilities and ask that these be considered for one's life.

Although neither the early Wittgenstein nor the later Wittgenstein draws the objective/subjective distinction as does Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein's distinction between judgments of trivial or relative value and judgments of ethical or absolute value within the *Lecture on Ethics* is analogous to Kierkegaard's view. For Kierkegaard,

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accidental knowledge and essential knowledge are respectively the products of objective reflection and subjective reflection. Accidental knowledge is indifferently related to the subject. In contrast, essential knowledge is knowledge which is essentially related to the subject's ethical existence (*vide*, CUP, pp. 176-177). According to Kierkegaard, essential knowledge consists of knowledge which is associated with the existential ethical and ethico-religious (*vide*, CUP, p. 177). In Wittgensteinian terms, accidental knowledge consists of judgments of trivial or relative value, whereas essential knowledge consists of judgments of ethical or absolute value. One difference should be noted: although Kierkegaard allows for propositions of ethical or absolute value, the early Wittgenstein does not. As previously mentioned, the later Wittgenstein's view is more akin to Kierkegaard's position.

Another affinity of view concerns the belief that ethics cannot be taught. The early Wittgenstein agrees with Kierkegaard that the existential ethical cannot be taught: "What is ethical cannot be taught. If I could explain the essence of the ethical only by means of a theory, then what is ethical would be of no value whatsoever...*For me* a theory is without value. A theory gives me nothing" (WVC, p. 117).

While Kierkegaard holds that one may serve a maieutic function whereby one lures the existential ethical out of another, Wittgenstein, as evidenced from the manuscript material of 1929, takes issue with the idea that one can lead someone to the ethical: "You cannot lead people to what is good; you can only lead them to some place or other. The good is outside the space of facts" (CV, 1929, p. 3e). The early Wittgenstein's point is closely related to what was said previously about the inexpressibility of absolute value.

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But in another sense, the early Wittgenstein may allow that one can be led to the ethical, for as noted before, Wittgenstein also held that ethical possibilities may be *shown* through the use of a good story. But even in this case, the early Wittgenstein would hold that the good is outside the space of facts, and that one only metaphorically leads one to the existential ethical by assisting him or her in realizing a more ethical life. In this respect, the early Wittgenstein's position would seem to accord with Kierkegaard's view that the proper approach is to "lure" the ethical out of another, although it must be noted that Wittgenstein does not employ Kierkegaard's terminology.

An implication of all of this is that despite these affinities, a significant disaffinity is seen to reside in the early Wittgenstein's insistence that there can be no propositions of ethics because propositions are incapable of representing anything which is higher. If one accepts the early Wittgenstein's position, one would have to admit that much of what Kierkegaard has to say about ethics is meaningless. Since the later Wittgenstein recognizes that language functions meaningfully in other than its representational use, he allows that we can talk meaningfully about ethics, that we can and do employ ethical judgments. In this respect, the later Wittgenstein's view of language is more accepting of Kierkegaard's project.

Later Wittgenstein: Ethical and Religious Communication

In turning to a consideration of the later Wittgenstein on the nature of communication associated with ethics, it may be helpful to note that Wittgenstein's movement away from the Tractarian view of language is already somewhat apparent in the *Lecture on Ethics*. There is no longer an emphasis upon language as picturing states of affairs in

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accordance with a truth-functional calculus. Rather, one encounters the idea that propositions fit into systems of knowledge. And from this vantage point, Wittgenstein moves toward his analysis of language in terms of language games, meaning as use, and the notion of family resemblances. The later Wittgenstein's view of ethics and ethical discourse changes in light of these developments.

When we are searching for the meaning of an ethical term, Wittgenstein recommends that we stop and ask: "How did we *learn* the meaning of this word ("good" for instance)? From what sort of examples? in what language-games?" (PI, § 77). As a result of asking these questions, Wittgenstein believes one comes to see that such words possess a "family of meanings," that these words are "family resemblance" concepts. Also, in the later Wittgenstein, the notion of a hard and fixed limit encountered in the *Tractatus* gives way to the idea that one may draw boundaries for different reasons (*vide*, PI, § 499).

Now the later Wittgenstein no longer holds there can be no ethical propositions, as he held in the *Tractatus* and the *Lecture on Ethics*, but he still recognizes that empirical propositions radically differ from ethical propositions. Empirical propositions must accord with an external reality; such propositions are subject to empirical testing; and if two empirical propositions are contradictory, it is acknowledged that something must be wrong. Ethical propositions differ, for they do not reflect external reality in the sense in which this may be said of empirical propositions, and it is not uncommon for two ethical propositions from different ethical systems to be contradictory.

The boundary which Wittgenstein drew in the *Tractatus* should now be seen in light of his later comment to the effect that boundaries may be drawn for different

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reasons. The boundary was drawn in the *Tractatus* for the purpose of demarcating the sayable from the unsayable. Although the grounds for claiming this strict boundary, i.e., the picture theory of language, have been abandoned, one may still claim that a boundary exists between scientific propositions and all ethical and religious propositions in this way: Although members of these classes of propositions are justified within their respective systems, empirical propositions, unlike ethical and religious propositions, are subject to verification on the basis of observation and measurement. Justification of empirical propositions then remains very different from the justification of ethical and religious propositions. For this reason, I think the later Wittgenstein would still hold there can be no science of ethics.

In the *Lectures on Religious Belief* the later Wittgenstein again considers the nature of religious discourse. Wittgenstein asks that we reflect upon the difference between two sets of statements:

> Suppose someone were a believer and said: "I believe in a Last Judgment," and I said: "Well, I'm not so sure. Possibly." You would say that there is an enormous gulf between us. If he said "There is a German aeroplane overhead," and I said "Possibly I'm not so sure," you'd say we were fairly near. (LC, p. 53)

As Wittgenstein points out, in the case of distinguishing between the position of the believer and the non-believer, "it isn't a question of...being anywhere near him, but on an entirely different plane, which you could express by saying: 'You mean something altogether different'" (LC, p. 53). Again he says, "This is partly why one would be reluctant to say: 'These people rigorously hold the opinion (or view) that there is a Last Judgment. 'Opinion' sounds queer" (LC, p. 57).

Wittgenstein proceeds to distinguish between language employed in religious

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discourse and that employed in scientific discourse. In religious discourse words such as "dogma" and "faith" indicate that we are talking about beliefs which are not subject to empirical verification. In contrast, in scientific discourse our use of words such as "hypothesis," "high probability," and "knowing" indicate that we are talking about knowledge claims which are subject to, and grounded in, empirical verification.

Of course, Wittgenstein acknowledges the propensity on the part of those who subscribe to various religious beliefs to think they are using terms, such as "belief" and "evidence" within religious discourse in the same manner and with the same force with which they use these terms in science (*vide*, LC, p. 57), but emphasizes the difference when he writes:

> Why shouldn't one form of life culminate in an utterance of belief in a Last Judgment? But I couldn't either say "Yes" or "No" to the statement that there will be such a thing. Nor "Perhaps," nor "I'm not sure."
>
> It is a statement which does not allow of any such answer. (LC, p. 59)

Expressions of religious statements which claim that such and such will occur, or that such and such is the case, are to be perceived as religious actions rather than expressions of statements requiring corroboration, i.e., such statements are to be perceived "as part of a religious act and not a theory" (WVC, p. 117). As "Yes," "No," "Perhaps," and "I'm not sure" are all responses which apply to the corroboration of statements, these responses cannot apply to such expressions of religious belief. Admittedly, one may say "yes" or "no" when asked if he or she believes in the Last Judgment, but this is different from saying "yes" or "no" to the question of whether or not there will be the usual sort of corroboration of its occurrence. The later Wittgenstein more clearly sets forth these differences in usage than does Kierkegaard, and in that respect, it must be said that

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Wittgenstein's work advances Kierkegaard's project.

Comparisons: Kierkegaard and the Later Wittgenstein on Ethical and Religious Communication

Although the later Wittgenstein says very little about the nature of ethics and the nature of ethical discourse, his views on these topics are in one respect closer to Kierkegaard's views than are the early Wittgenstein's views, for the later Wittgenstein allows that we can, and do, talk about ethics. The later Wittgenstein is more concerned with our use of ethical terms and the manner in which ethical principles relate to particular systems of ethics. The later Wittgenstein believes justification of one's ethical position always occurs from within a particular system of ethics (*vide*, Rhees, 1965, p.24). His position is mindful of Kierkegaard's consideration of the nature of ethical justification in light of Abraham's trial.

Within *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard discusses the paradox of faith as it is seen in the story of Abraham's trial wherein God demands that Isaac be sacrificed. Kierkegaard raises the question: "Was Abraham ethically defensible in keeping silent about his purpose before Sarah, before Eleazor, before Isaac?" (FT, p. 91). Kierkegaard notes that action which does not accord with universal ethical precepts would ordinarily require that one speak, that one justify oneself before the universal requirement: "If he keeps silent, ethics condemns him, for it says, 'Thou shalt acknowledge the universal, and it is precisely by speaking thou dost acknowledge it" (FT, p. 120). But Abraham's situation is anything but the ordinary situation, for it is a trial by the Author of the universal ethical. For this reason, Abraham cannot speak, for what he would have to say could not be understood. Kierkegaard holds that since God, the author of the ethical, calls

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Abraham out from the universal ethical, he no longer stands in relation to the universal law. Hence, Abraham is in a realm where no ethical justification for his action could be given.

Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein believe that justification of one's actions occurs within a particular system of ethics, but the conditions surrounding their views of justification differ. Although Kierkegaard admits that there may be other systems of morality and social mores, he still holds that ethics proper, that is, ethics which encompasses an awareness of the eternal, possesses a universal requirement. In contrast, the later Wittgenstein both allows for various competing systems of ethics and refuses to accept the view that there exists a higher ethics which levies a universal requirement. What Wittgenstein means when he says that justification of one's ethical position always takes place within a particular system of ethics is that there is no objective set of criteria by which various systems of ethics may be adjudged to determine which system is the right system; hence, justification must be intra-system as opposed to inter-system (*vide*, Rhees, 1965, p. 23). In contrast, Kierkegaard holds that justification can be given only if one remains within the universal ethical.

Another affinity of view between Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein concerns their emphasis upon the use of pictures, metaphors, and similes for communication of existential ethical and religious truths. Kierkegaard cites a number of stories in *A Thousand and One Nights* which he considers excellent and which he says ought to be remembered for their ability to communicate spiritual truths [*vide*, VIII[1] A 631 (J&P, 4615)]. Also, Kierkegaard's love of parables is readily apparent as he wrote numerous

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parables concerning the nature of the Christian faith.[4] This should come as no surprise, when one reflects upon the fact that Jesus communicated many spiritual truths through the use of parables and stories.

Kierkegaard's use of pictures and similes is also striking. Consider the following example:

> Sitting quietly in a ship while the weather is calm is not a picture of faith; but when the ship has sprung a leak, enthusiastically to keep the ship afloat by pumping while yet not seeking the harbor: this is the picture. And if the picture involves an impossibility in the long run, that is but the imperfection of the picture; faith persists. (CUP, p. 202)

This example is particularly intriguing for Kierkegaard observes that our use of pictures may not be wholly adequate as a means of communication, i.e., some elements of the picture may not wholly correspond to what one is attempting to communicate.

While the later Wittgenstein also recognizes the value of stories, pictures, and similes for communicating existential ethical and religious truths, he is similarly concerned that one admit the use of similes and also reveal how the simile does or does not fit lest the hearer feel that he or she has been tricked. As the later Wittgenstein remarks,

> Religious similes can be said to move on the edge of an abyss. B<unyan>'s for example. For what if we simply add: "and all these traps, quicksands, wrong turnings, were planned by the Lord of the Road and the monsters, thieves and robbers were created by him"? Certainly, that is not the sense of the simile! But such a continuation is all too obvious! For many people, including me, this robs the simile of its power.

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[4] For further insight into Kierkegaard's prolific use of parables, see Oden, Thomas C. (ed), *Parables of Kierkegaard*, Princeton University Press, 1978. As Oden (1978, p. vii) observes, no writer in the western philosophical tradition "has made more persistent use of parables, stories, and narrative metaphors than has Søren Kierkegaard."

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> But more especially if this is--as it were--suppressed. It would be different if at every turn it were said quite honestly: 'I am using this as a simile, but look, it doesn't fit here.' Then you wouldn't feel you were being cheated, that someone was trying to convince you by trickery. (CV, 1937, p. 29e).

Wittgenstein provides us with another example of what he has in mind when he says, "Thank God for the good you receive but don't complain about the evil: as you would of course do if a human being were to do you good and evil by turns" (CV, 1937, p. 29e). In the use of this simile, thanking God is likened to thanking another human being who does something good for us. But the simile stops with an acknowledgement of the good, for our use of language surrounding the concept of God precludes attributing the evil we experience to God.

The use of similes, or pictures, for the purpose of communicating existential ethical and religious truths, according to the later Wittgenstein, only serves to describe what we do, as opposed to providing justification for what we do:

> Rules of life are dressed up in pictures. And these pictures can only serve to *describe* what we are to do, not *justify* it. Because they could provide a justification only if they held good in other respects as well. I can say: "Thank these bees for their honey as though they were kind people who have prepared it for you"; that is *intelligible* and describes how I should like you to conduct yourself. But I cannot say: "Thank them because, look, how kind they are!'--since the next moment they may sting you. (CV, 1937, p. 29e)

When one uses similes and pictures for the purpose of communicating rules of life, e.g., ethical and religious beliefs, one must recognize the attendant limitations. No adequate logical or rational justification may be given in such cases. Such rules of life ultimately are grounded in long-established practices which one learns.

Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's use of similes, pictures, and metaphors is significant in virtue of the fact they think a more literal language is inappropriate for

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existential ethical and religious discourse. Both agree that existential ethical and religious truths may not be communicated by means of the representational language associated with empirical propositions.

In closing this section, I would point to one more affinity of view which relates to communication of the existential ethical: both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein recognized the sense in which philosophy may be better expressed as poetry than as prose, for poetry is a medium of indirect communication better suited to the expression of existential ethical and religious truths. Kierkegaard approaches his task in much the manner of the poet, by employing pseudonyms and masks in presenting us with possibilities for existence. According to Kierkegaard, the poet introduces ideals, thereby "forcing men back within their boundaries," i.e., confronting people with the ideal in such a manner that they understand that they are individually related to the ideal, that there is equality before the ideal [X^4 A 40-41 (J&P, 4197-4198)].

