

Language and Thought in Wittgenstein's Assessment of the Contemporary Occidental Civilization

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In the Biographical Sketch he wrote in 1954, three years after the death of Wittgenstein (1889-1951) at Cambridge, in England, Georg Henrik von Wright was one of the first philosophers who emphasized the importance of a now well known feature of his friend's philosophy, and of his relation to philosophy. Wittgenstein's influence on contemporary philosophy in general, and in Western world in particular, was as strong as his personal opinion on its possible reception was full of suspicion, not only in the context of contemporary philosophy, but of occidental culture in general. And it might be said that one, if not the main, root of the misunderstandings Wittgenstein had to deplore happened to be discovered, not only, as is often the case, in his tremendous originality, which is even today still far from being entirely disclosed to the posterity; but in one of the more striking traits of this new philosophy, and new way of philosophizing: the strong and paradoxical relation between a philosophy of logic, invested in a logician's work, and a philosophy of the « mystic », intended in a rather enigmatic, but certainly not positivistic, or even epistemological inquiry on the limits of language...Not only was he unsatisfied with the two main important schools of thought, that he both repudiated, logical positivism, or logical empiricism as illustrated in the Vienna Circle, and later developed in the north american tradition through men like Quine and his posterity; and the so called Cambridge School of analysis, and linguistic philosophy, from Strawson, Austin, Ryle to more recently M.Dummett and english analytical philosophy.

He was above all, and from the beginning of his philosophical writings, convinced of the existence of an organic relation between these two aspects of logical analysis of language which as strongly demands as it resists mathematical, or conceptual rigour, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as strongly aims to seize the real, concrete problems as it is indifferent to every form of treating them which would only reveal what he felt as a « lack of deep philosophical puzzlement ». One could even pretend that this organic relation between apparently contradictory aims of the philosophical inquiry may explain the now growing interest for his writings, from the part of the posterity of husserlian phenomenology, as it explained the influence of the *Tractatus* on the young Carnap, after he first discovered

Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, where he could have seen this same ambiguity, or this same tension between the submission to the given and the claim of scientific rigour. One could for the same reason be ready to admit that it is in this double inspiration, that we can see the strong unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy, as well as Husserl's, and that we are by the way able to dismiss the imputation of a diversity which would look like, as it did to Russell's eyes, an unfortunate renunciation of the first philosophy by the last one.

We would like to assume in our short presentation all this claims together in a simpler one, which could both sum them up and stress the paradoxical question we assumed to treat: If Von Wright was right in concluding his Sketch with the idea that « *In Wittgenstein many contrasts meet* », and that if one wants to use the too simple words of « *logician* » and « *mystic* » about him, one has to remember that they must be together, and not separately, true of Wittgenstein; if Von Wright was deeply right in concluding « *I have sometimes thought that what makes a man's work classic is often just this multiplicity, which invites and at the same time resists our craving for clear understanding* »¹, how can we understand Wittgenstein's assessment of occidental philosophical tradition as a whole, and his feeling of being both misunderstood and « *Vogelfrei* » in the present times, writing for people of a different culture? And would it be possible for his paradoxical opinion to receive an unexpected confirmation from the comparison with a philosophical style he could not be informed of, in a foreigner but strictly contemporary philosophy, the philosophy of the so called japanese Kyoto's school? (Nishida Kitaro 1870-1945) This last question does seem to me suggestive for the internal interpretation of Wittgenstein, and is not raised through circumstantial motivations, but will be left here in a programmatic and hypothetical state, for obvious reasons of time and still too poor acquaintance with Japanese philosophy.

Thought as Picture (Bildⁿ) of facts and plenitude of propositionnal sense in logical space.

The first, and most obvious conception of the relations between language and thought in the *Tractatus Logico*

Philosophicus (TTP), may be expressed as answering the logical question of the relation of thought to reality through language. It was Russell's interpretation in his Introduction (1922). It implies a kind of naïve realism as regards reality, assimilated to the realm of fact, and an assimilation of language to a logical one. «*The essential business of language is to assert or deny facts*» and «*Mr Wittgenstein is concerned with the conditions of a logically perfect language*»ⁱⁱⁱ. This logically perfect language, logical syntax or ideography in Fregean sense, being the only way of making clear the condition of accurate symbolism, that is one capable of showing what is common to the structure of the sentence and of the fact. Russell is here certainly right in saying that the last point, «*is perhaps the most fundamental thesis of Mr Wittgenstein's theory*»^{iv}. And it leads to the so called Picture theory, which has been recognized by a great majority of interpreters as the core of first Wittgenstein's philosophy.

