

# Wittgenstein and the Demystification of Art and Art Rituals

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**Abstract:** The criteria of Wittgenstein’s theories on demystification through art and rituals are inexact; in the realm where the Form of the Good dwells it is impossible to even dimly see and testify to the logical clarification of thought (catharsis). The reason for this impossibility is that catharsis is a biological procedure; which means that it concerns solely the physical, not the mental. Expanding further this idea as regards the use of language that implements catharsis, Wittgenstein maintains that communication signs alone play no part (hence neither do apprehension nor sense impressions) in a language which is disconnected from patterns of relationship that explain life and reality. To pay attention to these signs is to understand merely what happens – not what really is. To transmit them means to apprehend only their patterns – not what lies behind these patterns. And that was exactly, following Aristotle, what the initiates of the rituals as regards the form of the Good, were dedicated to. Their aim was not to grasp the Truth but to experience it through passion, thus putting themselves in a condition to dedicate themselves to its realisation. Plato, on the other hand, thought these rituals were qualified by sophistry. This process does function, however, not only cathartically at the level of thought, but also therapeutically, as healing the evils of times and physical evils and passions. Aeschylus’ lesson: that learning is brought about through passion solely, clearly foreshadows Wittgenstein’s demystifying ideas on the healing functions of parallel learning procedures.

**Keywords:** Wittgenstein’s Theology; Aristotle; Plotinus; Philosophy of Science; Culture; Aesthetics.

## Outlook

WITTGENSTEIN’S SPECIAL KIND OF BELIEF has been very much ignored nowadays. Except from Marjorie Perloff’s *Private Notebooks: 1914-1916 Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Norton, 2022), her *Wittgenstein’s Ladder Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*, (Chicago University Press, 1999), T.E. Burke’s *Questions of Belief* (Avebury, 1995), R. B. Braithwaite’s ‘An empiricist’s

view of the nature of religious belief', in *The Philosophy of Religion*, 72-91, ed. by B. Mitchell (Oxford University Press, 1971, and D.Z. Phillips, 'Religious Beliefs and Language Games', 121-142, *loc.cit. The Philosophy of Religion*; research which gets at precisely the "logical impossible" in the Wittgensteinian sense, is rare and much too little is done on Wittgenstein and Plato/Aristotle, say. What follows the history of my topic is the argument about my contribution. Wittgenstein has stressed the idea that what lives by argument perishes by argument summoning the logically impossible, the unknown realm of intellectual values.

So, despite appearances to the contrary, more than simply determining whether the truth values of statements of fact are fulfilled or not, we need to supplement our inductive means with the inexplicable, with concepts from the realm of the unknown, according to Wittgenstein. This means that we cannot establish the truth of unrestricted generalisations by empirical means, that we have to supplement them with concepts from the realm of the unknown, to furnish sufficient inductive means, according to Wittgenstein. These fuel, however, both the unwillingness to undertake the logically impossible in our pursuit of truth, on the one hand, and the attainment of the Absolute through the commonplace, on the other. My work links to the impasse which this contrast suggests, as what can be very dimly understood here is that we can be committed to realising the possibilities implied in the unknown realm of values. This means that we cannot push this line of thought further here without mentioning Wittgenstein's puzzle solution, which entails a fragile understanding of the mental absorbed into the physical.

Wittgenstein aims at the logical catharsis (elucidation, clarification) of the content of thought. This means that human beings should adopt such ranges of concepts as to make sense of what really is. As imperfect human beings we necessarily lack a recognizable concept of the ideal, of the world as it really is. The concept of God, in Wittgenstein's sense of the term, forms an idea, which we unconditionally value. Our appeal to it stresses our summoning the inexplicable. Wittgenstein acknowledges that over and above explanation of the world there is something more, which does not fall within our secular ways of thought, within our conceptual range, and must be left unexplained. It cannot be conceptualised or articulated. It cannot stand for anything we are constrained by reason to accept. Paradoxically, it is in the light of this vulnerable situation that our experience of the world no longer strikes us as meaningless. Thus the concept of God can allow the catharsis of the ranges of concepts, as to make sense of the world. Wittgenstein certainly has tried in vain to determine such a conceptual range with scope for expansion from what merely happens (the sensible) to what really is (the intelligible).<sup>1</sup> If, according to this picture, his theory of meaning is intended to fulfil the same purpose in the realm of art, then

<sup>1</sup> Giouli, "The True Objects", 44.

why does he warn us not to search for justification<sup>2</sup> as regards the realm of the intelligible? The question can easily be resolved if applied in the realm of art, because, paradoxically, the intelligible can be understood in secular terms alone. Referring to the pursuit of intelligible values through the commonplace is a possibility in Wittgenstein. Thus, following Wittgenstein, our knowledge of what really exists in the realm of the intelligible has a vital relevance to our dealings with the everyday world. Hence, we can certainly acknowledge the inexplicable only through the commonplace and thus be at peace.<sup>3</sup> Clearly the demystifying tools and trends for so doing are better implemented in the field of art than in that of philosophy.