Wittgenstein, in commenting upon his own attitude to philosophy, also acknowledges the importance of the poetic:

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a *poetic composition*. It must as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future or past. For I was thereby revealing myself as someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do. (CV, 1933-1934, p. 24e).

Wittgenstein's view that philosophy ought to be written as poetic composition, and his own admission that he cannot quite do this, are better understood, perhaps, in terms of his remarks to von Ficker concerning the fact that the *Tractatus* consists of two parts: "My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not*

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written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one" (LLW, p. 143). When one desires to communicate something which conveys the profound feelings and emotions associated with inwardness, one often turns to poetry. Philosophy as poetic composition may be better suited to assisting others in struggling with issues of inwardness. The early Wittgenstein acknowledges the significance of philosophy for one's own life when he states, "Working in philosophy...is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things. (And what one expects of them.)" (CV, 1931, p. 16e). Perhaps these sentiments account, in part, for the deep admiration Wittgenstein held for Kierkegaard.

Knowledge and the Ethical

Recognizing that the limitations associated with communication of the ethical have ramifications for knowledge of the ethical, the present section will focus upon a comparative analysis of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's view concerning knowledge of the ethical. Kierkegaard contrasts existential ethical or practical knowledge with abstract or theoretical knowledge, and shows the emphasis abstract knowledge places upon objectivity continually leads one away from one's subjectivity. Given the early Wittgenstein's view of language, and his view that there are no propositions of ethics, he says very little about knowledge in relation to ethics. The few remarks that he does make, for the most part, appear within the *Notebooks 1914-1916*, which Wittgenstein wished destroyed. But as I will attempt to demonstrate, these remarks possess some similarity to Kierkegaard's view. The later Wittgenstein is more concerned to demonstrate or to show the nature of the sound human

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understanding and its attendant implications for the way one lives one's life.

According to Kierkegaard, "The ethical is indifferently related to knowledge; that is, it assumes that every human being knows it" [VIII^2 B 81, (J&P, 649)]. And every human being knows the ethical because it has been communicated by God [*vide*, VIII^2 B 81, (J&P, 649)]. Since the ethical has been communicated by God, it possesses a universality of requirement which demands that it be realized by every person at every moment. As Kierkegaard observes: "The ethical does not begin with ignorance which is to be changed to knowledge, but begins with a knowledge and demands a realization" [VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

Since the universal ethical always begins with knowledge which calls for a realization of the ethical requirements of the law within one's individual existence, Kierkegaard holds objective scientific inquiry into the ethical is to be avoided, for its direction always leads the subject away from what is of infinite importance--one's own subjective existence. As was previously noted, Kierkegaard believes that to inquire objectively of the existential ethical is unethical [*vide*, VIII^2 B 81 (J&P, 649)].

Kierkegaard maintains that the only appropriate inquiry into the existential ethical is a subjective inquiry. If one inquires subjectively of the ethical and yet is unsure of what constitutes the good, the knowledge of the good will be revealed. According to Kierkegaard, Pontius Pilate serves as an example of the incorrect mode of inquiry:

> Had not Pilate asked objectively what truth is, he would never have condemned Christ to be crucified. Had he asked subjectively, the passion of his inwardness respecting what in the decision facing him he had *in truth to do*, would have prevented him from doing wrong. (CUP, p. 206)

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Kierkegaard points out, a figurative washing of the hands, for the objective scientific mode of inquiry does not lead to decisive action (CUP, p. 206). As Pojman (1984, p. 69) observes, Kierkegaard's view appears to be the opposite of the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge. On the Socratic view, if one has knowledge of the good, then one wills to do the good. For Kierkegaard, if one wills to do the good, but knows not what the good is, knowledge of the good will be given. As Pojman (1984, p. 69) further observes, it is highly likely that Kierkegaard based his view that God would reveal the knowledge of the good to one who seeks on John 7.17 (RSV): "If any man's will is to do his [God's] will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God."

The significance of subjective inquiry into the existential ethical becomes more apparent in light of Kierkegaard's distinction between objective and subjective thought. According to Kierkegaard, abstract objective thought understands possibility very differently than does subjective thought. Kierkegaard says that inquiry into the aesthetic and the intellectual protests every *esse* that has not been understood in terms of its *posse*. It is this very protest which drives our quest for scientific knowledge. In contrast, inquiry into the existential ethical protests every *posse* which has not been transformed into an *esse*.

Kierkegaard maintains that, understood *subjectively*, i.e., from the standpoint of an existing individual, the only reality which exists is one's own ethical reality:

> The only reality to which an existing individual may have a relation that is more than cognitive, is his own reality, the fact that he exists; this reality constitutes his absolute interest. Abstract thought requires him to become disinterested in order to acquire knowledge; the ethical demand is that he become infinitely interested in existing. (CUP, p. 280)

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Although one can only stand in a cognitive relationship to the existential ethical reality of another, this cognitive relationship allows one to conceive of ethical possibilities for one's own existence. According to Kierkegaard, "true knowledge consists in translating the real into the possible," i.e., true knowledge consists in translating the existential ethical reality of another into a possibility for our own ethical existence (CUP, p. 280). As Kierkegaard points out,

> When I understand another person, his reality is for me a possibility, and in its aspect of possibility this conceived reality is related to me precisely as the thought of something I have not done is related to the doing of it. (CUP, p. 285)

Given that another's reality can present a possibility for one's own existence, one is confronted with a decision as to whether or not to appropriate this possibility. One who appropriates such a possibility acquires a new reality. For Kierkegaard, Socrates is the paradigmatic example of one who seeks and applies true knowledge, for Socrates "reduced all other knowledge to indifference in that he infinitely accentuated ethical knowledge" (CUP, p. 281).

Although Kierkegaard talks in terms of ethical knowledge, it bears noting again that what he has in mind is something far different from the sort of knowledge which results from scientific inquiry. Kierkegaard holds that "ethical-religious truth is related essentially to personality and can only be communicated by an *I* to an *I*," that the proper mode for communication of the existential ethical is not by means of lecture but by means of conversation or dialogue [VIII^2 B 88 (J&P, 656)]. We come to understand another person's reality through dialogue; it is this personal dialogue with another which presents us with possibilities for our own existence. Dialogue leads to self-knowledge

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There is nothing in the early Wittgenstein which compares to Kierkegaard's views concerning knowledge of the ethical. Any such comparison is precluded due to the early Wittgenstein's views concerning the nature and limitations of language, his disavowal that there can be propositions of ethics and that ethics can be put into words, and his characterization of the ethical as "transcendental" (*vide*, TLP, 6.41-6.421).

The later Wittgenstein's view concerning ethics and knowledge changes considerably from his earlier Tractarian viewpoint, and for that matter from the viewpoint set forth in the *Lecture on Ethics*. One now encounters the idea that propositions fit into systems of propositions and that there are various systems of propositions (*vide*, Rhees, 1965, p. 19). The later Wittgenstein also emphasizes language-games and the notion of family resemblances.

Concerning the ethical and knowledge, the later Wittgenstein recognizes that ethical propositions are context dependent because they must fit within some system of ethics, and he acknowledges that one's outlook concerning a particular situation may vary considerably with the system of ethics which one adopts (*vide*, Rhees, 1965, p. 22).

In a discussion with Rhees, the later Wittgenstein considers the question of whether or not one may say that one of these systems is "the right ethics" (Rhees, 1965, p. 23). Wittgenstein points out that this question does not make sense, nor does it make sense to say that they are all equally right:

> Suppose someone says, "One of the ethical systems must be the right one--or nearer to the right one." Well, suppose I say Christian ethics is the right one. Then I am making a judgment of value. It amounts to *adopting* Christian ethics. It is not like saying that one of these physical theories must be the right one. The way in

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> which some reality corresponds--or conflicts--with a physical theory has no counterpart here.
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> If you say there are various systems of ethics you are not saying that they are all equally right. That means nothing. Just as it would have no meaning to say that each was right from his own standpoint. That could only mean that each judges as he does. (Rhees, 1965, p. 24)

There exists no objective set of criteria by which the various ethical systems may be adjudged right or wrong. One who claims that a particular ethical system is the right system is simply saying that he or she agrees with that system, that he or she has adopted that particular system. But such a person cannot appeal to any objective or scientific criterion in support of his or her position. Although a particular system of ethics may be the predominant system of ethics within a society or community, systems of ethics cannot be verified or tested against physical reality in the same manner as one would test physical theories.

While the later Wittgenstein admits that there may be systems of ethics, and that we may have knowledge of these various systems of ethics, his view of knowledge and the ethical is distinctly different from Kierkegaard's view. Again, it must be noted, as was the case with the early Wittgenstein, there is nothing in the later Wittgenstein which compares to Kierkegaard's concern for knowledge of the ethical understood in terms of the ethical as the universal and the ethical as subjectivity.

Knowledge and Religion

In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard (Johannes Climacus) raises the problem of the truth of Christianity from both the objective and the subjective standpoints: "The objective problem consists of an inquiry into the truth of Christianity. The subjective problem concerns the relationship of the individual to Christianity. To put

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it quite simply: How may I...participate in the happiness promised by Christianity?" (CUP, p. 20) Before turning to a consideration of the subjective problem associated with the truth of Christianity, Kierkegaard first sets forth the objective problem concerning the truth of Christianity from the historical and philosophical (speculative) points of view. His consideration of the historical point of view includes a discussion of the place accorded Scripture, the Church, and the existence and persistence of Christianity across the centuries ("the proof of the centuries") (*vide*, CUP, p. 7).

Kierkegaard's intention within the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is to demonstrate that one cannot become a Christian by means of objective reflection. In the case of objective reflection, one's consciousness is directed entirely away from oneself toward the objects of reflection, e.g., physical objects, states of affairs, or propositions. One stands in the truth provided that his or her beliefs accord with the object(s) under scrutiny (as, a version of the correspondence theory of truth would have it). In objective communication, one is concerned to communicate knowledge of such objects and, for this reason, one chooses a direct mode of communication.

But if truth is to have spiritual significance, as in the case of Christianity, it must be concerned with inwardness, for the individual must be concerned with his or her own spiritual transformation, with the realization of a capability. In Christianity the focus is upon one's relationship to the person of Christ; maintaining this relationship requires subjective reflection. Kierkegaard believes one who inquires objectively into the truth of Christianity is dispassionate and neutral, whereas the truth of Christianity is something which can only be experienced through faith, that is, through a decisive, passion-filled,

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infinite interest. Any interest other than this passion-filled, infinite interest may actually constitute a temptation and lead one away from Christianity (*vide*, CUP, p. 23).

In this section I will focus upon epistemological issues which concern religion and religious belief. To a considerable extent, the discussion will proceed by setting forth Kierkegaard's views concerning these epistemological issues as they appear within the *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Consideration of Wittgenstein's views will be interwoven appropriately within the presentation of Kierkegaard's views. Topics for consideration include Scripture, doctrine, proof, religious belief, and religious instruction.

Scripture

In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard begins his consideration of the role of the Scriptures by making the following observation: "When the Scriptures are viewed as a court of last resort for determining what is and is not Christian doctrine, it becomes necessary to make sure of the Scriptures historically and critically" (CUP, p. 26). When one attempts to assess the Scriptures in this manner, a number of issues arise, e.g., the canonicity, integrity, and authenticity of individual books, and the trustworthiness of the author.

Kierkegaard approaches the question of Scripture as it relates to an objective inquiry into the truth of Christianity both from the perspective of those who would defend and those who would attack the Scriptures; he asks what would follow should either group be successful. Given success on the part of those who would defend the Scriptures, Kierkegaard reasons that neither the believer nor the non-believer would be helped in the

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least, for such a defense approaches the truth of Christianity objectively, and as we have seen, faith does not result from objective scientific inquiry. For the believer, a completely successful defense of the Scriptures may even be harmful, for he or she may fall "victim to the temptation to confuse knowledge with faith" (CUP, p. 30), i.e., may become occupied with an interest other than the passion-filled, infinite interest of faith.

Even if those who would attack the Scriptures were to meet with success, e.g., were to prove that the Scriptures were not written by the alleged authors, are not authentic, etc., Kierkegaard reasons that the believer would in no way suffer harm, for his or her faith is not grounded in scientific inquiry. But the non-believer would still be responsible for his or her lack of faith, for the success of such an attack would not prove that Christ has not existed (*vide*, CUP, p. 31).

Kierkegaard believes that an objective inquiry into the truth of the Scriptures is undesirable because it at best does no good and at worst threatens faith. An objective inquiry into the truth of the Scriptures can never yield the certainty which is required of faith, a certainty which may be had only in the infinite, for at best objective scientific inquiry only approximates the truth. But as Kierkegaard points out, since we are constantly moving about in the sphere of approximation-knowledge, we are easily deluded by the "semblance of certainty" (CUP, p. 75). A completely successful defense of the Scriptures is potentially threatening to faith precisely because it lends such a semblance of certainty.

Just as Kierkegaard believes that a successful attack upon the Scriptures would mean no harm for the believer, so, too, does the later Wittgenstein:

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> Queer as it sounds: The historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be demonstrably false and yet belief would lose nothing by this: *not*, however, because it concerns 'universal truths of reason'! Rather, because historical proof (the historical-proof game) is irrelevant to belief. This message (the Gospels) is seized on by men believingly (i.e. lovingly). *That* is the certainty characterizing this particular acceptance-as-true, not something *else*. (CV, 1937, p. 32e).

The later Wittgenstein's view of faith (belief) accords with Kierkegaard's insistence that faith does not result from objective scientific inquiry (the historical proof-game). The later Wittgenstein's affinity to Kierkegaard's view is further evident in his assertion that the believer's relation to the Gospels is not "the relation to historical truth (probability)" (CV, 1937, p. 32e).

Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein also agree that the Scriptures contain deliberate discrepancies for the purpose of assuring that the believer must believe only on the basis of faith. The later Wittgenstein begins one of his remarks concerning Scripture by citing Kierkegaard and then proceeds to set forth some observations which accord with Kierkegaard's insistence that one must believe on the basis of faith. Consider the following quotation:

> Kierkegaard writes: If Christianity were so easy and cozy, why should God in his Scriptures have set Heaven and Earth in motion and threatened *eternal* punishments?--Question: But in that case why is this Scripture so unclear? If we want to warn someone of a terrible danger, do we go about it by telling him a riddle whose solution will be the warning?--But who is to say that the Scripture really is unclear? Isn't it possible that it was essential in this case to 'tell a riddle'? And that, on the other hand, giving a more direct warning would have had the *wrong* effect? God has *four* people recount the life of his incarnate Son, in each case differently and with inconsistencies--but might we not say: It is important that this narrative should not be more than quite averagely historically plausible *just so that* this should not be taken as the essential, decisive thing? So that the *letter* should not be believed more strongly than is proper and the *spirit* may receive its due. I.e. what you are supposed to see cannot be communicated even by the best and most accurate historian; and *therefore* a mediocre account suffices, is even to be

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> preferred. For that too can tell you what you are supposed to be told. (Roughly in the way a mediocre stage set can be better than a sophisticated one, painted trees better than real ones,--because these might distract attention from what matters.)
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> The Spirit puts what is essential, essential for your life, into these words. The point is precisely that your [*sic*] are only SUPPOSED to see clearly what appears clearly even in *this* representation. (I am not sure how far all this is exactly in the spirit of Kierkegaard.) (CV, 1937, pp. 31e-32e)

While some may object that Wittgenstein herein admits that he is not sure whether his remarks are in the spirit of Kierkegaard, it must be remembered that our access to Kierkegaard's works is undoubtedly much greater than was Wittgenstein's. On the basis of some of Kierkegaard's journal entries, one may reasonably state that some of Wittgenstein's observations appear to be in complete accord. For instance, Wittgenstein's observation that God has four Gospel writers recount the life of his son in differing accounts which possess inconsistencies "so that the *letter* may not be believed more strongly than is proper and the *spirit* may receive its due" accords with Kierkegaard's observation: "Precisely because God wants Holy Scripture to be the object of faith and an offense to any other point of view, for this reason there are carefully contrived discrepancies" [X^3 A 328 (J&P, 2877)]. Wittgenstein's observation also accords with Kierkegaard's assertion that the discrepancies or disagreements are present to provide a certain tension to faith [*vide*, X^4 A 110 (J&P, 3860)], for as Wittgenstein puts it, "it is important that this narrative...not be taken as the essential, decisive thing" (CV, 1937, p. 31e).

Doctrine

Kierkegaard continues his reflection on the historical point of view as it relates to an objective inquiry into the truth of Christianity by turning his attention to the Church,

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or more specifically "the living word in the Church, the confession of faith, and the word in connection with the sacraments" (CUP, p. 37). Here the objective inquiry into the truth of Christianity is concerned with a set of doctrines and creeds which the Church claims have stood fast and will continue to stand fast. Viewed objectively, if this truth stands fast, then people will be willing to grasp hold of it. As Kierkegaard puts it, one who puts credence in the objective view of doctrine "is naïvely convinced that if only the truth stands fast, the subject will be ready and willing to attach himself to it" (CUP, p. 37).

Once again, Kierkegaard points out that the mistake is to place the emphasis upon the objective character of the truth of such statements, for the truth of Christianity is not to be found in a collection of doctrinal propositions:

> If truth is spirit, it is an inward transformation, a realization of inwardness; it is not an immediate and extremely free-and-easy relationship between an immediate consciousness and a sum of doctrinal propositions, even if this relationship, to make confusion worse confounded, is called by the name which stands for the most decisive expression for subjectivity: faith. (CUP, pp. 37-38)

One who is objectively committed to a set of doctrines and creeds is engaged in objective reflection and is *turned outward*, whereas what is required is the subjective reflection of inwardness which results in spiritual transformation.

As does Kierkegaard, the later Wittgenstein holds that Christianity is not a doctrine, or a theory, "about what has happened and what will happen to the human soul, but a description of something that actually takes place in human life" (CV, 1937, p. 28e). He acknowledges that consciousness of sin, despair, and salvation through faith are events which are experienced and that those who speak of such things are attempting to describe such experiences (*vide*, CV, 1937, p. 28e). According to the later Wittgenstein,

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doctrine is incapable of effecting these experiences in life:

> I believe that one of the things Christianity says is that sound doctrines are all useless. That you have to change your *life*. (Or the *direction* of your life.)...The point is that a sound doctrine need not *take hold* of you...here you need something to move you and turn you in a new direction.--(I.e. this is how I understand it.) Once you have been turned around, you must *stay* turned around. (CV, 1946, p. 53e)

Since doctrine emphasizes an objective relationship to a set of truths, doctrine is incapable of working the inward transformation which is an essential part of the Christian faith.

Within the context of his remarks concerning doctrine, the later Wittgenstein expresses the belief that wisdom is cold and passionless, that it cannot be used for the purpose of setting one's life aright (*vide*, CV, 1946, p. 53e). His view of wisdom is mindful of a remark Kierkegaard makes in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: "All wisdom of life is abstraction" (CUP, p. 381). The sense of Kierkegaard's remark becomes clearer in light of a further remark which the later Wittgenstein makes concerning wisdom: "Wisdom is cold and to that extent stupid. (Faith on the other hand is a passion.) It might also be said: Wisdom merely *conceals* life from you. (Wisdom is like cold grey ash, covering up the glowing embers.)" (CV, 1946, p. 56e).[5] Since (as Kierkegaard tells us) all wisdom of life is abstraction, it conceals life (as Wittgenstein thought). Wisdom of life as an abstraction leads one away from the subjective passion (from the glowing embers) which is the essential expression of Christianity, for, as Kierkegaard believes, "abstraction assumes the indifference of existence" (CUP, p. 470). The later Wittgenstein

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[5] This view of wisdom is mindful of Goethe's remark about theory: "All theory, dear friend, is grey, but the golden tree of life springs ever green" (*Faust*, Pt. I, Scene IV).

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acknowledges this difference as follows: "Wisdom is passionless. But faith by contrast is what Kierkegaard calls a *passion*" (CV, 1946, p. 53e). This quotation contains one of Wittgenstein's few references to Kierkegaard and indicates that Wittgenstein's view of wisdom and faith was influenced by Kierkegaard.

Objective inquiry into the truth of Christianity is undesirable, as previously noted, for it may actually threaten faith. Kierkegaard considers commitment to a set of doctrines to be such a threat, for it leads away from the decisiveness and passionate subjectivity required by faith. Kierkegaard writes:

> As soon as the religious leaves the existential present, where it is sheer actuosity [completely actualized], it immediately becomes milder. The process of religion's becoming milder and thereby less true is directly recognizable by its becoming a *doctrine*. As soon as it becomes doctrine, the religious does not have absolute urgency. In Christ the religious is completely present tense; in Paul it is already on the way to becoming doctrine. [X^1 A 383 (J&P, 4455)]

Objective commitment to the truths contained within doctrine serves to lead one away from the believer's decisive, passion-filled relationship with God. While Christ's teaching always emphasized the significance of this passion-filled relationship to God, Paul's teaching begins to wrestle with doctrinal issues and interpretations. Kierkegaard also observes that once doctrine is introduced it serves to delay the urgency and decisiveness associated with faith: the greater the extent to which religion becomes a doctrine, the greater the delay [*vide*, X^1 A 383 (J&P, 4455)].

Kierkegaard's observation that the religious is present tense with Christ, whereas with Paul religion is already on the way to becoming a doctrine (and correspondingly to losing the urgency associated with the present tense) is mindful of an interesting comparison between the Gospels and the Epistles which the later Wittgenstein makes.

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The later Wittgenstein is of the opinion that the Gospels and the Epistles are radically different in character; in contrast to the gentleness and love of the Gospels, as portrayed in the life of Jesus, Wittgenstein sees the more human passions of pride and anger in the Epistles (*vide*, CV, 1937, p. 30e). His remarks convey admiration for the humility and simplicity which he sees within the Gospels and his dislike of pretentiousness which he sees in the Epistles, although he admits that, given his own impurity, he may be incapable of understanding what may be the truth of the situation. Drury informs us that the later Wittgenstein ultimately came to view the Epistles differently; originally Wittgenstein felt the religion of the Gospels to be very different from that of the Epistles, but he later came to realize that they portrayed one and the same religion (*vide*, Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 90).

Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein are pointing to a difference between the Gospels and the Epistles which has some merit. As Kierkegaard observes, doctrine emerges in the Epistles, and this doctrine takes us away from the existential present seen in the life of Christ as portrayed in the Gospels. Wittgenstein appears to take the analysis a bit further by recognizing more of the consequences associated with the emergence of doctrine in the Epistles: the formation of the Church as an institution brings with it a hierarchy, honors, and official positions, in other words, the trappings of authority for which dogma serves to effectively control the expression of opinions, and to restrict the freedom of movement of one's thoughts (*vide*, CV, 1937, p. 28e).

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In the *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard argues that every passion, including Reason, ultimately wills its own downfall: "The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think" (PF, p. 47). Reason at its highest passion seeks a collision with something which is unknown, with what Kierkegaard calls the "Unknown," which he suggests we call "*the God*" (PF, p. 49). According to Kierkegaard, the idea that the existence of the God, the unknown something, could be demonstrated is without merit: in the event the God does not exist, one could not possibly prove it; and in the event the God exists, any attempts to prove God's existence would be a folly (*vide*, PF, p. 49). If, on the contrary, when one speaks of proving the God's existence, one is speaking of proving that the Unknown, which does exist, is the God, then one speaks unfortunately, for such a one is not proving the existence of anything but is merely clarifying "the content of a conception" (PF, p. 49).

Kierkegaard further holds that "existence is not subject to demonstration" (PF, p. 50), that whenever one attempts to demonstrate the existence of anything, one always begins with the presupposition of the thing's existence. By way of illustration, Kierkegaard asks that we consider an attempt to prove the existence of Napoleon by means of a consideration of Napoleon's deeds. While Napoleon's existence explains the deeds, the deeds are incapable of proving "*his* existence, unless I have already understood the word 'his' so as thereby to have assumed his existence" (PF, p. 50). But as Kierkegaard further observes, one may object that, unlike the case of Napoleon (who is human and whose actions are subject to contingency), there exists an absolute, or a

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necessary, relationship between God and the works of God. To put this somewhat differently, nothing is capable of coming between what God proposes to do and what God does. But if we take this approach, Kierkegaard says, "the God is not a name but a concept" (PF, p. 51), that is, we may have clarified the concept of God, but we have not demonstrated that "God" serves to name some existing entity.

In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard discusses the manner in which the ontological argument serves to clarify our concept of God. The ontological argument typically proceeds, Kierkegaard observes, by reasoning that God, or the highest being, must be in possession of all possible perfections, that existence is such a perfection, and that it therefore follows that God must exist. Kierkegaard believes this movement to be deceptive, for the movement cannot take place apart from presupposing the existence of God in the first part of the argument. Apart from this presupposition, the argument must remain in the hypothetical form, which Kierkegaard characterizes as follows: "If a supreme being is assumed to exist, he must also be assumed in possession of all perfections; *ergo*, a supreme being must exist--if he exists" (CUP, p. 298). As Kierkegaard observes, a conclusion drawn within a hypothetical argument remains hypothetical. Consequently, when the question of God's existence is raised in the hypothetical form, God's existence remains just as hypothetical in the conclusion as in the premises. All the hypothetical argument serves to accomplish is to clarify the logical connection between the notion of a supreme being and the notion of existence as a possible perfection (*vide*, CUP, p. 298). In this respect, the ontological argument serves to

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clarify the concept of God as opposed to proving the existence of God. [6]

The later Wittgenstein derives the same conclusions from his analysis of the ontological argument as does Kierkegaard. Wittgenstein states, "God's essence is supposed to guarantee his existence--what this really means is that what is here at issue is not the existence of something" (CV, 1949, p. 82e). Wittgenstein asks, "Couldn't one actually say equally well that the essence of colour guarantees its existence? As opposed, say, to white elephants" (CV, 1949, p. 82e). The meaning of this question, according to Wittgenstein, is that one cannot explain the meaning of "color" apart from the presence of a color sample; and there is no question of explaining a hypothetical situation, i.e., of explaining "what it *would* be like if colours *were* to exist" (CV, 1949, p. 82e). To put this somewhat differently, since colors actually do exist, one cannot say what the hypothetical existence of colors would be like. Wittgenstein next comments: "And now we might say: There can be a description of what it would be like if there were gods on Olympus--but not: 'what it would be like if there were such a thing as God'. And to say this is to determine the concept 'God' more precisely" (CV, 1949, p. 82e). Here I take Wittgenstein to be saying that while it is possible for us to provide an imaginary description of what it would be like if there were gods on Olympus, a description grounded in our own human experience, we cannot say what it would be like if God were to exist, for if "God" is

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[6] Norman Malcolm provides a more contemporary discussion of the ontological argument in "Anselm's Ontological Arguments," (*The Philosophical Review*, LXIX, 1960). Malcolm reasons that the argument must be understood from the concept of God's logically necessary existence. But one may still ask, even if logical necessity is part of the *concept* of God, does it follow from this that God does indeed exist? Alvin Plantinga raises this objection to Malcolm's argument in "A Valid Ontological Argument?" (*The Philosophical Review*, Vol. LXX, 1961).

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understood in the sense that God's essence guarantees God's existence, it would be like what it now is. And although we more fully understand the manner in which we use the concept 'God,' this does not in any way *prove* the existence of God.

Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's analyses of the ontological argument run parallel; both conclude that the best that the ontological argument can do is "to develop the content of a conception" (PF, p. 49), or to "determine the concept 'God' more precisely" (CV, 1949, p. 82).

According to C. Stephen Evans (1983, p. 150), what may well lie behind Climacus's (Kierkegaard's) view of the traditional proofs for the existence of God is the insufficiency of logical argument. At best, logic can only tell us which propositions are consistent or inconsistent with other propositions, or reveal which propositions are entailed by other propositions (*vide*, Evans, 1983, p. 150). On this interpretation, Kierkegaard is arguing that logic cannot provide the desired results, that we must let go of attempts to logically demonstrate God's existence, and then God's existence manifests itself. As Kierkegaard puts it, "As long as I keep hold on my proof, i.e., continue to demonstrate, the existence does not come out, if for no other reason than that I am engaged in proving it: but when I let the proof go, the existence is there" (PF, p. 53). On the basis of these considerations, Kierkegaard is led to the conclusion that whenever one attempts to prove, or to demonstrate, the existence of God, one always ends up proving something else instead, "something which at times perhaps does not need a proof" (PF, p. 54). Ultimately, Kierkegaard claims, "One proves God's existence by worship...not by proofs" (CUP, p. 485).