If we read «*logical form*» as «*logical syntax*», and take the realm of fact for realm of reality, and consequently the limits of sense for those of factual, empirical sense, we shall obtain the first form of the so called logical empiricism, or logical positivism, as it was illustrated inside the Vienna Circle. A sharp and clear distinction is assumed between metaphysical non sense and correctly formed propositions as twofold, those which have an empirical content, and those with only formal content, that is tautologies and propositions of formal sciences, which, strictly speaking, say nothing.

We know that this is not exactly, and perhaps not at all, the genuine Wittgensteinian conception, since his author firmly rejected Russell's Introduction, and ten years later, invited by Schlick to discuss his theses in Vienna, had to clarify many misunderstandings on single points of the picture theory, and, finally, to put an end to the discussion. Carnap gave the clearest indications about this in his Autobiography, where he admits honestly to have been first under the illusion of a community of views and interest, which was at the origin of Wittgenstein's invitation, and to have in the course of the meetings with Schlick first understood that the philosophical motivations were different, and even opposite, specially as regards the relation to metaphysics; and secondly that even on points of detail and technical significance, neither the picture theory nor the theory of «*sinnlos*» propositions, in logic or in mathematics could be identified with the main theses of his own or the Circle. Why? A clear explanation of these differences would engage the whole interpretation of the first philosophy of Wittgenstein.

We will choose only two points: the concept of «*Bild*» (Picture) in his relation to thought, and not only, nor first, to

empirical facts, and the concept of logical «*Bild*» as unspeakable condition of sense.

Firstly, the concept of Picture is introduced by Wittgenstein in the course of propositions given as commentaries of 2: «*What is the case, the fact, (Tatsache) is the existence (Bestehen) of states of affairs (Sachverhalten).*» And it is the first plain number commentary 2.1. «*Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen*» («*We picture facts to ourselves*»). 2.2 will say «*Das Bild hat mit dem Abgebildeten die Logische Form der Abbildung gemein*» («*A picture has logico pictorial form in common with what it depicts*»). The analysis of the implications of propositions 2 leads to the next group, propositions 3, which first identify thought and picture: 3 «*Das logische Bild der Tatsachen ist der Gedanke*» («*The logical picture of the fact is the thought*»), then signs in general and propositionally signs in particular to the sensible medium of thought: 3.1 «*Im Satz drückt sich der Gedanke sinnlich wahrnehmbar aus. (In proposition a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by senses)*», and finally introduces in the groups in 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 the conditions for the logical picture of reality through the reference to the 'things' and their names, conditions of determination of sense; and through the reference of a necessary disjunction between names and propositions as regards describing and naming, and a necessary contextualization of names in propositions; it is then possible to introduce the fundamental concept of «*logical space*» and «*logical place*»: 3.4 «*Der Satz bestimmt einen Ort im logischen Raum*» («*The proposition determines a place in logical space*»), immediately commented in 3.41 «*The propositional sign with logical coordinates: that is logical place.*» The Treatise then offers in the fourth group an analysis of the identification of thought to «*sinnvoller Satz*» (proposition with sense): proposition 4. «*Der Gedanke ist der sinnvolle Satz*», 4001 «*The totality of propositions is language*»

We choose to stress only the following points, among many others that could be invoked through these texts against the positivistic or naïve realistic reading.

- 1) 2.1 comes after a succession of propositions noted 2.0, which cover the major part of propositions 2. These propositions give the elements for what will appear as the really unspeakable logical form of the world, and subsequently should be rather evoked than stipulated, which could be an explanation for the still mysterious notation with zero. This unspeakable theory is that of «*logical space*» as it will later appear in relation to propositionally symbols. It appears as soon as in

1.13 «*The facts in logical space are the world*»

This logical space is a space of possible, non real, and certainly not empirical relations between things and facts, and facts and states of affairs. And the concept of picture will be coherent with Wittgenstein's insistence on articulated, virtual, and non substantial sense, as inherited from Frege's *Sinn* » and Herz's *Mechanics* . Its model is rather geometrical than visual space.