## **Wittgenstein's Demystification of Art and Rituals in the History of Ideas**

What we are looking for here is to locate Wittgenstein's demystifying attempts to pursue the Form of the Good in the history of ideas. If we look back at a line of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*,<sup>4</sup> we shall see that the deity's role in history seems to be limited (to be limited *ab extra*) since it cannot show, nor inspire the man committing *hybris* (an impious and arrogant act) to follow the predetermined historical itinerary to which the deity, itself, leads. Man, himself must take responsibility even in what is so much a predetermined "course of action": the old sin loves, Aeschylus avers, when the predestined time comes, to bring forth new sin. This constitutes an unavoidable cycle of the repetition of evil. Justice, however, counterbalances this cycle and prevents the historical events in their spatio-temporal order from degenerating, i.e. from coming to an end. Human beings, even if they have little chance of determining their historical itinerary, as set *ab extra*, and being conscious of it, of their errors and their sins, do not hesitate to proceed towards such a determination. The expression of such bravery and courage, one could add, implies not only the freedom of Man throughout his struggle to determine his destiny, but also his tragic nature when extrinsic powers overwhelm him and his historical itinerary.

Aeschylus' often-quoted dictum that we learn solely by our mistakes<sup>5</sup> (or *πάθει μάθος*) is pertinent here, having had a tremendous impact in the history of ideas.

But Justice turns the balance scales,  
sees that we suffer  
and we suffer and we learn.

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<sup>2</sup> *Culture and Value*, 29 and 32. Giouli, *How is Social Science Possible*, 233 and n. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Burke, *Questions of Belief*, 50. Giouli, "Psychology".

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, ll 750-781. Toynbee, *A Study*, IV, 266 and n. 1. Giouli, *The Taming*, 39-40 and n. 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Agamemnon*, 177ff and 250. Giouli, *Punishment*, 19 and n. 15. Nussbaum, *Fragility*, 47.

His dictum recalls Aristotle's dictum on those who are being initiated at the Eleusis Mysteries.<sup>6</sup>

...as Aristotle claims that those who are being initiated are not to learn anything but to experience something and be put into a certain condition...

Aristotle here refers to the ritual which connects in action – not in theory – that initiation with the initiation into the realm of artistic performances on the stage of a theatre. The link between ritual and theatre in Aristotle's reference is clear as regards his statements that theatrical art ceases to be merely an incantatory procedure aiming to console us for the evils of our time and becomes a cognitive process. Aristotle's idea of staged myths used in this way stresses how little can be done as regards the realisation of some such modern policies and management, if we ignore the importance of theatre as a political institution. Aristotle believes<sup>7</sup> that principles that can be taught and explanations of how desired results are produced, can only be found in theatrical communication and teaching.

Aristotle uses the words of Aeschylus to acknowledge the inexplicable as a call or an invitation in Ancient Greek Tragedy. No form of knowledge can be attained without suffering and passion (*πάθει*), and the learning we can only very dimly perceive. Aristotle refers solely to experience here; not to the possibility of knowledge of the form of the Good. Wittgenstein shares Aristotle's concern and aims at catharsis with the conceptual apparatus implemented by the theatrical ritual of performing the Good and its Form. The way Aristotle demystifies the initiative taken by the participants in these rituals, whether Eleusinian or theatrical, is very similar to that of Wittgenstein. The example of a Byzantine Liturgy can be used as a parallel with Ancient Greek Tragedy.<sup>8</sup> We have in this conception of Liturgy two choruses with leaders engaged in dialogue using antiphony; also, with "passageways" by which the leaders make their entrances and exits in the sacred place, as happens on the stage of a theatre. A cathartic light was, during a ritual, conveyed by ships from the temple of Delos to the island of Lemnos in ancient times; the same happened in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC from Delphi to Athens. This "renewed" light foreshadows the Holy Light in the Byzantine Liturgy.<sup>9</sup> The great philosopher, Pythagoras, is said to have visited the temple of Zeus at the Idaean Cave, located on the eastern slopes of Mount Psiloritis, above the plateau of Nida, in Crete. This is the cave in

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *F 15 R3* (*Synesius*, Dio 48A): καθάπερ Ἀριστοτέλης ἀξιοῖ τοὺς τελουμένους οὐ μαθεῖν τί δεῖν, ἀλλὰ παθεῖν καὶ διατεθῆναι, δηλονότι γενομένους ἐπιτηδείους.

<sup>7</sup> Nussbaum, *Fragility*, 97.

<sup>8</sup> Giannaras, *Τα καθ'εαυτόν*, 185.

<sup>9</sup> Sakellarakis, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 50.

which, according to the excavations of Prof. John Sakellarakis (1936-2010),<sup>10</sup> the greatest Greek god, Zeus, grew up. In his pilgrimage, Pythagoras is said to have remained for twenty-seven days, changing his clothing from black into white, and writing an epigram for Zeus' tomb.