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Kierkegaard notes that many professors and preachers attempt to prove that God is personal, but Kierkegaard observes, the fact that God is personal is not a matter for proof, but for belief. Kierkegaard comments that attempts to prove that God is personal may stem from the desire to transfer the matter to the "sphere of proofs," as opposed to the "sphere of faith," so that we may be done with the matter once and for all [*vide*, XI^2 A 175 (J&P, 1452)]. The actions of such professors and preachers, according to Kierkegaard, reveal that they do not really believe in Christianity, for if one passionately believes that the subject of his discourse is the highest good, any defense of it will seem anticlimactic. Kierkegaard compares asking a defense of one who passionately believes that the good he is discoursing about is the highest good to asking a lover for proof of his or her love; the lover would think the one who asked such a defense to have no understanding of love and would further suspect that such a one did not understand the nature of love [*vide*, IX A 5 (J&P, 474)].

One may object that there are criteria for love, that the lover may point to certain actions as evidence of his love, e.g., he or she listens attentively when the other speaks, attends to the other's needs, etc. In a similar manner, one can argue that there are criteria for religious belief, e.g., one prays to God, goes to confession, performs charitable acts, etc. Admittedly, such criteria exist for both love and religious belief. But in both cases, asking for a defense is likely to make the lover or the believer wonder if the one who asks understands what love or belief is all about.

Proof in the religious sphere, according to Kierkegaard, is not a matter of logic or of reason; it is a matter of inwardness, or of faith. Throughout his journals, Kierkegaard

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reiterates the view that one proves God's existence through worship, or faith: "Away with all this world history and reasons and proofs for the truth of Christianity: there is only one proof--that of faith" [X^1 A 481 (J&P, 3608)]. According to Kierkegaard, the expression of faith is the greatest proof of Christianity and of God's existence. Within this context, Kierkegaard sees the actions of Anselm to constitute an "amazing self-contradiction":

> Anselm prays in all inwardness that he might succeed in proving God's existence. He thinks he has succeeded, and he flings himself down in adoration to thank God. Amazing. He does not notice that this prayer and this expression of thanksgiving are infinitely more proof of God's existence than--the proof. [X^5 A 120 (J&P, 20)]

According to Kierkegaard, Anselm has failed to recognize that his actions within the "sphere of faith" constitute a far greater proof of God's existence than do his actions within the logical or rational "sphere of proof."

The later Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, also believes the traditional arguments for the existence of God to be virtually worthless, that none of these arguments would likely bring anyone to believe in God:

> A proof of God's existence ought really to be something by means of which one could convince oneself that God exists. But I think that what *believers* who have furnished such proofs have wanted to do is give their 'belief' an intellectual analysis and foundation, although they themselves would never have come to believe as a result of such proofs. (CV, 1950, p. 85e)

The manner in which the classical arguments for the existence of God are written, especially by Anselm and Aquinas, tends to bear out Wittgenstein's remarks, for the arguments are set forth in the midst of devotional writings and include prayers. Although these exercises may be construed as attempts to provide a rational basis for something which the author already believes, as Wittgenstein observes, it is highly unlikely that the

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authors would have been brought to a position of belief on the basis of their arguments.

Just as for Wittgenstein absolute value lies beyond the realm of facts, Kierkegaard holds that religious belief, or faith, lies beyond the sphere of proof. In this respect, Wittgenstein joins Kierkegaard. Malcolm captures Wittgenstein's disparaging attitude toward proof as it relates to religious beliefs:

> Once I quoted to him a remark of Kierkegaard which went something like this: 'How can it be that Christ does not exist, since I know that he has saved me?' Wittgenstein's response was: 'You see! It isn't a question of *proving* anything!' (Malcolm, 1994, p. 19)

Drury notes the later Wittgenstein's attitude toward attempts to give the Christian faith a rational foundation. When Drury advised Wittgenstein of his intention of being ordained as a priest in the Anglican Church, Wittgenstein replied:

> I would be afraid that you would try and give some sort of philosophical justification for Christian beliefs, as if some sort of proof was needed....The symbolisms of Catholicism are wonderful beyond words. But any attempt to make it into a philosophical system is offensive. (Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 102)

Wittgenstein was attracted to the richness of the symbolism of Christianity, and for that matter, to religious symbolism as expressed in other religions, but he found any attempts to provide religious beliefs with a scientific or rational foundation to be offensive.

The later Wittgenstein's attitude toward proof in relationship to religious belief is developed somewhat further in *Lectures on Religious Belief*. Wittgenstein asks that we suppose that someone makes belief in the Last Judgment a guideline for life, and that we think of such a one as always having this before his or her mind when he or she acts. When the question arises as to how we are to know whether this person believes the Last Judgment will or will not occur, Wittgenstein says that it is not enough to ask him or her,

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for he or she will likely say that he or she has proof. Wittgenstein argues that what is at issue here is not really a matter of proof; those who claim to have proof are mistaken, since they do not fully understand the nature of their belief. In contrast to proof, Wittgenstein says this person "has what you might call an unshakable belief," which "will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by regulating for in all his life" (LC, pp. 53-54).

The later Wittgenstein further points out that the nature of this unshakable belief (religious belief) differs from that of more ordinary beliefs in a number of ways. First, the unshakable belief must be considered as "the firmest of all beliefs," for it regulates the believer's actions in ways which would not seem to accord with more ordinary beliefs (*vide*, LC, p. 54). One who possesses such an unshakable belief will continue to cling to the belief despite evidence to the contrary, will believe through thick and thin. In contrast, one would jettison a more ordinary belief when evidence counts against the belief. Second, Wittgenstein says that one who holds such an unshakable belief will consider it to be extremely well-established in some ways, and in other ways not well-established at all. The unshakable belief may be well-established in light of a system of religious beliefs but not well-established in light of more ordinary beliefs (*vide*, LC, p. 54). Third, religious beliefs differ from more ordinary beliefs, for one who believes differently from one who holds a particular religious belief, e.g., belief in a Judgment Day, does not believe something which is contradictory. As Wittgenstein points out, controversies concerning religious beliefs look very different from controversies surrounding more normal beliefs, and correspondingly, reasons also look very different. Such controversies,

according to Wittgenstein, are inconclusive for they do not rest upon evidence as do more normal controversies: "The point is that if there were evidence, this would in fact destroy the whole business," for "Anything that I normally call evidence wouldn't in the slightest influence me" (LC, p. 56). Religious belief does not involve giving evidence in the normal sense of giving evidence employed in scientific reasoning.

Religious Belief

The preceding sections on Scripture, doctrine, and proof contain numerous references to religious belief or faith. It is time to turn to a more direct consideration of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's views of religious belief.

Kierkegaard distinguishes between faith in the ordinary sense and faith in the eminent sense. Faith in the ordinary sense is the type of faith associated with historical knowledge, with the belief that something has come into existence. As noted previously, this type of faith negates the uncertainty associated with the past, the uncertainty associated with all coming into existence. In contrast, faith in the eminent sense is the type of faith associated with the passion-filled belief that God has entered into history as Jesus Christ. In light of the belief that God has come into existence in history, eminent faith is a special sub-class of ordinary faith.

In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard sets forth a definition of eminent faith in Socratic terms, that is, in the manner in which one would relate oneself existentially to the eternal truth and thereby attain one's salvation. Within this exposition, Kierkegaard also observes that the definition of truth as subjectivity is "an equivalent expression for faith" (CUP, p. 182), understood in the eminent sense. Kierkegaard

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characterizes truth as subjectivity in the following manner:

> When subjectivity is the truth, the conceptual determination of the truth must include an expression for the antithesis to objectivity, a memento of the fork in the road where the way swings off; this expression will at the same time serve as an indication of the tension of the subjective inwardness. Here is such a definition of the truth: *An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing* individual. At the point where the way swings off (and where this is cannot be specified objectively, since it is a matter of subjectivity), there objective knowledge is placed in abeyance. Thus the subject merely has, objectively, the uncertainty; but it is this which precisely increases the tension of that infinite passion which constitutes his inwardness. The truth is precisely the venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. (CUP, p. 182).

The objective uncertainty to which Kierkegaard refers is the incarnation of Jesus Christ.[7] However, unlike Socratic faith, one cannot hold fast to belief in the incarnation of one's own accord, one cannot bring about one's own salvation, for belief in the incarnation involves an absolute paradox, in connection with which "the only understanding possible is that it cannot be understood" (CUP, p. 195).

For this reason, eminent faith involves a miracle, the miracle of faith, whereby God gives to the believer the condition which enables him or her to believe. The miracle comes about through God's revelation in Christ, and it is through this revelation that one becomes conscious of one's sin. Consequently, what was previously experienced as guilt (resulting from one's inability to live in accordance with ethical principles) is now understood as sin (*vide*, CUP, pp. 517-18). And it is this sin-consciousness which makes one aware that one is powerless to effect one's own salvation. To put this more succinctly, within Christianity salvation comes through the miracle of faith wherein God is revealed

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[7] For Kierkegaard the Incarnation is both an objective uncertainty and an objective absurdity; it is incomprehensible.

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in Jesus Christ; as a result, one is made aware of one's sinful nature, whereupon one may choose to repent; and as a result of this repentance, one becomes a new creation in Christ.

The later Wittgenstein concurs with Kierkegaard's view that religious belief is characterized by the passion of inwardness:

> It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief*, it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life. It's passionately seizing hold of this interpretation. (CV, 1947, p. 64e)

As noted previously, according to the later Wittgenstein, the passion which attaches to one's "seizing hold of this interpretation" is the certainty which characterizes "this particular acceptance-as-true" (*vide*, CV, 1937, p. 32e). These passages clearly reveal that the later Wittgenstein accepts Kierkegaard's characterization of faith in Socratic terms, and the similarity of expression may be accounted for when one recalls that Wittgenstein had read the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. However, did the later Wittgenstein also understand faith in the eminent sense?

Considerable evidence suggests that the later Wittgenstein also understood faith in the eminent sense. For example, the later Wittgenstein says, "'Consciousness of sin' is a real event and so are despair and salvation through faith" (CV, 1937, p. 28e). Furthermore, he states, "I read: 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' And it is true: I cannot call him *Lord*; because that says nothing to me....And it could say something to me, only if I lived *completely* differently" (CV, 1937, p. 33e). This passage appears to indicate Wittgenstein understood the believer's need for God's revelation, for the working of the miracle within oneself, for apart from this miracle one cannot say that Jesus is Lord. In reference to salvation and redemption, the later

Wittgenstein continues:

> But if I am to be REALLY saved, --what I need is *certainty* -- not wisdom, dreams, or speculation -- and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what is needed by my *heart*, my *soul*, not my speculative intelligence. For it is my soul with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, that has to be saved, not my abstract mind. Perhaps we can say: Only *love* can believe the Resurrection. Or: It is *love* that believes the Resurrection. What combats doubt is, as it were, *redemption*. Holding fast to *this* must be holding fast to that belief. So what that means is: first you must be redeemed and hold on to your redemption (keep hold of your redemption) -- then you will see that you are holding fast to this belief. (CV, 1937, p. 33e).

Wittgenstein's acknowledgment that one must first be redeemed and then hold on to one's redemption would tend to indicate that it is not wholly within one's own power to believe.

The later Wittgenstein further appears to acknowledge that faith is not wholly voluntary when he says that a person can experience infinite torment and can thereby "stand in need of infinite help," that Christianity is only for the person who stands in such need, and that "anyone who is in such torment who has the gift of opening his heart, rather than contracting it, accepts the means of salvation in his heart" (CV, Circa 1944, pp. 45e-46e). This passage also tends to indicate that the later Wittgenstein understood that salvation is not something which one can effect of one's own accord, that salvation is a gift from God which one must choose to accept or to reject. I think that this interpretation is further borne out by Wittgenstein's observation that one who opens his or her heart in this manner opens it before God in confession (*vide*, CV, Circa 1944, p. 46e).

Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein recognize that religious belief requires a passionate commitment on the part of the believer, in response to God's initiative, which results in transformation of the self; and, as previously noted, both agree that grasping hold of sound doctrines for the purpose of effecting this transformation is a

useless exercise.

The later Wittgenstein provides us with further insights into the nature of religious belief, insights which can be seen as the nonfactuality and inexpressibility of absolute value and the impossibility of proof in the sphere of religious belief. His analysis of language practices associated with religious discourse and scientific discourse ultimately lead him to recognize that religious belief is not so much *unreasonable* as it is *not reasonable* (*vide*, LC, p 58). In setting forth the nature of these differences, Wittgenstein observes that religious believers treat evidence very differently from the manner in which it is treated in science, basing things of great consequence upon what would normally be considered as the flimsiest of evidence. Wittgenstein acknowledges that, while he would not call such people unreasonable, for "unreasonable" is a term of disparagement, he would say they were "not *reasonable*" (LC, p. 58). Wittgenstein continues:

> I want to say: they don't treat this as a matter of reasonability.
>
> Anyone who reads the Epistles will find it said: not only that it is not reasonable, but that it is folly.
>
> Not only is it not reasonable, but it doesn't pretend to be. (LC, p. 58)

The later Wittgenstein is pointing out that belief is not a matter of reasonability; belief is not so much unreasonable as it is non-reasonable. To employ Kierkegaard's terminology, religious belief belongs to the "sphere of faith" rather than the "sphere of proofs" [*vide*, XI^2 A 175 (J&P, 1452)]. Religious belief is outside the sphere of rationality which is associated with scientific reasoning.

Kierkegaard, as previously mentioned, is highly critical of those professors and preachers who would introduce proof into religious belief in an effort to make it reasonable [*vide*, XI^2 A 175 (J&P, 1452)]. Similarly, the later Wittgenstein is highly

critical of those who would attempt to ground the Christian faith in reason or in science. The later Wittgenstein faults Father O'Hara[8], a priest, for attempting to make the historic basis of Christianity a "question of science" (LC, p. 57). Since faith is not reasonable, Wittgenstein states, "What seems to me ludicrous about O'Hara is his making it appear to be '*reasonable*'" (LC, p. 58). Wittgenstein believes that if such accounts are indeed religious belief, then religious belief is all superstition (*vide*, LC, p. 59).[9] Wittgenstein believes Father O'Hara "is cheating himself," that he "is ridiculous because he believes, and bases it on weak reasons" (LC, p. 59).