- 2) If a strong sense has, nevertheless, to be given to the reality, here, it approaches more the metaphysical view assumed in propositions 2 about « things », virtual but substantial, (2.021) unalterable (2.026) independent (2.0122) and simple (2.02), at least as absolute requisits of determination of sense (3.23) , even if never given through empirical and immediately given examples.
- 3) Even if the fourth group of propositions will assume a critic of the transcendental subject, which has sense for Wittgenstein in the realm of will, not of knowledge, and even if he will assimilate to a large extent thought and language , as is clear in 4, one must not forget that he introduces the concept of picture with a « we », and, if we look at technical detail of the theory, we shall see that the logical form of representation, which is common to every picture, as well as the particular forms of representation which specify pictures as spatial, coloured etc, strongly imply the possibility of a system of forms, which has to be complete if the picture is to work. And this system which prevents symbols to be substantial or deictic in a naïve sense, is conceived as a form of anticipation of sense which has to be used, to be related to methods of projection, for being « pictural ». Wittgenstein will defend through his entire lifetime the idea that philosophy and logic are an activity, not a doctrine ; and that in this nevertheless surprising activity which can't discover nothing and can't meet no surprise ,lies the condition for a sign to be living, to be thought. It is true that Thought in 4 is the proposition, and doesn't need a subjective instance of constitution in the kantian sense. And the transcendental «*Ich*» will be discarded in the propositions 4 and 5 to the benefit of a logical concept of the subject as limit of a world., But there is no life in a sign devoid of his conditions of use, and, even, devoid of effective use. If proposition is thought, in 4 we have to remember 3.5, the proposition just preceding in the text «*Das angewandte, gedachte, Satzzeichen ist der Gedanke.* » (*A propositionnal sign, applied and thought out, is a thought* »

Secondly, and to a large extent as a consequence of the preceding conceptions, the concept of *Bild* as logical *Bild* reveals itself as largely different from that of «logical syntax», or ideal language if understood as well in the realistic, and so called platonist style of the first Russell's philosophy of logic as in the empirical manner of the Vienna Circle. We have a clear sign of this difference in the wittgensteinian rejection of a logical meta language. Not that he would not be aware of the technical possibilities that Russell as soon as 1922 in his Introduction, and Carnap in a more radically new technical sense in his great LSS were to consider and realize in the field of logic. But he had philosophical reasons for this rejection , rooted in the picture theory, and exactly at the point that Russell mentions about the unspeakable character of the logical form, which «*can, in his phraseology, only be shown, not said.*»^v The use of the word « phraseology » and the explanation Russell seems to think to be the right one , clearly indicate how far he was really from Wittgenstein's conception of the opposition between saying and showing,

And that for philosophical as well logical reasons, which could be both related to differences in the appreciation of the limits of thought as embracing vacuity as well plenitude of sense.

These reasons will be so more evident in the second part of our exposition, as will be perhaps more perceptible than about pure logic and theory of scientific knowledge a possible comparison with japanese philosophy. We might however suggest , at the end of this first movement, a first kind of « family resemblance » between the wittgensteinian philosophical « form of life » and the one we may try to understand in the one illustrated in the style of Nishida: First a common critic of the notion of experience as dogmatically invested by the transcendental forms of theory of knowledge on the model of scientific objectivity, and a common sensibility to the phenomenological inspection of the given, both under its husserlian form and in the manner of Fechner, Wundt and James . James we know for having been one of the emphatically stressed references of Wittgenstein. From this point of view the way of projecting logical space on the reality of a world of things is intended as a conciliation between the reality of the given, the concrete, and the new tools offered by logic to capture this effectivity *a priori*. Even if the new logic of the predicate as assumed by Nishida reveals largely pre fregean, it might be suggested that there could exist a convergence between his logic of places and that of logical space. And specially if, as we may now see, logical space is in Wittgenstein's philosophy as much intended as the medium of an Ethics assimilated to an Aesthetics ,and the unspeakable substitute of a theology, as a

formalist, or structuralist, contribution to what he sees as characteristic of occidental science and philosophy of science and progress.