This tradition saves the ritual of initiates as regards, firstly, the demonstration of the throne symbol. Plato comments on the enthronement of the newly initiated at the mysteries of the Corybantes.<sup>11</sup> These comments are answers to the enthronement process, which is accompanied by dancing and sport. According to Plato, the initiates go through the first part of a "sophistical" ritual. These parts of learning, Plato adds,<sup>12</sup> are not serious: for if a man had all that sort of knowledge that ever was, he would not be at all the wiser; he would only be able to play with men, tripping them up and over setting them with distinctions of words. Adding to the point of Wittgenstein's idea of our inability to tackle the issue of distinctions, Plato thought these rituals were qualified by sophistry.

It is in the *Euthydemus* dialogue that inquiring into a good life by the young is used by Plato in contradistinction to what sophistry considers as inquiring into a "wise" life, which, in turn, is not only misleading but also embarrassing for the young.<sup>13</sup> We understand that, according to Plato, the powers of Socratic *aporia* that made people regard Socrates as the most formidable arguer,<sup>14</sup> are absent from a sophistry that inquires into the "wise" life. This is the reason why the initiation ritual was sophistical from Plato's point of view.

However, the above-mentioned tradition also saves the ritual of initiates as regards, secondly, of what can be articulated and executed as pageant. This form of worship has also been testified by Euripides, the other tragic poet, in a choral passage from his lost tragedy "The Cretans".<sup>15</sup> The Chorus' participants address king Minos and are referred to as the initiates of the Idaean Zeus. In the same passage the Cretans appear to be proud of the pure and virtuous life they lead, as they avoid eating meat and wear white clothes, in order to renew the holy light. Tradition testifies also that Plato referred to Minos' miraculously receiving the State Laws from Zeus in the above-mentioned cave in Crete.<sup>16</sup> The sacred vessels which were found in the excavations in Crete, dating from the first half of the second millennium BC, are similar to those ritual vessels later found in Eleusis.<sup>17</sup>

These examples indicate catharsis as the purpose of ritual in art and intellectual life; catharsis constitutes solely an experience according to

<sup>10</sup> *Digging for the Past*, 171ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Euthydemus*, 277 d.

<sup>12</sup> *Euthydemus*, 278 b-c.

<sup>13</sup> Notomi, *Plato's Sophist*, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Notomi, *Plato's Sophist*, 62.

<sup>15</sup> Sakellarakis, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 61.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Aristotle – not the pure knowledge of the intelligible. One can also refer to Nietzsche who stresses the ritual of ancient Greek theatre which combines the apollonian element of the realm of the intelligible with the Dionysian element of the secular realm.<sup>18</sup>

Myths also are important both to reveal the essence of ancient Greek religion and to better study the personifications of Apollo and Dionysus.<sup>19</sup> The way in which they were reconstructed by the ancient Greek poets to serve their plots is also of great interest.<sup>20</sup> The use of ritual in these writings is fully developed alongside religious rules<sup>21</sup> in order to implement catharsis. Priests often act in female clothing to make catharsis effective.<sup>22</sup> Some terrifying figures in ancient Greek religion foreshadow the Furies of ancient Greek Tragedy. They can repel evil when they are turned into Eumenides.<sup>23</sup> During excavations, figures of a war deity descending from the sky with a shield in the form of number eight have been found. The number eight is a symbol of worship.<sup>24</sup> This figure has a parallel with the “Deus ex machina” figure in ancient Greek tragedy. The so-called initiates are said, according to tradition (written or oral), to be able to see life and reality in an enhanced manner compared to that of the non-initiates. We can understand at this point how Wittgenstein could have considered the world of the believers as resembling the world of a happy man.<sup>25</sup> This simply means that the conceptual apparatus of those believers could have been extended from seeing merely what happens to seeing what might happen. This extension is traced in Wittgenstein, despite the fact that these possibilities lie altogether outside the competence of the proof-gamers. As we have seen in the passage quoted from *Culture and Value*,<sup>26</sup> every argument there is always a counter-argument. Hence, Wittgenstein can fitly be considered an Apostle for the impossible – though certainly not a mystic.<sup>27</sup>

Every theatrical performance and every artistic performance have distant roots in cathartic acts. The great tragic poet, Sophocles, is said to have been in 420 BC Athens a priest in the health-temple of a local celebrated hero and a doctor at the same time, who was called Amynos.<sup>28</sup> *Katharmos* in ancient Greek religion is not connected with magic but with healing, a familiar, well-used philosophical method according to Wittgenstein. An

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 56–57.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 42–43.

<sup>20</sup> Moutsopoulos, “Myth”.

<sup>21</sup> Sakellarakis, *op. cit.*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–37.

<sup>25</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.43.

<sup>26</sup> 29.

<sup>27</sup> Hintikka & Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, 68.