Religious Instruction

Kierkegaard holds that for both the ethical and the ethical-religious, "genuine communication and instruction is *training* or *upbringing*" [VIII^2 B 82 (J&P, 650)]. According to Kierkegaard, in training or upbringing, the trainer regards the trainee as being essentially what he or she is to become, and so brings what one is to be out of the trainee. The objective of such upbringing is a particular behavior, or set of behaviors, or a particular way of living, or of approaching life. Since the trainee is to acquire a behavior or a way of living, the trainee is expected to do his or her best in a series of attempts which are characterized by steady improvement on the part of the trainee.

According to Kierkegaard, upbringing within the Christian faith, when properly

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[8] A footnote to the "Lectures on Religious Belief" indicates Father O'Hara's remarks appear in a Symposium on Science and Religion (London: Gerald Howe, 1931, pp. 107-116).

[9] The later Wittgenstein holds religious faith to be very different from superstition, for religious faith is "a trusting," whereas superstition is the result "of *fear* and is a sort of false science" (CV, 1948, p. 72e).

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conducted, should ultimately result in a transformation of one's will in response to the miracle of faith. This transformation of the will is the main idea encountered in Christianity; with this transformation of the will one takes on a whole new attitude or life-view wherein one renounces the world, denies oneself, dies to the world, hates one's sinful nature, and loves God. Since Christianity has to do first and foremost with the transformation of the will, with decisiveness, Kierkegaard contends that Christianity should not be forced upon a child: "To cram Christianity into a child is something that cannot be done, for it is a general rule that everyone comprehends only what he has use for, and the child has no decisive use for Christianity" (CUP, p. 523). One does not begin (in childhood) by being a Christian; rather, one becomes a Christian through decisiveness. And if one forces a child into such decisiveness, it generally makes the child "exceedingly unhappy" (CUP, p. 523).

A child who is forced into the decisive categories of Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, is bound to suffer greatly, because forcing the child into the decisive categories of Christianity circumvents the natural progression of the stages of life; it is tantamount to a rape of the spirit (*vide*, CUP, p. 532). When a child is forced into the decisive categories of Christianity, the aesthetic stage is effectively bypassed. The demands of the aesthetic stage will most likely surface at some later time when one either comes to experience "despondency and dread" or "lust and the dread of lust in a measure with which even paganism was unacquainted" (CUP, p. 532).

How then should a child be introduced to Christianity? Kierkegaard believes the child should be introduced gently, lovingly, through stories and pictures. He portrays the

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appropriate manner as follows:

> When one talks to a child about Christianity, and the child is not violently ill-treated (in a figurative sense), the child will appropriate everything that is gentle, lovable, heavenly; he will live in companionship with the little child Jesus, and with the angels, and with the Three Kings of Orient, he sees their star in the dark night, He travels the long road, now he is in the stable, one amazement after another, he is always seeing the heavens opened, with all the inwardness of fantasy he yearns for these pictures. (CUP, p. 530)

In effect, the child should receive these stories as he or she would receive other stories; the child should enter into the story with wonder, imagination, and amazement. Such a construction of Christianity, as Kierkegaard observes, is "essentially that of fantasy-intuition"; in point of fact, it is not true Christianity, but is rather a form of paganism (CUP, p. 530). Nonetheless, this fantasy-intuition becomes the foundation for all later religiousness (*vide*, CUP, p. 532).

The decision to become a Christian, according to Kierkegaard, is not a decision to be made in childhood; rather, this decision is to be made in the age of maturity:

> Becoming a Christian involves a decision which belongs to a much later age. The child's receptivity is so completely without decision that it is said proverbially, "One can make a child believe anything." The elders of course bear responsibility for what they venture to make the child believe, but the fact is perfectly certain. (CUP, p. 532)

Kierkegaard believes the child is so receptive as to preclude the serious decisiveness which Christianity requires. The child simply absorbs what he or she is told without really making it his or her own; so the child does not truly own the beliefs and values that are absorbed. Ownership of beliefs and values takes place at an age of maturity.

Although the later Wittgenstein does not comment upon the inappropriateness of forcing a child into Christianity to the same extent that Kierkegaard does, there is

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considerable affinity of view concerning religious instruction. The later Wittgenstein, as previously noted, sees religious belief as being "something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference," as grasping hold of a particular "way of living, or a way of assessing life," as grasping hold of a particular interpretation (CV, 1947, p. 64e). After having set forth this view, the later Wittgenstein states:

> Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal, a description, of that system of reference, while at the same time being an appeal to conscience. And this combination would have to result in the pupil himself, of his own accord, passionately taking hold of the system of reference. It would be as though someone were first to let me see the hopelessness of my situation and then show me the means of rescue until, of my own accord, or not at any rate led to it by my *instructor*, I ran to it and grasped it. (CV, 1947, p. 64e)

Wittgenstein's belief that religious instruction must begin by portraying or describing the system of reference and proceed with an appeal to one's conscience is mindful of Kierkegaard's insistence that the religious address should assume a direct-indirect form. While one can introduce someone to the system of reference which accompanies religious belief, the decision to passionately grasp hold of this system of belief ultimately rests with the one who is receiving instruction (and with God, of course!). Wittgenstein assumes a certain maturity to be present on the part of the pupil, for this decision rests upon an appeal to conscience, upon the realization of the hopelessness of one's situation, and upon one's passionately seizing hold of the system of reference.

Life itself, according to the later Wittgenstein, may also serve to bring one to belief in God. What Wittgenstein has in mind here are certain types of experiences which induce suffering:

> Life can educate one to a belief in God. And *experiences* too are what bring this about; but I don't mean visions and other forms of sense experience which show

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> us the 'existence of this being', but, e.g., sufferings of various sorts. These neither show us God in the way a sense impression shows us an object, nor do they give rise to *conjectures* about him. Experiences, thoughts,--life can force this concept on us.
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> So perhaps it is similar to the concept of 'object'. (CV, 1950, p. 86e)

And now in this new and rather more extensive context, we find Wittgenstein once again pointing out that the religious frame of reference, or the attitude of faith, is very different from our more normal frames of reference, for these experiences do not reveal God to us in the same manner as sense impressions reveal an object to us. When we look for the origination of our concept of 'object,' we come to realize that the concept may be forced upon us as a result of our experiences, from our sensory impressions. In like manner, the concept of 'God,' may be forced upon us as a result of suffering. But as Wittgenstein observes, the concept of God is transcendent; God is not revealed to us in the same manner as sense impressions reveal an object.

Consideration of Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's views of religious instruction reveal a number of affinities. First, both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein recognize that a certain kind of upbringing may lead one to belief in God. Second, they acknowledge the role which suffering may play in educating one to belief in God. Third, they recognize that the goal of religious instruction is a decisive faith commitment, a passionate seizing hold of a system of reference. And fourth, given that decisiveness is required, both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein agree that the pupil must make this commitment at an age when one can freely act of one's own accord. Lastly, although Wittgenstein does not put it in these terms, both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein recognize the need for the use of direct-indirect communication, for one begins by

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portraying, or describing, the system of belief and then makes an appeal to the other's conscience.

Summary of Affinities and Disaffinities Related to Ethics and Religion

The preceding analysis of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of ethical and religious discourse, and of the attendant ramifications for ethical and religious knowledge, has revealed a number of affinities and disaffinities. The following summary is provided to assist the reader in reviewing the findings set forth within this chapter.

Ethical and Religious Discourse

1. Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein acknowledge the limit of language as it relates to attempts to communicate the existential ethical; Kierkegaard speaks of this in terms of Reason encountering the paradox, whereas Wittgenstein speaks of running up against the limits of language. It should be noted that the early Wittgenstein takes a more extreme position concerning communication of the ethical than does Kierkegaard.

2. Numerous parallels exist between Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and the early Wittgenstein's *Lecture on Ethics*:

a. Kierkegaard's differentiation between statements of accidental and essential knowledge is analogous to the early Wittgenstein's differentiation between judgments of relative and absolute value.

b. Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein are in harmony regarding the fact that ethics and religion can have no objective or scientific basis; consequently, there can be no science of ethics or religion.

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3. Recognition of the incapability of language adequately to convey the existential ethical and the religious leads to a number of affinities:

a. Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein acknowledge a characteristic misuse of language associated with ethical and religious propositions; both perceive as ethical the problems associated with the propensity to misuse language in certain ways, e.g., the inappropriate use of words which leads to nonsense.

b. There is a close affinity of view among Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein concerning the need for indirect communication. Although differences exist between Kierkegaard's indirect communication and the early Wittgenstein's say/show distinction, there is a sense in which the *Tractatus* may be seen as an exercise in indirect communication, for it attempts to show what cannot be said. As the early Wittgenstein notes, the propositions of the *Tractatus* are to serve as elucidations--one must transcend these propositions and then one "will see the world aright" (TLP, 6.54). Recognizing that the use of a more literal language is inappropriate for ethical and religious discourse, Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein employ pictures, stories, metaphors, similes, and parables, all of which are modes of indirect communication.

c. Both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein recognize the sense in which philosophy may be better expressed as poetry than as prose, for poetry is a medium of indirect communication which is better suited to the expression of ethical and religious truths.

4. Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein agree that the existential ethical cannot be taught.

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Knowledge and the Ethical

1. Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein acknowledge the inability of language to fully express the existential ethical.

2. A disaffinity exists concerning knowledge of the universal ethical and the ethical as subjectivity. Kierkegaard holds that the universal ethical is God-given, that everyone is in possession of it, that there is an objective moral order which may be discerned, even revealed, if one becomes maximally subjective. In contrast, neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein consider knowledge of the ethical in the Kierkegaardian sense.

Knowledge and Religion

1. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein fully agree that faith does not hinge upon the literal truth of the Scriptures; belief in Jesus Christ would suffer no consequences were the Scriptures proven to be demonstrably false.

2. According to Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein, disagreements within the scriptural accounts assure that one must come to Christianity through faith; both suggest that the Scriptures contain deliberately contrived discrepancies and inconsistencies.

3. Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein believe the historical proof-game is irrelevant to religious belief; both acknowledge that the historical account surrounding the life of Christ is accorded a very different place and role than is any other historical account.

4. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein are in complete agreement that Christianity is not a doctrine, for doctrine is incapable of working the inward

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transformation that is essential to the Christian faith.

5. Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein are highly critical of any attempts to prove the existence of God, for both recognize that religious belief is non-rational and both consider the classical proofs for the existence of God to be mistaken attempts on the part of believers to give their faith a rational foundation.

6. Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein are in fundamental agreement that faith cannot be rationally or logically communicated, that faith cannot be reduced to the sphere of proof associated with empirical propositions, and that those who attempt to render such an account of faith cheat themselves. In this regard, it should be noted that the later Wittgenstein's analysis of language-games and his recognition that the use of religious language is not so much communication as religious action in and of itself lend further clarity to Kierkegaard's project.

7. Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein recognize that belief in the Christian faith is belief against the understanding, that such belief is not unreasonable, or nonsensical, but it is rather non-reasonable.

8. Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein agree that a certain kind of upbringing may lead one to belief in God, as may certain life experiences involving suffering. While Wittgenstein does not address the manner in which a child should be introduced to Christianity, Kierkegaard emphasizes the harm that may result from forcing a child into decisive Christian categories. Both recognize that the goal of religious instruction is religious commitment at an age when one can so commit of his or her own volition.

As the above summary reveals, Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's and the

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later Wittgenstein's views of religion are far more closely related than are their views of ethics. The significance of these affinities and disaffinities will be considered in the concluding chapter.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters I have examined Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of epistemology, ethics, and religion. The epistemological ramifications for knowledge claims and discourse concerning ethics and religion have also been considered. In this chapter, I will consider the merits of a comparative analysis of Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein. With this objective in mind, the following topics will be examined: the manner in which an understanding of Kierkegaard's philosophy illuminates our understanding of Wittgenstein, and vice versa; the plausibility of Kierkegaard's having influenced the early and the later Wittgenstein; the credence the study lends to an emergent, broadened understanding of Wittgenstein's work; and a broad sketch of a single view which I think to be a plausible approach in philosophy of religion.

Kierkegaard's Illumination of Wittgenstein, and Vice Versa

Within this section, I will consider insights related to a number of topics. These insights primarily fall into two categories: first, increased understanding of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's philosophy resulting from comparison of affinities; and second, insights derived from careful reflection upon the

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disaffinities in light of the aforementioned affinities.

Logic, Necessity, and Necessary Connection

Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein consider logical problems to be at the heart of much of the confusion encountered in philosophy. They agree that the only necessity is logical necessity and that there is no necessary connection between states of affairs. The centrality accorded logical concerns is far more apparent in the early and the later Wittgenstein than in Kierkegaard, but familiarity with Wittgenstein's analysis of the manner in which the logic of our language leads us into confusion and sets traps for us enables one to apprehend more fully the extent to which Kierkegaard is also addressing logical problems.

The Limit and the Unknown

Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein recognize that reason and representational language encounter a limit and both speak of this limit in ethico-religious terms. Kierkegaard observes that the passion of reason ultimately encounters the unknown something, which he calls "*the God*," which is the limit beyond which reason cannot advance (*vide*, PF, p. 49). The early Wittgenstein similarly acknowledges our "urge to run up against the limits of language" and says "this running up against the limits of language is *ethics*" (WVC, 1979, p. 68). Admittedly, some have maintained that the early Wittgenstein holds that there is nothing on the other side of the limit, but it strikes me that those who take this position ignore Wittgenstein's letters to Engelmann, his references to the mystical, and his observation that "Only something supernatural can express the Supernatural" (CV, 1929, p. 3e).

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The early Wittgenstein takes the position that the ethico-religious is beyond the capacity of representational language, that it is in the realm of the unspeakable. In a similar manner, Kierkegaard holds that we cannot speak of the ethico-religious via direct communication; but Kierkegaard further holds that we can meaningfully communicate about the ethico-religious via indirect communication.