Thought as unspeakable and vacuity of sense

The concept of logical space and picture theory are invested in Wittgenstein's philosophy of a very ambitious function, and would rather be parts of Theology or Ethics than of a philosophy of logic interpreted as a theory of knowledge or a language for scientific thought. It would be those parts if it could be expressible in words. And it is, on the contrary, this inexpressibility which is shown, in a negative and finally silent way, as both the main result and intention of the Treatise.

This inexpressibility is more radical than the kantian form of a critic of metaphysical thought, since there is no distinction to do between thought and language, and no place is left for a philosophy of the limits of knowledge which could be thought and, then, expressible in language. It is also intended in a more radical sense than in some forms of more speculative metaphysics, since it will not be suggested, in the language itself, by a process of negation of contents of thought in the manner of ancient « negative theologies ». It will be really not written at all. And it has been often noted that Wittgenstein will even drastically reduce the part of the speakable as regards this speculative motivation, when he passes from the *Note books* 1914-1918 to the ultimate redaction of TTP. And yet, as he wrote in a letter to Ficker^{vi} (1919), his intention was indeed of a speculative or at least ethical kind, and it is this not written part of his work which is, to his own judgement, the important thing. Why, then, express his philosophical thinking in such a logical, mathematical, and at the same time prosaic way as it may be condemned to misunderstanding? Why, admitting that Ficker will not understand and will believe that the content is for him quite unfamiliar, did he not directly give the « key », as he says, as regards the core to the work, i.e. that it is a book whose meaning is an ethical one?

The answer is given in the same letter and in another written a few days before: Wittgenstein intended to write a presentation of a system, and we may hear that exactly in the kantian sense of a completely closed and innerly determinate totality. And it is only under that condition that a not written part can be expressed, even if not speakable, since it will be shown as the reverse, or the limit of the speakable sense. This ideal of rigour, will be able to give to the propositions of Ethics not only a better shield against sceptical attacks of morality, as Kant had thought about the necessity of a critic of dogmatic theory. It

will offer a better guarantee since it will be able to « draw limits of Ethics from the interior ». And Wittgenstein added that for him it was the only rigorous way of drawing these limits^{vii}.

Is it not impossible that he was here reflecting a widely spread opinion in German and Austrian philosophy at the end of nineteenth century as regards practical philosophy. For all the differences existing between Husserl in *Krisis*, the young Carnap and Wittgenstein, a common lack of confidence in the powers of rationalism as shown in the great systems of German Idealism, and a deep sensibility toward « the darkness of the time » could explain that he might have considered an extension of content in the field of practical knowledge outside the realm of experience as a form of « transcendental chattering »^{viii}. So, even if, contrary to Carnap, or Schlick, he was sad, and not liberated, when noticing this weakness in Metaphysics, since the latter remained for him, as for Kant, like a beloved person, despite all its faults, he could not find any material, speakable place in his philosophy for Ethics, Theology and all that he names « The higher », and even qualifies as « transcendental », and was compelled to this extreme form of speculative asceticism which has to be satisfied with the form, and never with expressible content of thought.

As regards this strange and drastic form of negative Ethics, Ontology and Theology, the picture theory and the conception of logical form show themselves particularly interesting. And we have both to meet a new sense of the relation between language and thought in the realm of « *sinnvoll* » propositions, which stresses the difference between what is shown, expressed as shown, not speakable, and what is said, that is thought; and to distinguish here between two other modes of relation of thought to language, which correspond respectively to « *sinnlos* » propositions, in the realm of theoretical and objective knowledge, and to the expression of a sense given to the world as a whole, as it is from the theological or ethical point of view.