<sup>28</sup> Sakellarakis, *op. cit.*, 48.

individual called a pharmakós (φαρμακός)<sup>29</sup> in Ancient Greek religion was the human scapegoat or victim in the ritual. The word *φαρμακός* derives from the expression for a remedy with poison. In Aristotle's texts, catharsis is a biological procedure;<sup>30</sup> a pleasant purgation that follows the passion and suffering of the heroes in tragedy.<sup>31</sup> The necessity for catharsis signifies a quite absurd text of Aristotle in which we read that the only people who are happy are those who are dead.<sup>32</sup>

## **Juxtaposition of Wittgenstein's Ideas with Plotinus' Competing Theory**

What could Plotinus, (204/5 – 270 CE) a philosopher in the Hellenistic tradition, born and raised in Roman Egypt, have told us about the rituals performed in art and those forming part of the Mysteries? Plotinus, said to have been initiated into the Eleusis mysteries, claims that neither the hands nor the eyes of an artist play an important role in artistic creation. It is solely the artist's participation in the creative procedure that matters.<sup>33</sup> Can this dictum of his be seen as demonstration of what Wittgenstein says about the difference between the world of the initiate and the world of the non-initiate? The above-mentioned dictum certainly points to the sense of participation and realisation of the Form of the Good. This is not a mere sensory perception; it is an idea seen as a possibility. Plotinus minimises the role played by the material factor in the creation of a work of art. This suggests his idea of a clear separation between the mental and the physical, in the way, say, Descartes understands this division. That Plotinus favours the mental, giving it a mystic aura, is beyond dispute. Further, Plotinus rejects the idea that the content of artistic experience and artistic rituals is essentially psycho-somatic in nature. The content of experience is strictly spiritual. We know that this rejection of the physical aspect is also illustrated in Descartes' thought.<sup>34</sup>

Plotinus, moreover, claims that there are irrefutable propositions as regards the Form of the Good implemented by the models of truth.<sup>35</sup> His attempt, however, to demonstrate truth is of very little use, because Plotinus thought that it is possible to confirm or refute the values of the Good, an idea which is false from a wittgensteinian stance. Our objection to such possibility does not concern the classical dichotomy between facts and values but the difference between the non-demonstrative realm of the

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b–1450b.

<sup>31</sup> Giouli, *How is Social Science Possible*, 205–207.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100 a10–20.

<sup>33</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 8, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Charles, *Aristotle on Meaning and Essence*, 364–367.

<sup>35</sup> Giouli, *The Taming*, 15.

Absolute from the realm of the proof-game; this latter being defined by Wittgenstein. As seen in the reference to *Culture and value* above,<sup>36</sup> historical proof is irrelevant to belief; hence, Wittgenstein claims that the historical accounts of the Gospels, say, might be demonstrably false. Historically speaking, he states, this is a possibility. However, he continues, belief would lose nothing by fault.

It is possible to disagree with Plotinus' firm belief in rationalism as the only way in which to demonstrate the truth of the inexplicable realm of values. His rationalistic zeal is evident in his ideas that the Form of the Good in artistic products functions in one's mind in a superior way to that of the form found in beautiful works of nature.<sup>37</sup>

Despite Plotinus' attempt to assign a dynamic character to matter,<sup>38</sup> his ideas clearly reduce the material to the mental. Hence, art exists spiritually in the way in which soul exists as an abstract entity, which can provide the soul of those participating in a ritual and being initiated into it, with rational laws.<sup>39</sup> Plotinus refers here to the idea of *awe* (θαυμάζειν) an idea<sup>40</sup> of Aristotelian origin. According to this idea, the soul opens up to the marvel of the Form of the Good, being awe-struck by the vision of it. However, the soul, according to Plotinus, is able to rationally grasp this Form, absorb it and make use of it. This Aristotelian principle of "awe" is differently used by Wittgenstein, as it suggests the idea of human inability to provide reason with irrefutable propositions as regards the truth. Plotinus would have found it intolerable to adopt Wittgenstein's use of the principle of "awe". Clearly, Plotinus would never have wished to dispense with rationalism, and make a virtue of it. We should not attempt to moderate his rationalist zeal by means of this principle, because his interest either in the imitating form of a painting or in the body itself of the painting is minimal.<sup>41</sup>

Plotinus goes to extremes in his ideas on the separation of body from mind. The body, he states, cannot harbour the being.<sup>42</sup> There is no way of demonstrating that a being is harboured by a body nor can any truth about such a being be attained. This being, he avers, degenerates into the physical, thus becoming a figment of the imagination. Getting rid of such figments, which are like absurd dreams, can only lead to the clarification of the soul, he avers.<sup>43</sup> The abolition of such figments implies the definite separation of body from mind. Thus, the inferiority of body as regards the mind will also be annulled, he concludes. Moutsopoulos' assessment is clearly in favour of Plotinus' reduction of the physical to the mental. This simply

<sup>36</sup> 32.