Although neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein speaks of indirect communication, familiarity with Kierkegaard's use of indirect communication helps one to see that the early Wittgenstein employs indirect communication in the *Tractatus*. It must be remembered that Wittgenstein perceived the writing of the *Tractatus* to consist of an ethical deed in which he used propositions to show the limitations of language and thought. According to Wittgenstein, one who thinks with him and who uses the propositions of the *Tractatus* "as steps--to climb up beyond them" will come to rightly view the world (TLP, 6.54). Wittgenstein is herein employing indirect communication. The early Wittgenstein's appreciation for the use of indirect communication is also apparent in his admiration of Tolstoy's *Twenty-three Tales.*

Despite these affinities of view concerning the limit, representational language, and direct and indirect communication, one does encounter a significant difference, for Kierkegaard employs indirect communication in a manner which portrays the essential features of the ethico-religious existence and the nature of the God-relationship associated with the same. Kierkegaard strives, via indirect communication, to say something about what is on the other side of the limit, the Unknown, or "*the God*," and he fully acknowledges that God has made himself known to us in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the

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Teacher. Kierkegaard's work is a masterpiece of indirect communication which conveys information far surpassing what either the early or the later Wittgenstein have to offer. Even so, a more complete understanding of the limit, the use and limitations of language, and the nature of ethico-religious existence are to be gained through a comparative study of Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein.

Objective and Subjective Truth

Since objective and subjective truth are closely related to direct and indirect communication, it is appropriate to consider this topic. First, it should be noted that neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein makes the objective/subjective distinction as does Kierkegaard. Nonetheless, the early Wittgenstein's distinction between the "trivial or relative sense" and the "ethical or absolute sense" associated with judgments of value within the *Lecture on Ethics* possesses some features which are analogous to Kierkegaard's objective/subjective distinction. However, one must be careful not to equate these distinctions.

The affinity of view between Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein is better understood in terms of Kierkegaard's distinction between accidental and essential knowledge, a distinction which builds upon the objective/subjective distinction. In Wittgensteinian terms, one could say that accidental knowledge is "trivial or relative", whereas essential knowledge is "ethical or absolute." Both Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein, in their own ways, are attempting to delineate ordinary matters of concern from ultimate matters of concern. While Kierkegaard recognizes the problems associated with discussion of ultimate matters of concern, he allows that we can and do discuss such

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matters via indirect communication. In contrast, although Wittgenstein acknowledges the place of such matters of ultimate concern, he avers that we cannot meaningfully discuss such matters, that our related expressions are nonsensical, and that this nonsensicality is the "very essence" of such expressions (LE, p. 11). To my knowledge the later Wittgenstein does not hold on to the distinction between relative and absolute value judgments, but that does not mean that he would reject it. Comparative analysis of Kierkegaard's and the early Wittgenstein's views on these points is illustrative, for one can see the manner in which they approach shared concerns from diverse directions while using different terminology.

Furthermore, although neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein talks about subjective truth or attempts to communicate matters of subjective truth, as does Kierkegaard, the early and the later Wittgenstein's analysis of what Kierkegaard refers to as objective truth goes far beyond Kierkegaard's analysis. In this respect, the early and the later Wittgenstein serve to enhance our understanding of the nature of what Kierkegaard calls objective truth. In a similar fashion, Kierkegaard's analysis of subjectivity and subjective truth provides us with insights which go far beyond Wittgenstein's analysis, for neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein addresses the notion of subjective truth. I suspect the early Wittgenstein would say that such an investigation would be nonsensical, for it would be incapable of adequate representation by means of language. In contrast, the later Wittgenstein would more than likely hold that a certain type of language-game is being played.

In contrast, Kierkegaard provides us with a detailed account of subjectivity and

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reasons that apart from subjectivity one is incapable of making the decisive distinctions which are essential if one is to truly exist as an individual. In his analysis of subjective truth, Kierkegaard demonstrates that there is another sense of truth which transcends the sense of truth which attaches to propositions. In this second sense of truth, truth attaches to reality itself. In a subjective inquiry into truth, the subject focusses subjectively upon his or her relationship to the truth, and if the relationship is proper, one is "in the truth, even if that to which he so stands be untruth" (CUP, p. 178). If the reality of God is the truth, then one must focus upon one's subjective relationship to that reality as truth.

Justification

Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein hold similar points of view on epistemic and ethical justification. Concerning epistemic justification, Kierkegaard holds that reason is incapable of providing ultimate justification for theoretical systems and that one can commence the development of such a system only by means of an act of the will. In other words, for Kierkegaard, reflection ultimately must be halted by means of an act of will.

Wittgenstein does not hold that reflection must be halted by an act of will, but he does agree with Kierkegaard that reasons must come to an end. The later Wittgenstein provides us with additional insights and understanding into why reasons must come to an end. His view of justification recognizes that our knowledge is comprised of a vast inherited system, that justification of any proposition must take into consideration its fit with other propositions, and that this procedure rests upon a "system of verification" (*vide*, OC, § 279). The later Wittgenstein also points out that justification of rules

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ultimately comes to rest in our actions, in our "form of life", or our natural history.

Concerning ethical justification, Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein agree that nothing we do can ever be defended absolutely. Kierkegaard holds that reason, being infinite, can present us with just as many reasons pro as con for any given ethical action wherein one must act decisively-infinitely, and that ultimately we pick an alternative and turn to God and ask that he bless the action [X^1 A 66 (J & P, 3767)]. The early Wittgenstein holds that our actions can never "be defended absolutely and finally," that the only reason we can give for taking a certain action is that it is more likely to bring about a certain result which is an aim we accept. In this sense, the only defense one can give is tied "to something else that is not questioned" (CV, 1931, p. 16e). I think Wittgenstein's analysis serves to further illuminate what Kierkegaard has in mind, for I believe that Kierkegaard would agree that one would pick that course of action which one thinks God would most likely bless, which ties the action to some aim which one accepts.

Belief, Doubt, and Certainty

Consideration of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of belief, doubt, and certainty reveals a number of affinities and disaffinities. In most instances of disaffinities, I believe the later Wittgenstein's analysis provides a more accurate account of our practices.

According to Kierkegaard, one chooses to believe, or to doubt, through a resolution of the will. Kierkegaard's analysis of epistemic belief is set within the context of a discussion pertaining to the uncertainty associated with coming into existence. Kierkegaard holds that inasmuch as the historical has come into existence, a sense of uncertainty

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always attaches to the historical. Kierkegaard admits that one has certainty of one's sense perception (one sees the star), but doubt (uncertainty) enters in the moment one considers the question of the star's having come into existence (*vide*, PF, p. 101 ff). Accordingly, Kierkegaard maintains, one who believes that something is an effect, that it has come into existence, has already subjected his or her belief to the doubt which attaches to all coming into existence and has chosen to dispel this doubt through an act of the will; we apprehend the historical with the organ of faith or belief.

The later Wittgenstein's analysis of belief and doubt provides the basis for questioning the legitimacy of Kierkegaard's claim that believing and doubting are acts of the will. When we first begin to believe things, Wittgenstein observes, we do not begin by taking in a single proposition which we then subject to analysis and decide whether it is to be accepted or rejected; rather, we take in "a whole system of propositions," and only later do we come to realize the extent of the interconnectedness and mutuality of support which attaches to such propositions (*vide*, OC, §§ 141-142). Some things within this vast system of knowledge stand "unshakably fast" while others are likely to shift; but what stands unshakably fast does so because of the beliefs which surround it as opposed to its being "intrinsically obvious or convincing" (OC, § 144).

Wittgenstein's analysis reveals that in most cases it is not a matter of willing to believe or to doubt. In most instances, doubt simply is not there, so there is no doubt to be cast aside. On Wittgenstein's view, it is unreasonable to hold that a sense of doubt attaches to all coming into existence, for such a view does not square with our actual practices. In this respect, the later Wittgenstein's analysis of belief and doubt serves to

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remedy Kierkegaard's extreme doxastic voluntarism, and, correspondingly, his skeptical position that all historical knowledge possesses a sense of uncertainty and doubt. On the later Wittgenstein's account, one does not need to postulate the existence of an organ by means of which we apprehend the historical. In this sense, Wittgenstein judiciously wields Occam's razor.

The later Wittgenstein further argues that certainty and doubt are associated with language-games: "Or are we to say that *certainty* is merely a constructed point to which some things approximate more, some less closely? No. Doubt gradually loses its sense. This language-game just *is* like that" (OC, § 56). Although agreeing with Kierkegaard that doubt must come to an end, Wittgenstein provides a subtler account of doubt by locating the limits of doubt in the linguistic contexts of doubt: a proposition can be doubted only if a number of other "propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn" (OC, § 341). In other words, doubt is dependent upon our belief that certain things hold fast. These propositions which hold fast allow our investigation to proceed. The later Wittgenstein's analysis once again points to the importance of recognizing our actions, or our form of life, for doubting behavior rests upon non-doubting behavior (*vide*, OC, § 354).

In a similar fashion, I believe the later Wittgenstein's analysis of certainty is superior to Kierkegaard's. As I previously noted, Kierkegaard holds objective certainty to be an illusion. He maintains that the positivity of sense-perception, historical knowledge, and speculative philosophy are sheer falsity, for certainty can only be realized in the infinite (*vide*, CUP, p. 75). In contrast, the later Wittgenstein argues that certainty is

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reflected in our language-games and in the way we live our lives. He further argues that there are "countless general empirical propositions that count as certain for us" (OC, § 273). I believe that the later Wittgenstein's account far more accurately describes how we do think and act than does Kierkegaard's, because reflection reveals that we do accept as certain numerous beliefs associated with sense perception and historical knowledge.

Knowledge of the Ethical

While Kierkegaard holds that knowledge of the universal ethical is God-given and that everyone is in possession of this knowledge, neither the early nor the later Wittgenstein takes this position. While the early Wittgenstein does say, "Certainly it is correct to say: Conscience is the voice of God" (NB, p. 75e) and "What God commands, that is good" (WVC, p. 115), close examination of the context of these passages does not indicate that the early Wittgenstein believes that ethics is God-given or that everyone is in possession of ethical knowledge. Wittgenstein is not entirely clear on this point.

Both the early and the later Wittgenstein agree with Kierkegaard that the scientific, rationalist approach to ethics violates the character of the ethical, for the ethical cannot be treated in the same manner as a scientific theory. The later Wittgenstein's consideration of ethical systems reveals that no objective set of criteria exists by which such systems may be judged, whereas such criteria are routinely applied to scientific theories. I am unaware of Kierkegaard's having addressed the question of competing systems of ethics. However, I think that the later Wittgenstein's observations are sound. I believe that Kierkegaard would have to agree that there exists no objective set of criteria by which these ethical systems may be adjudged in an effort to determine which system is the

"right" system, for such an approach would have to employ a scientific approach to ethics. Comparative study of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views provide a more complete understanding of why ethics is not to be treated as a science than could be gained by studying them in isolation.

Ethics and Solipsism

The early Wittgenstein's references to solipsism, ethics, and the mystical (which appear within the *Notebooks 1914-1916* and the *Tractatus*) have long been considered to be enigmatic. As we have seen, the logical positivists simply chose to ignore these troubling passages and to focus upon Wittgenstein's analysis of logic and language. But this approach overlooks the early Wittgenstein's insistence that the point of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one, that its aim "is to draw a limit...to the expression of thoughts" (TLP, p. 3), that "the book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were" (LLW, p. 143).

The early Wittgenstein introduces the ethical and mystical portions of the *Tractatus* by stating, "*The limits of my language* mean the limits of my world" (TLP, 5.6). Wittgenstein then observes that this remark reveals "how much truth there is in solipsism" (TLP, 5.62), and he further comments upon solipsism as follows:

> For what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest.
>
> The world is *my* world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of *language* (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world. (TLP 5.62)

In this quotation, as Black (1964, p. 309) points out, "means" (*meint*) is better translated as "intends" or "wants to say." Wittgenstein immediately follows this passage by

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observing that "The world and life are one" (TLP, 5.621) and by stating "I am my world. (The microcosm.)" (TLP, 5.63).

These passages are troublesome. While we can make sense of the notion that "the limits of *language*...mean the limits of *my* world," what are we to make of the parenthetical phrase, "of that language which alone I understand" ("*der Sprache, die allein ich verstehe*")? Black (1964, p. 309) informs us that the meaning of the German is uncertain, that he and others take this phrase to mean "the *only* language which I understand."

When considering what Wittgenstein is attempting to communicate, one must remember that the early Wittgenstein's analysis of language and propositions within the *Tractatus* prior to Section 5.6 reveals that he is concerned with our use of language within objective discourse, with descriptive, or representational, language as it pertains to empirical reality (*vide*, TLP, 5.526 and 5.5561). Sections 5.6 and beyond of the *Tractatus* lead into a discussion of solipsism, ethics, and mysticism, among other things, and point to the insufficiency of representational language to communicate such concerns.

Although the early Wittgenstein admits that what the solipsist want to say contains some truth, he recognizes the limitations of solipsism:

> This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side *nothing* is left over, and on the other side, as unique, *the world*. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out. (NB, 85e)

Herein, Wittgenstein is wrestling with the nature of the metaphysical subject and is considering the relationship of the same to the world. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein further observes, "There is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas"

(TLP, 5.631). According to Wittgenstein, the metaphysical subject is to be understood as "a limit of the world" as opposed to something which belongs to the world (TLP, 5.632).

The early Wittgenstein further notes that while we are tempted to say that the relationship of the metaphysical subject to the world is akin to that of an eye to its visual field, there is nothing in the visual field which in any way allows one to infer that it is seen by an eye (*vide*, TLP, 5.633). Continuing with this line of reasoning, Wittgenstein claims that there is no part of our experience which is *a priori*, that whatever is seen could be other than it is, and that whatever can be described could be other than it is (*vide*, TLP, 5.634). Wittgenstein then remarks, "Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it" (TLP, 5.64).