Inside the realm of ordinary propositions, whose model of expressivity is the expression of the real facts, or the world as it is, the distinction between what is shown and what is said is introduced with the very idea of logical form. That form, which is the condition of possibility of every structure in the objective expression, and which commands the possibility of every method of projection of a sense in symbolism, cannot itself be described nor projected. And that is not so for the motive given by Russell when he comments this « phraseology » of the « *shown* », that is because we will need a language with the same structure for expressing it.

The problem here is not a logical one, of the form of a *regressio ad infinitum*. And as we saw in last part of our exposition, the logical problem would have been one for a form of universalism in logic, as Russell's, Wittgenstein's or the first Carnap's. It would find a solution within the theory of the second Carnap, and the internalization of syntax. And Wittgenstein did mention in his correspondence with Russell that he was misunderstood. The problem was a metaphysical one, and it is not limited to pictorial expression *via* a language.

The form of representation (*Form der Abbildung*) can't be represented, depicted, by any sort of picture, as well coloured, spatial as logical (2.172). If it could, it would be equivalent to the possibility, obviously absurd, for it to place itself outside representational form (2.173). The picture can only display its pictorial form («*er weist sie auf 2.172*») And Wittgenstein might here be in affinity with the ideas of Paul Klee on *Gestalt* and *Gestaltung* in painting. As regards logical form, the problem is the same. The method of projection is not itself represented, but since the logical form is defined by a space of possibilities of truth or falsity, the propositional sign as projection of a possible situation (*Sachlage*), that is the thought, can't contain the content of his sense, it contains uniquely its form, that is the possibility of expressing it (3.13). The case is different, and symmetric, with names, representatives of objects (3.22) which can only be named, not described, but representing both form and content (2.025). But this projection gives the possibility to represent a sense (*darstellen*) and not only to show it. This mode of representation is a logical one, as is clear in the case of propositional calculus. A proposition *shows* its sense, that is how are the things if it is true, and *it says* that so they stand. In one case it is related to a *Sachlage*, in the other to the *Tatsache* (4.022). It does not show its logical form in the same sense, since here it can't «*darstellen*»: «*Proposition cannot represent (Darstellen) logical Form; it is mirrored in it*

What expresses itself in language we cannot express by means of language

Proposition shows the logical form of reality

It displays it (Er weist sie aus)» (4.121) And it is that last kind of «*showing*» which is absolute and irreducible to meta linguistic formal procedures.

This distinction between sense and form will be now of central importance as regards «*sinnlos*» propositions, that is not absurd (*unsinnig*) propositions, but propositions whose sense is only formal. They are strictly vacuous from the point of view of empirical content. However something is shown about the world as a whole through this vacuity. They are vacuous since they show only a form which is a limiting

case of combination of signs (4.466). That is the case of tautologies and contradictions (4.461) «*Propositions show what they say: tautologies and contradictions show that they say nothing*» (ibid) They can't be pictures of reality since they can't represent any possible situation, as admitting all, or none, possible situation, (4.462). They can be models, that is like bodies limiting freedom of movement of others, or limited spaces giving places to bodies, since tautology «*leaves open to reality the whole, the infinite whole, of logical space, and contradiction fills it leaving no point to reality*» (4.463). And, like the zero in a symbolism, or the form of a representative net for objects, they are not «*unsinnig*», they show something of the form of representation of the totality of states of affairs, as it is clear on propositional calculus.

The disjunction between form and sense will at last illuminate the nature of the important unwritten, and silent part of Wittgensteinian philosophy, as it regards sense, and not only form, but not empirical sense. If the first part of our presentation insisted on the «*phenomenological*», not empiricist aspect of the given, in *sinnvoll* propositions, regarding now the Wittgensteinian form of formal ontology, we could plausibly insist on the claim of completeness and totality as constitutive of being, which would indicate an aspiration to an ontology of immanence, concreteness and effectiveness of the sense. Let us try to show it rapidly.

If tautologies and contradictions of propositional calculus seem to offer a substitute of transcendental subject for the realm of knowledge, and if the form of the experience as totality and as singularity must collapse in the same non transcendental sense of the self, the *Ich* «*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.*» (5.64), and if it is the only way of giving a non psychological sense to the theoretical subject, it is because the whole logical space might be the metaphysical condition for finite objective worlds as well as for the expansion of a free and living use of language and thought. But this movement of thought through the whole of logical space is shown in the group of propositions 6, which treat of the general form of proposition as generating this space. Contradiction and tautologies are seen here, as respectively the «*outer limit of proposition, vanishing outside them all, and as the insubstantial point at their centre, vanishing inside them*». (5.143).