<sup>37</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 8, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Enneads*, III, 6, 7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 9, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 18

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 4, 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 6, 6.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 6, 5. Moutsopoulos, *Plotinus*, 90ff.

means that image, as a sort of a mirror of consciousness, mystically signifies our experiences in Plotinus.<sup>44</sup> He locates this mirror between two worlds: the conceptual and the sensual, which he manages to unite. Shall we, however, share with Plotinus the possibility of a return to the aesthetic absolute, once we have taken refuge to the imaginary? Following Plotinus, the concept of the One remains unqualifiable; hence, Moutsopoulos takes him to speak of a reductionist theory of mind-matter relations, referring to the view that talk about matter is reducible to talk about mind. But does this idealist theory have adherents at present?

Importantly, Plotinus uses mystifying elements when describing the ritual and the function of this cathartic procedure of separation. His rationalistic zeal enhances the mystifying quality of his treatise on the body-mind problem.<sup>45</sup> The need for a detailed discussion as regards his mystifying rationalism must be stressed here. As we have seen, no attempt to present mystification—and its link to the Eleusinian mysteries—as irrational can be successful.<sup>46</sup> Also, the character of incantation must be assigned to the way mystification functions. Incantation enhances the meaning and protects the effects of these mystifying functions as employed in Plotinus' text. We can see in these texts the mystifying omnipotence of reason, which denies the existence of body as the source of knowledge.

There is, however, a point which could act as a catalyst in Plotinus' so-called rationalist angle.<sup>47</sup> Any change to the rational nature of the human soul through phantasms and sensations means vulnerability, a trauma (πληγή) to man. This is a trauma coming from an *ab extra*, non-controllable and completely irrational realm. Plotinus at this point, according to Moutsopoulos,<sup>48</sup> refuses to explain the nature of the shock that the soul suffers from the impact of the irrational. The process of explaining the nature of this impact would make evident the shortcomings of Plotinus' ideas. Moutsopoulos, however, in an attempt to balance this, stresses the quality of the *impression* of the sensible on the soul as it experiences it. But this idea of *impression* (taken by Moutsopoulos from Plato's<sup>49</sup> *Timaeus*) further evidentiates the shortcomings of Plotinus' ideas. *Impression* simply calls for an empiricist justification—in the way in which Wittgenstein, say, might have produced such a justification. However, Wittgenstein certainly never completely adopts material reductionism.

The term "impressions" is linked erroneously above with Plotinus' ideas of a trauma sensed by the soul. Plato's "impressions" (whether impressions

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<sup>44</sup> *Enneads*, IV, 4, 3; I, 2, 2–7; VI, 2, 8; III, 6, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Giouli, *Vizyenos*, 73–93.

<sup>46</sup> Moutsopoulos, "The Mysterious".

<sup>47</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 8, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Moutsopoulos, *Plotinus*, 78 and n. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Giouli, *Intuition*, 4–11. Id. "Plato's Republic". Moutsopoulos, *Aesthetics of Morals*, 101–102 and nn. 35–36.

of ideas or impressions of the elements of nature) have no connection with Plotinus' mystifying functions of reasoning because Plato, paradoxically, never ceases to link the intelligible with the sensible, despite his attempts to pinpoint the difference between them. He certainly never reduces the intelligible to the sensible. This link is emphasised in his explanation of the sophists' account of art. Socrates' claim that art, together with philosophy, makes life worth living, fuels this explanation. Plato's dogmatism and unreserved conservatism, however, always haunts his dialogues.

It is the same term "impressions" that recalls Hume's ideas<sup>50</sup> on the psycho-somatic content of experience: sense-data are apprehended by the mind as impressions or as copies of original impressions.<sup>51</sup> In these "well-lighted" experiences, i.e. in patches of colour, sounds, tastes, etc. lie the foundations of knowledge.<sup>52</sup> This empiricist idea of the universe suggests Hume's atomism,<sup>53</sup> a theory which claims that these elements have no inherent connection with each other. Elements and objects are inherently independent of each other and the existence of one does not guarantee the existence of any of the others.

Wittgenstein, too, is interested in these impressions as apprehended by the mind. In this context he questions whether the world state of affairs reflects relationships of facts. He is reluctant to define a link between the formal and the structural, especially when the term "internal" replaces the term "structural". He employs this replacement to clear up confusions as regards the qualification "proper" to relations. It is impossible, however, he concludes, to obtain the meaning of the "internal" by means of propositions signifying states of affairs and objects.<sup>54</sup> Wittgenstein is faced with an enormous difficulty as regards Hume's ideas on the inherent unconnectedness of the elements of the world. This difficulty lies in the idea of the atomism of impressions-feelings.

Unable to solve the problem of atomism, Wittgenstein refers to the whole idea of logic as being common and generic. We can only feel, he avers, that the truth of axioms may be due to some fortunate accident. Such an accident alone determines the general validity of logic –not its essence.<sup>55</sup> Hence, Wittgenstein reaches a conclusion of the utmost importance, that of the mystical existence of the world. Clarifying further his thought he adds that it is not how things are in the world that is mystical.<sup>56</sup> Here we can understand how Hume's atomism of the elements of the world is incomplete. Atomism calls for a supplement. This can be the idea of the Form of the

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<sup>50</sup> Cottingham, *Rationalism*, 77 and n. 19.

