

Comments on Professor Hans Sluga's
SHOWING THE FLY THE WAY OUT OF THE FLY-BOTTLE.
WITTGENSTEIN AS A "LIBERATORY" THINKER

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1, The meaning of liberation in Wittgenstein

What kind of liberation in Wittgenstein's philosophy:

Kant or Schopenhauer or William James

2, Three questions on the Liberatory reading of Wittgenstein's philosophy

- a) Philosophical or metaphysical propositions VS propositions from common sense: what is the purpose of Wittgenstein to make such a distinction?
- b) Ethical reading vs mathematical reading: on what level for Wittgenstein to consider his work as ethical?
- c) Two styles of writing for Wittgenstein: aphoristic and dialogical for the same purpose of presenting his ideas directly

3, Why Schopenhauer rather than Kant

- a) What difference between Schopenhauer and Kant in the liberation reading?
- b) Schopenhauer on liberation of cognition

"I hope that all these remarks have enabled me to make clear the nature of the subjective condition for aesthetic pleasure, and how great a role this subjective condition plays in the pleasure itself, namely the liberation of cognition from service to the will, forgetting oneself as an individual, and the elevation of consciousness to the pure, willless, timeless subject of cognition, independent of all relations." (WWR, p.234)

- c) Schopenhauer on overcoming of will

For the most part, cognition always remains subordinated to the service of the will, as it in fact developed in this service, and indeed sprang from the will as the head springs from the trunk of the body. With animals this servitude of cognition to the will can never be overcome. With human beings, such an overcoming appears only as an exception, as we will now be considering more closely. (WWR, p.209)

Thus we find that the peace and blissfulness we have described in the lives of saintly people is only a flower that emerges from the constant overcoming of the will, and we see the constant struggle with the will to life as the soil from which it arises; on earth nobody can have lasting peace. (WWR, p.463)

4, Is there no concept of liberation and overcoming in Kant?

Kant on liberation and freedom in practical reason:

“the moral law, and with it practical reason, [have] come in and forced this concept [freedom] upon us” (2nd edition of *CPR*, p.30).

“Consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason” (*Ibid*, p.31).

5, The meaning of the aphorism of fly-bottle: Retrieve the start-point along the way

- a) How could we escape from the temptation of the bait? In which way?
- b) Is the referential conception of meaning the only bait for us to be trapped? How about the identity of two words by which one defines one with another?

PI, § 254: The substitution of “identical” for “the same” (for example) is another typical expedient in philosophy. As if we were talking about shades of meaning, and all that were in question were to find words to hit on the correct nuance. And that is in question in philosophy only where we have to give a psychologically accurate account of the temptation to use a particular mode of expression. What we are ‘tempted to say’ in such a case is, of course, not philosophy; but it is its raw material. So, for example, what a mathematician is inclined to say about the objectivity and reality of mathematical facts is not a philosophy of mathematics, but something for philosophical treatment.

PI, § 255: The philosopher treats a question; like an illness.

6, About PI § 293

- a) The context of § 293: the famous metaphor of beetle-box
- b) Meaning of the last sentence of § 293:

the object is irrelative in consideration of the mode of expressions, naming “object and name”. It is not concerned, I think, with the referential conception of meaning in Sluga’s understanding.

7, From what we liberate and whose liberation in Wittgenstein’s philosophy?

- a) Liberating from confusion or temptation? Is it a deliberate choice?
- b) Liberation from vs freedom from: intentional vs autonomous or the political vs the moral?
Considering Foucault’s political significance in his philosophy

8, Who liberates philosophy from something? Philosophers themselves or someone else who liberates for philosophers?

9, How many Wittgenstein then?

Liberationist or Experimental?

A conclusion:

Wittgenstein’s philosophy might be seen as an ESCAPE FROM in two senses: (1) from any philosophical temptation; and (2) from any attempt to label his philosophy under a single name.

References

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