This orientation of the proposition towards an infinite logical space (3.42) could be, and has been, distinguished of the force and totalisation of finite totalities of sense. It could

evoke the living infinite thought that Wittgenstein had named the first deity, God, in *The Note Book*, the second one being the subject of the will: « *How things stand, is God. God is how things stand* » (1-8-16) and « *The general form of proposition is: This is how things stand* » (4.5). In these texts and many others, in *The Note Books* or propositions 6 of TTP, the elevation of thought to this higher point of view, in which could collapse the most concrete experience and the sense of absolute, the « mystic » is defined as « *Das Gefühl der Welt als begrenztes Ganzes* », feeling the world as a limited whole (6.45) It is no more the limited form of the world which is in question, but its sense, which can't be in the world as is the sense of individual facts, and which can't be shown in this factual sense (4.022: both showing how things are *wie es sich verhält* if it is true) and asserting that it is true. Speaking of the totality of the world as a limited whole is not a question of « how » is the world, but that it is « *Gott offenbart sich nicht in der Welt* » He can't reveal himself as being the sense of this totality, he is outside the world as a factual reality, as « *the facts in logical space* » (1.13)

As regards the last group of unspeakable thoughts which could evoke a sense of the life, and be the silent substitute of Ethics and Aesthetics considered as identical, it is connected with another view of the totality, and the *Note Books* are more explicit on that point than TTP. Identity of the two parts of philosophy of sense of totality is relied with the idea of vision *sub specie aeterni*, of the artistic object as well as the good life taken as a world, seen from a higher thought, as a limited wholes in the infinite space. So does Wittgenstein's philosophy of the higher tend to a forceful and strange unification of a spinozist conception of infinite substance as immanent to Nature, and of beatitude as infinite acceptance of what it is as it is, and a Schopenhauer like conception of the of the preeminence of subject of will on that of representation, which seems to claim new powers for subjective thought, in the context of a pessimistic and sceptical conception of reality and being as a whole. If not concluded as in the Mauthner's manner, discarded in TTP 4.0031, by a sort of suicide of thought in language, the wittgensteinian conception of philosophy as a critic of language seems to choose the ways of silence for his speculative aspirations, theoretical as well practical. And even if that silence is only heard inside the words of language as is music between the notes, he clearly suggested that this ideal of serenity let him very lonely and misunderstood in the context of contemporary occidental philosophy. We would like to suggest, in a last part, which will be used as well as conclusion of our presentation that,

on this point at least, Wittgenstein could have spared himself the distress of his tormented soul.

Is occidental philosophy really challenged by a logical philosophy of silence ?

Wittgenstein was convinced of what he named in the Preface of P.U « *der Finsternis dieser Zeit* », gloom or darkness of our time. And he happened to express a very strong feeling of aversion, or at least indifference to the spirit of the « *main stream of the european and american civilization* », as he says in a text written in 1930 for a Preface to his *Philosophical Remarks*^x. For him industry, architecture, music, fascism and socialism of this time were expression of this spirit. He was convinced that he could be understood only by friendly brothers of his. And on the contrary he marked a clear conscience that this civilization might be the context of his work, but that it was unacquainted with it. « *Our civilization is characterized by the word « progress » . Progress is its form, the fact that it progresses it is not only one of his properties. It is typically constructive. Its activity consists in constructing always more complicated structures. Even clarity is just used for that aim, it is not to itself its own aim. For me on the contrary, clarity, limpidity, is to itself its own aim.*

I am not interested in raising a building, but in having limpid in front of me the foundations of possible buildings »^x). In the definitive version of the Preface he would give shorter and deeper formulation of the contrast between the two sorts of spirit (*Geist*) « *One expresses itself in a progress, a construction of always bigger and more complicate structures, the other in an effort towards always more clarity and limpidity in structure. One grasps the world through its periphery, its multiplicity, the other in its center, its essence.. So one orders constructions one upon another and climbs from level to level always farther, as the other remains where it is, and wants to grasp always the same.* »^{xi} As the first spirit was according to him the predominant one in present times, Wittgenstein sometimes thought and said that he would be understood only in a distant future or that he « *wrote properly for friend scattered on the four corners of the world* »^{xii}

On the basis of the simple points just selected by us in his philosophy of language and thought, we would like to ask three last question, by way of conclusion.