<sup>51</sup> Hume, *Treatise*, I, 1, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Burke, *Whitehead*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Burke, *Popper*, 38–39.

<sup>54</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 4.122.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.1232.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.44.

Good, which *ab extra* imposes order and laws on its elements.<sup>57</sup> That is why Wittgenstein avers that viewing the world as a limited whole *sub specie aeterni* differs from feeling the world to be a limited whole.<sup>58</sup> This is because in the latter case we employ mysticism.

Let us focus on Wittgenstein's treatment of mysticism. The mystical and all that is mystical, he states, cannot be put into words; it can only be made manifest in those things related to it.<sup>59</sup> Hence, Wittgenstein opposes Plotinus' omnipotence of reason, the frailty of reason as regards the treatment of the inexplicable. What is mystical cannot be grasped by reason; it can only be felt as such. To outweigh this incapacity of mind, which resembles an illness, he counter proposes a healthy psychological state of mind. This state ideally can be realised in peace. Plainly, no further inferential steps are needed to identify an explanation in terms of something which does not itself require to be explained. If there were evidence as regards belief in, and summoning of, the inexplicable, he adds, this would in fact destroy the whole business.<sup>60</sup> That is why Wittgenstein claims that the real discovery as regards feelings and impressions of the world, is the one that makes us capable of stopping the study of philosophy when we want to stop. This discovery gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the mystical does not further concern him. It is needless to refer either to it or to the things that it qualifies. What he is now concerned with is the method of unveiling order-imposed *ab extra* on the world. There is not one single philosophical method, he adds in the above quoted passage, but many methods for solving problems and eliminating difficulties in philosophy, just as there are different therapies to heal evil. Hence, he grounds the parallel between the rituals founding the Form of the Good in the unknown realm of values and philosophical activities as regards a biologically obtained catharsis and healing the evil of times.

## The Soundness of Wittgenstein's Demystifying Theories

Wittgenstein rightly points out the impasses suggested by Hume's atomism as regards how things are in the world. In this context he explores the sense in which the impression of colours belongs to a single individual, and not to others. The fact that reason cannot be passed to other minds is once more clarified here. Wittgenstein adds that the idea of belonging never

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<sup>57</sup> Burke, *Popper*, 39.

<sup>58</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.45.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.522.

<sup>60</sup> Wittgenstein, *Lectures on Religious Belief*, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, I, 133.

crosses our minds.<sup>62</sup> He further claims that any attempt to name a colour-impression should arouse our suspicion.<sup>63</sup> This means that any link between naming and necessity must be and is indeed controvertible. Suspicion must be aroused, he continues, because there is always a gap between the colour as received by and known to everyone and the visual impressions, which we receive at given moments.<sup>64</sup> Various questions follow this statement: Can everything change with time? How valid can an inductive inference be over a long period? And does the validity of an inference constitute just a simple guide from past to future? One is tempted here to raise the unanswerable question, together with Aristotle,<sup>65</sup> of what it is to be “red”, “blue”, “yellow” etc.<sup>66</sup>

It is the possessor (a poppy, for example) of, say, “redness” that can suggest the answer to what it is to be red; not the poppy *per se*.<sup>67</sup> This does not mean that the red poppy is not there at all, because it exists conditionally. One can respond to Wittgenstein’s challenges and suspicions that analytic truths, as also happens with inductive references, have fixed meanings in all relevant respects, as it is only our criterion of relevance that can make the difference in time.<sup>68</sup> Wittgenstein, in *Tractatus*, espouses anti-realism but not in the form according to which the realism/non-realism argument functions. His version of anti-realism differs from the standard argument. According to him, there is no point in pursuing the fulfilment (or the negation) of the assertion conditions in semantics. This pursuit characterises the realist/non-realist argument. On the contrary, belief in the ideal concept of the world uses a different conceptual equipment to identify events. It frames different statements than those framed by scientists and secular historians. They both (science and belief) thus do not simply disagree over the true-values of the same statements, as these statements are too far apart to contradict or to criticise each other. This is precisely the case with Aristotle, who suggests that one should attempt the realisation of the ideal of truth – instead of first searching to perceive order and reality. We need, however, to be very careful not to undercut the standard argument of realism/non-realism in Aristotle. We can see it at work as regards what merely happens – not what might happen. However, according to Aristotle, we shall always lack the ideal concept of the world as it is in itself.<sup>69</sup> Wittgenstein thus, Hacker claims, propounded no theory of meaning of this kind, having good reasons for avoiding such a programme.<sup>70</sup> Wittgenstein argues that an

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 275.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 276.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 277.

<sup>65</sup> Giouli, “Aristotle’s Non-realistic Account of the World”, 275–276.