I think the sense of what Wittgenstein is getting at becomes clearer in light of a section of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* entitled "Real or Ethical Subjectivity--The Subjective Thinker." Herein Kierkegaard argues that language associated with abstract thought, i.e., with objectivity, is incapable of expressing the subjectivity associated with individual existence. According to Kierkegaard, our relationship to external reality is a cognitive relationship. If we are to acquire knowledge, abstract thought requires that we become disinterested; in contrast, the ethical requires that we become "infinitely interested in existing" (CUP, p. 280). Kierkegaard further states, "The only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical reality. To every other reality he stands in a cognitive relation" (CUP, p. 280). Kierkegaard is not taking a

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solipsistic position in which he denies other realities apart from the reality of the existing individual. To the contrary, he admits the existence of such realities, but he reasons that ethically understood, the only reality is one's own reality. While Kierkegaard does not deny the existence of the thinking subject, as does the early Wittgenstein, Kierkegaard argues that the thinking subject is not the real subject, for in knowing the thinking subject moves in the sphere of the possible. According to Kierkegaard, "the real subject is the ethically existing subject" (CUP, p. 281) who thinks everything in relation to his own ethical existence.

I believe that Kierkegaard's view of the ethically existing subject and of ethical reality illuminates the early Wittgenstein's solipsistic assertions that "The world and life are one" (TLP, 5.621) and "I am my world" (TLP 5.63). Further evidence for this position is found in the *Notebooks 1914-1916*, wherein Wittgenstein denies the existence of the cognitive subject, but maintains, "The willing subject exists" (NB, p. 80e). Furthermore, Wittgenstein's view that good and evil enter the world only "through the *subject*" (NB, p. 79e), and his assertion that apart from the existence of the will, there would be no "centre of the world, which we call the I, and which is the bearer of ethics" (NB, p. 80e) fully accord with Kierkegaard's view of the ethically existing subject and the ethical reality of that subject. In summary, Kierkegaard's analysis of relationship of the ethically existing subject to the world gives us a better sense of what the early Wittgenstein's discussion of solipsism is attempting to get at, for it allows us to see the sense in which reality must be understood as attaching to the existing individual.

Religious Belief

Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein differentiate between everyday, ordinary, epistemic belief and religious belief. In delineating this difference, Kierkegaard differentiates between "belief with the understanding" and "belief against the understanding" (CUP, p. 208). Ordinary, epistemic beliefs, such as those associated with "livelihood and wife and fields and oxen and the like" (CUP, p. 208) are beliefs which one holds with the understanding. In contrast, one holds to religious belief against the understanding, i.e., one is not being reasonable by ordinary standards, by non-religious criteria, although one uses the understanding to "to make sure that he believes against the understanding" (CUP, p. 504). Although religious belief is held against the understanding, this does not mean that it is nonsense; to the contrary, as Kierkegaard points out, if it were nonsense, the understanding would preclude one from believing it. In religious belief, the understanding is used to bring one to an awareness of the incomprehensible (the Incarnation), of the paradox, which one chooses to believe against the understanding (*vide*, CUP, p. 504).

The later Wittgenstein holds that religious beliefs are to be looked upon as "unshakable beliefs" (LC, p. 54). Such beliefs differ from more ordinary, epistemic beliefs in three ways: first, such beliefs are "the firmest of all beliefs," for they serve to regulate the believer's actions in ways which would not seem to accord with more ordinary beliefs (LC, p. 54); second, such an "unshakable belief" may be considered to be well-established in relation to a system of religious beliefs, but not well-established in the sense in which we would speak of epistemic beliefs as being well-established (LC, p. 54);

and third, one who rejects such religious beliefs does not believe something which is contradictory (LC, p. 55). So religious belief is unshakable not in the sense that it cannot be lost, but in the sense that it cannot be reasoned away as can other beliefs because it is a matter of committing oneself to actions rather than grounding oneself in evidence.

Although the later Wittgenstein rejects Kierkegaard's doxastic voluntarism which is associated with ordinary, epistemic beliefs, his position concerning volition as it relates to religious belief possesses some similarity to Kierkegaard's view. Consider the manner in which the later Wittgenstein characterizes religious belief:

> It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief*, it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life. It's passionately seizing hold of *this* interpretation. Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal, a description, of that system of reference, while at the same time being an appeal to conscience. And this combination would have to result in the pupil himself, of his own accord, passionately taking hold of the system of reference. It would be as though someone were first to let me see the hopelessness of my situation and then show me the means of rescue until, of my own accord, or not at any rate led to it by my *instructor*, I ran to it and grasped it. (CV, 1947, p. 64e; cf. CV, 1937, p. 32e-33e)

Wittgenstein's references within this passage to "passionate commitment" and to "passionately seizing hold" of the system of reference of one's "own accord" seem to me to point to a volitional aspect associated with religious belief.[1] However, it must be remembered that Kierkegaard maintained that the Christian faith involves the miracle of faith wherein God creates the condition enabling one to believe.

As I have mentioned previously, both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein

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[1] These texts are somewhat ambiguous concerning the role of volition in religious belief. One may seize hold of this system of reference apart from willing to do so.

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agree that a commitment to a religious belief requires that one must be at an age which allows for the inwardness essential to religious belief. Kierkegaard holds this position because, as he puts it, "The child's receptivity is so without decision that it is said proverbially, 'One can make a child believe anything'" (CUP, p. 532). Kierkegaard further avers that this fact is so certain that the elders are accountable for whatever they endeavor to make the child believe. This position certainly appears to lead to an inconsistency, for how can it both be the case that a child can be made to believe anything and that belief always entails an act of the will?

The later Wittgenstein's analysis of the acquisition of belief appears to be a far more accurate reflection of what actually takes place, i.e., a great deal of the beliefs which we acquire are simply taken for granted. Although the context within which Wittgenstein makes this observation is one which more clearly points to epistemic beliefs, there is some indication that he holds much the same position for religious belief. As a matter of fact, the later Wittgenstein holds, as previously mentioned, that religious instruction consists of a portrayal or description of the religious frame of reference as well as an appeal to conscience (*vide*, CV, 1947, p. 64e).

Wittgenstein's analysis of the manner in which we assimilate a whole system of beliefs helps to dissolve the seeming inconsistency within Kierkegaard's position. The child learns all beliefs, including religious beliefs, in the ordinary way of absorbing the general beliefs. But the child does not believe *religiously* because the child lacks the passionate commitment associated with inwardness which is essential for religious belief. When the child reaches the appropriate age, he or she may be capable of believing

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religiously with the appropriate passion.

Both the early and the later Wittgenstein were deeply interested in religion. And, as I have shown, the later Wittgenstein's views of religion and religious belief have many affinities to Kierkegaard's thought. Wittgenstein even acknowledges that his views concerning faith and wisdom were influenced by Kierkegaard (*vide*, CV, 1946, p. 53e). Nonetheless, one must be careful not to conclude that Wittgenstein was a Christian as was Kierkegaard, for by his own admission, he was not a Christian.

Religious Language

As we have seen, in considering the question of what one must do to become a Christian, Kierkegaard differentiates between objectivity and subjectivity, between the sphere of proof and the sphere of faith. Kierkegaard also points out that language is incapable of fully conveying the nature of religious existence, that religious communication must take a direct-indirect form. Although Kierkegaard sets forth these distinctions in considerable detail, it may be said that it remained for the early and the later Wittgenstein to fully analyze the use of language practices associated with religious belief. Comparison of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's view of religious discourse demonstrates the merits of jointly studying Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, for a more complete picture of the nature of religious discourse, of objectivity, and of subjectivity may be gained from a comparative analysis than from studying only Kierkegaard or Wittgenstein.

The early Wittgenstein, holding to a representational view of language, recognizes the limitation of language for communicating the religious or the mystical. But the early

Wittgenstein's position regarding the use of religious discourse is more extreme than is Kierkegaard's, for Wittgenstein holds that all religious discourse must be rejected because of its failure to signify. According to the early Wittgenstein, nonsensicality is the very essence of both ethical and religious statements, for these statements represent attempts "*to go beyond* the world...beyond significant language" (LE, p. 11).

The later Wittgenstein's view of language recognizes that the representational use of language is only one of a multiplicity of uses. He allows that we can, and do, engage in religious discourse, but his analysis of language demonstrates how religious discourse radically differs from scientific discourse. As the later Wittgenstein points out, the difference accorded the notion of belief within religious discourse and scientific discourse is seen in our use of words.

Within religious discourse our use of "dogma" and "faith" indicate that the beliefs at hand are not subject to empirical testing. Wittgenstein says, "We don't talk about hypothesis, or about high probability. Nor about knowing" (LC, p. 57).[2] Wittgenstein further observes that our use of phrases such as "I believe that so and so will happen," are used very differently within religious discourse from the way they are used in scientific discourse, although we are tempted to believe they are used in the same manner as within scientific discourse because we also talk of evidence and of evidence by experience

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[2] Wittgenstein's assertion that we do not talk about knowing in religious discourse is questionable. The Scriptures contain many references to knowing, and the use of "know" is common within religious discourse, but the sense of "to know" it must be agreed, differs from the sense of know employed in empirical discourse. The language-games are very different.

within the context of religious discourse.

The later Wittgenstein further clarifies the usage of "belief" within religious discourse by pointing to the commonly asserted claim that Christianity rests upon an historic basis. In this case, belief in historical fact is accorded a very different place than is belief as it relates to other historical events. Wittgenstein notes Christianity's insistence that we are not to believe this narrative in the same manner as we would believe any other historical narrative; to the contrary, we are to take a very different attitude to this narrative (*vide,* CV, 1937, p. 32e).

The later Wittgenstein's analysis of language practices associated with religious belief serves to clarify Kierkegaard's distinction between the "sphere of proof" and the "sphere of faith." Wittgenstein's analysis of religious belief and religious discourse demonstrates that religious faith is not a matter of reasonability, that religious faith is not *unreasonable* but is rather *not reasonable* (*vide*, LC, p. 58). Wittgenstein's view accords with and illuminates Kierkegaard's insistence that the Christian uses the understanding precisely in order to believe against the understanding. However, lest one conclude that the Christian faith entails nonsense, Kierkegaard is careful to add:

> [The Christian] cannot believe [nonsense] against the understanding, for precisely the understanding will discern that it is nonsense and will prevent him from believing it; but he makes so much use of the understanding that he becomes aware of the incomprehensible, and then he holds to this, believing against the understanding. (CUP, p. 504).

It appears to me that Wittgenstein's analysis of language as it is employed in religious discourse serves to clarify the distinction which Kierkegaard is attempting to make.

The later Wittgenstein's view of religious belief and religious language may be

seen as building upon Kierkegaard's analysis of objectivity and subjectivity, and correspondingly, upon direct and indirect communication.[3] Unlike the early Wittgenstein who alleges that there can be no propositions of ethics or religion, that ethical and religious discourse is nonsensical, Kierkegaard, while acknowledging that there is a difference between ordinary direct discourse and ethical and religious discourse, allows that we can communicate about the ethical and religious in meaningful ways via indirect discourse. At any rate, the later Wittgenstein's view more closely accords with Kierkegaard's position and illuminates and clarifies the distinctions which Kierkegaard set forth.

The Plausibility of Kierkegaard's Having Influenced Wittgenstein

As we have considered the aforementioned affinities and disaffinities, it is appropriate to raise the question of whether or not it is plausible that Kierkegaard influenced the early or the later Wittgenstein. When one contemplates this question, one must remember that Wittgenstein learned Danish for the purpose of reading Kierkegaard in the original (*vide,* Lee, 1979, p. 218) and that he was disappointed with Walter Lowrie's English translation of Kierkegaard's works because of its failure "to reproduce the elegance of the original Danish" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees, 1984, p. 88). We also know that Wittgenstein considered Kierkegaard to be "by far the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century" (Drury, "Symposium," in Fann (ed), 1967, p. 70).

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[3] Both Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein may have been influenced by Johann Georg Hamann. Kierkegaard frequently mentions Hamann in his journals, and we know from a conversation which was recorded by Drury ("Conversations with Wittgenstein," in Rhees (ed), 1984, p. 107) that the later Wittgenstein was reading Hamann. One of Hamann's concerns was the philosophy of language.

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These facts tend to indicate Wittgenstein's great interest in, and esteem for, Kierkegaard. Even so, to my knowledge, no historical document exists wherein Wittgenstein directly acknowledges Kierkegaard's influence upon his life and work. Apart from such a document, caution must be exercised when drawing any firm conclusions concerning Kierkegaard's influence on Wittgenstein.

Nevertheless, the present study reveals considerable evidence for the view that Wittgenstein, especially the later Wittgenstein, was influenced by Kierkegaard. Whether the early Wittgenstein was so influenced may be disputed for a number of reasons.

We know from Bertrand Russell's letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell, dated 20 December, 1919, that Wittgenstein was already reading Kierkegaard in 1919 (*vide,* LR, p. 82). But we do not know whether Wittgenstein was reading Kierkegaard during the period in which he wrote both the *Notebooks 1914-1916* and the *Tractatus*. While - Theodore Haecker's German translations of Kierkegaard were being published in *Der Brenner,* and while these translations "did much to stimulate the interest of Austrian intellectuals in the Danish philosopher before the First World War" (Monk, 1990, p. 109), it remains an open question whether Wittgenstein was reading Kierkegaard as published in *Der Brenner* or whether he was influenced by discussions of Kierkegaard among Austrian intellectuals, e.g., Kraus, Engelmann, Nestroy, and Schlick. Despite the numerous affinities between Kierkegaard's and the early Wittgenstein's views of ethics, one may only speculate about Kierkegaard's influence upon the early Wittgenstein.

There is a much stronger case for a claim that the later Wittgenstein was influenced by Kierkegaard. First, as previously mentioned, the later Wittgenstein refers to

Kierkegaard in some of his manuscript entries as published in *Culture and Value*, and in conversations with those who were close to him, e.g., Malcolm, Drury, and Bouwsma. Second, we know that the later Wittgenstein had read Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (*vide*, Malcolm, 1962, p. 71), although we do not know precisely when he read it. Lastly, several affinities between Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's views of religion and of Christianity have been detailed in this study. These affinities are so striking that, even apart from direct historical evidence, they constitute considerable evidence for the claim that the later Wittgenstein's views of religion and Christianity were directly influenced by Kierkegaard.

The Credence Lent to an Emergent Broadened Understanding of Wittgenstein's Work

With a few exceptions, Wittgensteinian scholars have tended to fall into two camps. The tendency has been to focus exclusively either upon Wittgenstein's investigation of logic and language or upon the more ethical and mystical portions his writings.