1. Would it be possible to find some points of comparison between this conception and that of a friend, unknown to him, and living in the countries of the rising sun, Nishida Kitaro ? We suggested some at the end of our first part. We could add that a certain

form of serenity as linked with confucianist and buddhist tradition as well as a common interest in Schopenhauer's metaphysik and in a philosophy of silence as the active way of seeking the solution of the problem of life in its vanishing, might confirm this suggestion.

2. Was Wittgenstein right in thinking that he was so lonely within europaischen, if not american philosophy ? He certainly knew that his solitude was that of a survivor, and he could not, and did not, condemn the whole european tradition on the motive of a supposed devotion to progress and lack of metaphysical or ontological problems. The same problems and cravings for metaphysic that distinguished him from both logical positivists and analysts of ordinary language .Was his final speculative scepticism a necessary answer for a man who defended Schopenhauer against Carnap, but in his last Note Books deplores his superficiality^{xiii} ? Couldn't he have found in german idealism the intellectual tools for his demand of a philosophy of activity and courage even, and first, in theoretical matters ? The oriental tradition did not prevent Nishida to do so.
3. If the solitude and distres he confessed was induced in Europe by the shade of nihilism, we know that Wittgenstein wrote in the same Preface of 1930 that he might have written that his book was written to the glory of God, but that it would be dishonest in the present times. So did he give in the Preface only an ethical formulation of its ideal of a good will as a duty for philosophical expression. And we have a testimony of this nostalgia in a recollection of his friend and student, Drury, who remembers Wittgenstein quoting, one evening not long before his death, the inscription that Bach wrote on the title page of his *Little Organ Book* «*To the glory of the most high God, and that my neighbor may be benefited thereby*», and, pointing to his pile of manuscript ,saying «*That is what I would like to have been able to say about my own work*»^{xiv}. If

Wittgenstein was not born in the last years of the austrian empire but in the first decades of Meiji, and if he had approached German idealism through the original text of Hegel and not, as may be Nishida, at least in the beginnings of his work , through the books of Thomas Green, he might have been ready for the rapid assimilation of both positivist, hegelian, husserlian and heideggerian philosophy that his great japanese contemporary intended to perform. It is not sure, it is rather highly questionable that he could have succeeded to do so without renouncing the logical conception of God as the absolute necessity of being and freedom which compels to choose between nihilism and rationalism in philosophy.

Notes

- i. G.H.Von Wright .*Biographical Sketch*, in *Ludwig Wittgenstein, A Memoir*, by N.Malcolm Oxford University Press, 1958,p.22. The text has been published separately for the first time in 1954
- ii. We shall here quote the T.T.P. in the english translation by Pears and Mac Guinness, even if it is sometimes misleading.
- iii. Russell's Introduction to the TTP, May 1922, in the ,first edition of the translation, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961, p.X.
- iv. Ibid.
- v. Ibid..
- vi. This letter was published in *Prototactatus* 1969,Oxford, and in a french translation in *Revue Sud*, 1986
- vii. Loc.cit., pp.15-16. and p.219.
- viii. «*transzendentes Geschwätz* », Letter to Engelmann, 16-1-18, Blackwell, Oxford, 1967, p.12.
- ix. This text was published in *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1977, pp.20 sqq. and in a german french edition in 1984, *Remarques Mêlées*,pp.15 sqq
- x. Loc.cit., p. 22 and p .16.
- xi. *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, Suhrkamp, and Blackwell 1964.
- xii. *V.B.*, p.21 and *Remarques Mêlées*, p.16.
- xiii. *V.B.*, 1939-1940, in *V.B.*, p.74 and *Remarques Mêlées*, p.48.
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