<sup>66</sup> Burke, *Whitehead*, 84.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>68</sup> Burke, “Science”, 211.

<sup>69</sup> Giouli, “Aristotle’s Non-Realistic Account of the World”, 271–273 and 288–289.

<sup>70</sup> Hacker, *Wittgenstein*, 242.

elementary proposition does not have any truth-conditions,<sup>71</sup> stressing thus only criteria of relevance as regards its soundness. Hence, an elementary proposition has no more truth-conditions than does a tautology or a contradiction.<sup>72</sup> The nature of experiencing reality thus cannot but be a postulate, which is a transitory one. The demarcation which expresses the above-mentioned tension between what is real and what is not real is stressed by Wittgenstein; we come to know the unreliability of perception: “this is not how it is. Yet this is how it has to be!”, i.e., this has to be our attachment to the realisation of the ideal of truth.<sup>73</sup>

Aristotle states that we can grasp terms for kinds without knowing how we can grasp them.<sup>74</sup> Wittgenstein stresses this problem claiming that it is one thing to claim that there are certain things which fall equally under the concept “picture-rabbit”, say, or under the concept “picture-duck”. A picture, a drawing is such a thing, he continues.<sup>75</sup> But the *impression* (his underlining) is not simultaneously of a picture-duck and a picture-rabbit. Wittgenstein once more stresses the unreliability of perception as he avers that it is a mistake to say that a “visual image” is a “visual impression”.<sup>76</sup>

There is absolutely nothing that can manifest this resemblance between images and impressions, he states; nothing apart from stating that images and impressions resemble each other and apart from wishing to state this. Such expressions suggest a personal experience and truth; not the experience and truth of other minds.<sup>77</sup> The atomism (as Bertrand Russell calls it) implied here can only be healed by the use of a pattern of relations into which redness, say, just like all elements in nature, fall.<sup>78</sup> Order then, and rules as imposed *ab extra*, are just within the bounds of possibility, but to be unveiled by faith alone. Although faith cannot guarantee reason’s results, it can make the attainment of such results less partial and subjective.<sup>79</sup> Unless we adopt a religious angle to make sense of the material in question, relativistic problems may not arise.<sup>80</sup> But it is despite Wittgenstein’s reference to this function of faith and reasoning that one must never forget however the illusory character of such knowledge, as stressed here by him. Hume holds that impressions are close copies of original impressions, and ideas are impressions of derivative ideas. Wittgenstein adds that it is only the likeness of objects that can make a striking impression familiar; however, this is merely what happens –not what really is. We should not link impression

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 52–53.

<sup>73</sup> Giouli, *How is Social Science Possible*, 164–165 and n. 43.

<sup>74</sup> Giouli, “Aristotle’s Non-realistic Account of the World”.

<sup>75</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, II, xi, 199.

<sup>76</sup> Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 630.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.

<sup>78</sup> Burke, *Whitehead*, 37.

<sup>79</sup> Giouli, *The Taming*, 17 and n. 8.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 and n. 5.

and thought together at this point, as any impression is necessarily one which fades – and thus, no longer striking.<sup>81</sup>

In order to get an impression of a verbal expression, we need to transform it into a drawing. We translate it into an imaginary language, following rules.<sup>82</sup> What a pity the picture does not have a soul, so that we can apprehend it, he exclaims. This testifies to man's inability to ever grasp the real objects of truth – thus linking impression and thought. He further explains that communication signs of language exist only within patterns of relationships that explain life and reality.<sup>83</sup> Signs play no part in a language which is disconnected from these patterns. Understanding impressions is impossible if the language is disconnected from those patterns. Indeed, as Hacker puts it, we must understand that words, according to Wittgenstein, are not *connected* with the world at all.<sup>84</sup> We must take notice of these signs, Wittgenstein explains further, to understand what merely happens – not what really is. We must write and transmit these signs to get the impression of the pattern of the sign. Wittgenstein further stresses how useless and unnecessary the production of evidence as regards confirmation or negation of values is. The sign, being an order, like those used in religion, has no relevance to a picture or an impression. We can only translate it into action following certain rules, or some tables.<sup>85</sup> These ideas of his show how important the difference between the realm of the Form of the Good and the realm of the secular is. It is not merely a difference between facts and values but a fundamental difference between the values we pursue and the facts we produce, once we expand our armament towards the realm of the unknown.<sup>86</sup> Dedication to such an expansion, and humility as regards our ability to grasp the truth, makes the difference between the world of a happy man and that of an unhappy. That truth remains impossible to attain, unless we realise the ideal of truth with no relativism, can be seen in Wittgenstein's demystifying procedures; which are parallel with the artistic and religious rituals as exposed below.

## Ideas on Wittgenstein's Theories on Demystification through Art

Wittgenstein's idea that the ideal of truth cannot be attained is the main reason for considering him an anti-realist. If we re-visit his ideas on the existence of the world which we can feel as a limited whole, we understand his use of the word *mystical* referring to the nonsensical. He provides us

<sup>81</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, II, xi, 211.