Two recent works point to an emergent broadened understanding of Wittgenstein's work: Philip R. Shields' *Logic and Sin in the Writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein* (1993) and Norman Malcolm's *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?* (1994; published posthumously). Both Shields and Malcolm link Wittgenstein's focus upon logic and language with his concern for the ethical and religious. Malcolm's work, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, is based on a comment which Wittgenstein made in a conversation with Drury: "I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view" (Drury, "Some Notes on Conversations," in Rhees (ed.), 1984, p. 79). The sense of what Wittgenstein means by this comment becomes more apparent in

light of Kierkegaard's work.

As we have seen, Kierkegaard originally planned to employ "Logical Problems" as a title for what was later published as the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Kierkegaard saw many of the problems associated with Hegelian philosophy, especially its failure to understand the nature of individual existence, as grounded in confusions surrounding our understanding and use of logic and language.

In a similar fashion, both the early and the later Wittgenstein understood that logic and language are integrally connected to our understanding of the ethical and the religious. For the early Wittgenstein, this understanding serves to demarcate the sayable from the unsayable, and to place the ethical and the religious within the realm of the unsayable. For the later Wittgenstein, the logic of our language serves to reveal the differences between epistemic beliefs and ethical-religious beliefs as well as the differing language-games associated with each.

Comparative study of Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein tends to support Shield's and Malcolm's work, for it more fully reveals the manner in which these topics are related. In light of this study, it becomes clearer that neither the early Wittgenstein nor the later Wittgenstein views the logical, the ethical, and the mystical as discrete and separate realms.

A View of Philosophy

The preceding comparative analysis suggests a view of philosophy, or perhaps better stated, a way of doing philosophy, or a way of looking at philosophy and life. Consideration of this view should serve further to demonstrate the value of this study.

First, the comparative analysis reveals the importance of understanding the workings of our language. Admittedly, one may obtain this from studying only Wittgenstein, but reading Kierkegaard allows one to see how he handles similar problems within a religious context. Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein recognize the extent to which our failure to understand the workings of our language leads to confusion and philosophical puzzlement. They perceive as ethical the problems associated with our propensity to misuse language, and they recognize that the misuse of language creates problems for one's life-view. With this in mind, Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein perceive their works to be ethical deeds. Although the later Wittgenstein never says as much, there are suggestions that he also sees his work to constitute an ethical deed.

Bearing their example in mind, and recognizing that language is used for a multiplicity of purposes, it is imperative that one engaged in philosophy carefully consider linguistic practices associated with a variety of language-games, and that one be ever vigilant to identify the traps which language sets. As the later Wittgenstein has shown, many of these traps result from our failure to recognize the manner in which the meaning of a word or a phrase subtly shifts from the context of one language-game to another. For example, "verification" means something very different in scientific discourse from what it is taken to mean within religious discourse. As used in scientific discourse, "verification" means authentication on the basis of testing or measurement, whereas in religious discourse it connotes more of a sense of confirmation of the legitimacy of a belief or of a particular course of action which one understands to be God's will

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for his or her life. Verification within the scientific domain involves very different methods and procedures from those employed in the religious domain.

Second, bearing the above in mind, it is imperative that we recognize the extent to which epistemic concepts such as knowledge, belief, doubt, certainty, and justification are employed within various spheres of discourse. Again, the use of language practices associated with such concepts reveals the extent to which scientific discourse, and the related knowledge claims and beliefs, radically differ from ethical-religious discourse and beliefs.

Third, the comparative analysis reveals that Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein all acknowledge the role and place within life of both the empirical and the religious or the mystical. Furthermore, the manner in which Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein distinguish the objective from the subjective, the sphere of proof from the sphere of faith, and more ordinary, epistemic beliefs from religious beliefs, serves to demonstrate that central religious beliefs, e.g., belief in the Incarnation, are not unreasonable, but are rather not reasonable. Such beliefs are incomprehensible; they are outside the rational domain of science. In this respect, religious beliefs need not be seen as contradicting more ordinary epistemic beliefs.

Fourth, recognizing the role, place, and limitations of beliefs associated with both the empirical and the religious, it should be noted that the on-going dispute between philosophers of science and philosophers of religion possesses little, if any, merit. One should feel free to rigorously engage in philosophical investigation of issues within science, ethics, and religion, always being careful to bear in mind the shift in meaning

associated with epistemic concepts as they are employed within these differing contexts and differing language-games. Accordingly, the proper task of philosophers of religion is the analysis of religious discourse with the goal of attaining insight concerning the nature and use of such discourse.[4] Perhaps considerable confusion within philosophy of religion, especially as it relates to proofs for the existence of God and other attempts to reduce religion to the sphere of proof, could be avoided by exercising such care. Similarly, the task of religious philosophers is the analysis of religious concern and its relationship to the happy life, e.g., as encountered in existentialism. A carefully articulated view of life which recognizes the legitimacy of both the empirical and religious points of view would serve a dual purpose: first, it would guard against incursion on the part of science into the domain of the human spirit in ways which violate its sacredness; and second, it would guard against a critique of science grounded in religious literalism and fear which would dismiss well-established scientific facts.

Fifth, as Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein hold, philosophy should have practical value for the individual because it assists in clearing up confusions. Kierkegaard's primary focus is upon the individual as he or she exists before God; it is within this context that Kierkegaard examines and delineates the stages of existence and repeatedly stresses that each individual is assigned to himself or herself for the proper study of the existential ethical. Both the early and the later Wittgenstein were similarly concerned with the individual, although it bears noting that Wittgenstein was

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[4] *God-Talk: An Examination of the Language and Logic of Theology* by John Macquarrie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) provides an excellent example.

not concerned with the individual in the Kierkegaardian sense in which the individual stands before God. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein says that one who thinks with him will ultimately come to realize that "he must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright" (TLP, 6.54). One who philosophizes, according to the early Wittgenstein, is actually working on oneself, on one's interpretations, and way of seeing things (*vide*, CV, 1931, p. 16e). Similarly, the later Wittgenstein holds that the philosopher "must cure many diseases within himself before he can arrive at the notions of common sense" (CV, 1944, p. 44e; cf. PI, § 255), and that philosophical problems are confessional in nature: "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (PI, § 123).

In this respect, I believe one who philosophizes is engaged in the construction of a life-view for the purpose of unifying one's existence and providing life with meaning. One who philosophizes in this manner recognizes that he or she is always in the process of becoming and takes comfort in the fact that life's journey is as important, if not more important, than its goal. Kierkegaard, the early Wittgenstein, and the later Wittgenstein recognize that philosophy is a working upon oneself, and the manner in which they work provides examples of how one can profitably work upon oneself.

Closing Remarks

As I bring this comparative analysis to a conclusion, there are two outcomes or insights, not previously covered, which I wish to mention. First, I am struck by how easy it is to categorize a philosopher and to lose sight of the connections with the work and the views of other philosophers. This is certainly the case for both Kierkegaard and

Wittgenstein, who are often described, respectively, as a theistic existentialist and an analytic philosopher. The above study should point to the danger of such facile classifications, for, as I have shown, Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein share many of the same concerns. As a consequence, their philosophies possess numerous affinities, and in many instances, the disaffinities encountered actually serve to illuminate and to build upon the other's work.

Lastly, as Drury mentioned, both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein serve to warn us of various intellectual and spiritual dangers (*vide*, Rhees, 1984, p. xi). Drury found it difficult to state exactly what he meant. While I am not sure that this is what Drury had in mind, it strikes me that both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein serve to warn us of an over-reliance upon scientific rationality. This is not to imply that they were anti-science, for that is clearly not the case. Both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein recognized and applauded the legitimate application of science, but they also abhorred the application of science to the domain of the human spirit. Both agree that many of the most important things in life, things which provide life with meaning, are non-rational. They argue that such areas of life are beyond scientific rationality; as such, they cannot be reduced to rational analysis or be directly communicated by means of representational language.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Directions for Further Research

Comparative analysis of Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's views of epistemology, and of the ramifications of the same for ethics and religion, suggests a number of possible topics for further research. I will briefly outline some topics, but this list is not meant to be exhaustive.

First, as previously mentioned, both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein may have been influenced by Hamann. While Kierkegaard cites Hamann on numerous occasions, especially throughout the *Journals and Papers*, Wittgenstein's only reference to Hamann appears within the context of a conversation with Drury. It bears noting that Hamann is not included in Hallett's listing of "Authors Wittgenstein Knew or Read" (1977, p. 759). Nonetheless, Hamann's work in certain areas parallels Kierkegaard and the later Wittgenstein. For instance, Hamann was concerned with the relationship of philosophy to Christianity, and he saw language not only as the means by which reason is capable of expression, but also as the means by which reason becomes confused. Reading Hamann in light of Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein may reveal numerous affinities of view.

Second, while we know from Russell's letter, dated 20 December 1919, to Lady Ottoline Morrell that Wittgenstein was reading Kierkegaard at that time (*vide*, LR, p. 82), we do not know when Wittgenstein started to read Kierkegaard, or whether Wittgenstein

was reading Kierkegaard during the period of time in which Wittgenstein was writing the *Tractatus*.

It is possible that Wittgenstein was reading Kierkegaard from 1914 on. Wittgenstein met with Ludwig von Ficker, the publisher of *Der Brenner*, on 26-27 July 1914 for the purpose of transferring 100,000 crowns to Ficker to be distributed among needy artists. At that time, Theodore Haecker's German translations of Kierkegaard were being published in *Der Brenner*. At some time, Ficker proceeded to send *Der Brenner* to Wittgenstein, for on 5 August 1921 Wittgenstein wrote to Engelmann, "Ficker keeps on sending me *Der Brenner*" (LLW, p. 44). An examination of *Der Brenner's* subscription or mailing records, should they exist, may indicate when Wittgenstein began to receive the publication. If this could be ascertained, a check of the contents would reveal what portions of Kierkegaard's works Wittgenstein may have been reading. The resultant findings of such an investigation may allow us to better account for the striking similarities between Kierkegaard and the early Wittgenstein which one encounters in the more mystical portions of the *Tractatus*.

Third, Kierkegaard's, the early Wittgenstein's, and the later Wittgenstein's analysis of belief suggests that further investigation into the role doxastic voluntarism plays in religious belief is merited, especially in light of Kierkegaard's assertion that one can believe in the Incarnation only by means of the miracle of faith and his insistence that one must hold fast to this belief. As previously noted, the later Wittgenstein's work serves to limit the more extreme view of doxastic voluntarism which Kierkegaard appears to hold. An analysis employing Wittgenstein's methods of various classes of beliefs may more

clearly reveal the nature and scope of doxastic voluntarism.

Fourth, the work done provides context for, and leads into, contemporary problematics concerning epistemology. As do most epistemologists, both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein hold that one who claims to know something must stand in a proper relationship to what is known. Recognition of the relational aspect of knowledge on Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's part raises a number of questions for the traditional objective/subjective dichotomy associated with positivist-empiricist epistemology. Positivist-empiricist epistemologists, in pursuit of the "view from nowhere," place great emphasis upon the neutrality of the observer, standard observation conditions, and replication of results. While it is hard to argue against the success of positivist-empiricist epistemology as employed in the physical sciences, it is not so clear that this model is appropriate for other types of knowledge.

For example, one way of looking at Kierkegaard's objective/subjective distinction is to see it as demonstrating that one's relationship to the empirical world is utterly different from one's relationship to God, or for that matter to oneself. The differences in these relationships are also reflected in the associated knowledge claims. Stated somewhat differently, Kierkegaard highlights the differences between objectivity and subjectivity for the express purpose of demonstrating the inability of the traditional empiricist model of epistemology to adequately account for the inwardness and subjectivity associated with one's God-relationship, a relationship which is contingent upon revealed knowledge.

Similarly, one may see both the early and the later Wittgenstein's work as an

inquiry into the appropriate use of language for the purpose of gaining clarity and dissolving philosophical problems. While the early Wittgenstein's work is largely a reflection of the empiricist model of epistemology, the later Wittgenstein's work begins to dismantle the objective/subjective distinction, for it recognizes that language about human subjectivity is grounded in objective practices, rules, and concepts.

Recent work within epistemology continues the process of reworking the objective/subjective dichotomy. For example, Nagel (*vide*, 1979, p. 206) argues that the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity is a relative distinction, and that the opposition between the objective and the subjective arises precisely because the dominance which one view claims over the other more subjective view leads to dispute.

The objective/subjective dichotomy is further eroded by recent advances within feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint epistemology. Feminist empiricism maintains that a value-laden empiricism that recognizes its own value-laden status, and that rigorously applies empirical standards, is to be preferred over the more traditional empiricist epistemology which fails to recognize its own androcentricity. True objectivity, it is argued, can only derive from the recognition that competing sets of values are operational in the social construction of knowledge. In contrast, feminist standpoint epistemology holds that the varied social conditions which contribute to the social construction of knowledge are not adequately taken into account by either the more traditional empiricist epistemology or feminist empiricism. More specifically, knowledge on the part of the oppressed is more privileged than is the knowledge of the oppressor, for the oppressed better understand and know the workings of the system of oppression than

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do the oppressors. This more complete understanding may ultimately lead to explanation, transformation, and emancipation. There may be considerable merit to further examining these more recent developments in empiricism in light of Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's work.

Lastly, Kierkegaard's and the later Wittgenstein's recognition of the differences between ordinary epistemic beliefs and religious beliefs raises an interesting question pertaining to epistemic claims on the part of religious believers: Is it possible that lack of toleration for religious beliefs and systems other than one's own stems from a basic epistemological confusion? Stated somewhat differently, is it possible that the pervasiveness of the objectivist, empiricist epistemology leads many to understand and interpret subjectivist religious beliefs from within a perspective which rightly is reserved for scientific knowledge? If one views religious claims as having the same force and certainty as do scientific claims, then one is more likely to assume that people with the "wrong" religious beliefs are being woefully unreasonable and ought be chastised for that. Investing a person who makes such an assumption with social and political power may lead to persecution.

In many respects this question wrestles with some of the same concerns as does feminist standpoint epistemology, but it raises these concerns from the standpoint of religious oppression. Research into the ecclesiastical documents from eras of religious persecution should reveal whether or not such a fundamental epistemic confusion exists. If such a confusion can be shown to exist, then again, such knowledge ultimately may lead to explanation, transformation, and emancipation.

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