<sup>82</sup> Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 147.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>84</sup> Hacker, *Wittgenstein*, 100–101.

<sup>85</sup> Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 145.

<sup>86</sup> Burke, *Belief*, 82.

with a feeling parallel to that of an artist during the process of creating a work of art, wishing her/his feelings to be shared by the people experiencing her/his products. This, according to Wittgenstein, is absurd, and impossible to attain.<sup>87</sup> Understanding a poem in the sense its writer would have wished is one thing, he adds; what she/he actually felt while writing it is another. It is as if, he explains further,<sup>88</sup> we all wish to be well received when paying a visit; this, however, does not mean that we expect the person to whom we paid this visit to have feelings of such and such a sort. The realm of the Form of the Good and the realm of the secular are completely different. This difference is even more fundamental than the difference claimed by Plato to exist between the sensible and the intelligible. This fundamental difference was well grasped by those initiating and being initiated into the Eleusis mysteries.

Does Wittgenstein's example convincingly prove that artistic creations are in a different class from other, secular, creations? Resonance, harmony or response as regards a work of art relate to the work of art itself –not to something else conveyed through it. Wittgenstein warns us not to focus on this *something else* (his underlining) of art, because it is beyond expression, unless obtained through the senses.<sup>89</sup> Certainly, we can focus on communication of feelings through, say, music.<sup>90</sup> But then we need to examine the correct use of the words that convey these feelings. For example, how do we know that our feeling or another's feeling concerning the, say, facial expressions that are the same now as previously, are correctly expressed in words?

Wittgenstein offers a radical shift as regards the expansion of our conceptual equipment towards the realisation of the ideal of truth. His attempt to demystify knowledge has a parallel with demystifying rituals and art, as implemented in the following passage.<sup>91</sup>

Life can educate one to a belief in God. And *experiences* too are what brings this about; but I don't mean visions and other forms of sense experience which show 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* (I underline). So perhaps it is similar to the concept of 'object'.

The function and method of this expansion from the abstract to the concrete aims at the healing of evil. It is always through the commonplace

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<sup>87</sup> Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 58–59.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

that the dedication towards this realisation of the ideal of truth is suggested. Hence, he maintains, the existent of the Form of the Good, say God, is possible as the concept of "object" exists. This, however, does not mean that we can apprehend this Form by means of visions and other forms of sense experience that (existentially) focus on an ontology of the Good. He stresses the ideas that it is only through weakness and through suffering, that we can be educated to be believers. We are then open to change and vulnerable. We should not make conjectures about the unknown realm of values, as we are unable to experience sense impressions about them. Simply, life forces the Supreme Form on us, he concludes. This function stresses the fundamental difference between the realm of the known and that of the unknown. It is a healing process, and implies, besides, that the evils particular to specific periods can be repelled.

Wittgenstein offers an example of how the repelling of evil can take place, as regards the control and limits of, say, bad behaviour and conduct within social relationships. Newton, he avers, would have lost absolutely nothing, if he had acknowledged Leibniz's originality.<sup>92</sup> Quarrels over precedence are cheap and easy, he continues, and are the expression of evil weakness, as they are fostered by vile people. Philosophy tries to heal the unhappiness of these people in order to enable people to see many more possibilities in life than those experienced by unbelievers, and thus to repel the evils of the time. Newton would have gained a lot by acknowledging Leibniz's originality, he states. The experience of envy ought to be taken as a sheer error, he concludes, which can be overcome by esteem and, finally, love.

That is why one should never feel frustrated as regards vain attempts to attain definite, once-and-for-all knowledge of the Form of the Good. A man's dreams are virtually never realised, Wittgenstein states.<sup>93</sup> That is why he accuses Socrates of slipping into a lazy scepticism when reducing the sophist to silence. Obviously, he continues, Socrates had no right to do this, even if the sophist can be characterised as not being free from his ignorance and common beliefs. It is no triumph for Socrates, he adds, just to prove the ignorance not only of the sophists but that of all people. Ignorance, Wittgenstein states, simply exists because nobody can be led by art, science or philosophy to what is good. One can only be led to some place or other, as happens with those being initiated into the rituals explored in art. This weakness of reasoning and aesthetic and religious reasoning, especially, stresses Wittgenstein's idea that the Good is outside the space of facts.<sup>94</sup> This is a moral issue, he avers, as the Divine, i.e. the good, as something supernatural, can only express the Supernatural. We have seen how Aristotle warns us not to lay claim to knowledge gained by such

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

imaginings following any sundry idealism. Hadrian, the Roman emperor from 117 to 138, is said to consider for example, his marriage and spouse sacred as this was reflected in the bonds and these mysteries to which he, himself, had been initiated. These imaginings prove the false character of reason's omnipotence that challenges the sacred character of the Eleusis mysteries.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Yourcenar, *Hadrian*, 186.

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