

From Existential Feelings to Belief in God

Submitted by Gorazd Andrejč to the University of Exeter
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Signature:

This thesis is dedicated with deep gratitude to my wife Žaklina, my son Natan, and my parents Alojz and Jožica Andrejč. Their love and immeasurable sacrifice made this work possible.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Mark Wynn whose guidance, expertise, encouragement and friendship was invaluable; and to my friend Bradley Arnold, who spent countless hours discussing and critically engaging with the ideas presented here.



ABSTRACT

The question of the relation between religious experience and Christian belief in God is addressed in radically different ways within contemporary theology and philosophy of religion. In order to develop an answer which avoids the pitfalls of the 'analytic perception model' (Alston, Yandell, Swinburne) and the 'over-linguistic' model for interpreting Christian religious experience (Taylor, Lindbeck), this thesis offers an approach which combines a phenomenological study of feelings, conceptual investigation of Christian God-talk and 'belief'-talk, as well as theological, sociological and anthropological perspectives.

At the centre of the interpretation developed here is the phenomenological category 'existential feelings' which should be seen, it is suggested, as a theologically and philosophically central aspect of Christian religious experiencing. Using this contemporary concept, a novel reading of F. Schleiermacher's concept of 'feeling' is proposed and several kinds of Christian experiencing interpreted (like the experiences of 'awe', 'miracle of existence', 'wretchedness', and 'redeemed community'). By way of a philosophical understanding of Christian believing in God, this study offers a critical interpretation of the later Wittgenstein's concept of 'religious belief', combining Wittgensteinian insights with Paul Tillich's notion of 'dynamic faith' and arguing against Wittgensteinian 'grammaticalist' and 'expressivist' accounts. Christian beliefs about God are normally life-guiding but nevertheless dubitable.

The nature of Christian God-talk is interpreted, again, by combining the later Wittgenstein's insights into the grammatical and expressive roles of God-talk with Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on linguistic innovation and Roman Jakobson's perspective on the functions of language. Finally, the claim which connects phenomenological, conceptual and theological strands of this study is a recognition of a 'religious belief-inviting pull' of the relevant experience. Christian religious belief-formation and concept-formation can be seen as stemming from 'extraordinary' existential feelings, where the resulting beliefs about God are largely but not completely bound by traditional meanings.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Only abbreviations for the works of F. Schleiermacher, L. Wittgenstein, and M. Merleau-Ponty are used without explanation and throughout the chapters of this thesis. A few other abbreviations that appear in the text are clearly explained and do not extend beyond the immediate context.

The following abbreviations of the works of Schleiermacher, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty, respectively, are used throughout the thesis:

Works of Friedrich Schleiermacher:

OR (1996) *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy)*, transl. from the 1st edition of the original (1799), Richard Crouter (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CF (1999) *The Christian Faith*, H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (eds.), Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Äst O (1931) *Ästhetik*, Rudolf Odebrecht (ed.), Berlin, Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter.

Dial O (1942) *Dialektik 1822*. Rudolf Odebrecht (ed.), Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs Verlag.

Dial T (1996) *Dialectic or, The Art of Doing Philosophy: A Study Edition of the 1811 Notes*. Terrence Tice (transl. and ed.), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

HC (1998) *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy)*, Andrew Bowie (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sol (1926) *Schleiermacher's Soliloquies: An English Translation of the Monologien*, H.L. Friess (transl. and ed.), Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing.

BE (2003) *Brouillon zu Ethik/Notes on Ethics (1805/1806) and Notes on the Theory of Virtue*, J. Wallhauser and T.N. Tice (transl. and ed.), Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

The number indicating the place where a text is to be found in Schleiermacher's works normally refers to the relevant page number, except in the case of *CF* where it refers to the relevant chapter and section.

Works of Ludwig Wittgenstein:

- LE* (1965) 'Lecture on Ethics', *Philosophical Review*, 74/1, 3-12.
- LC* (1970) *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- OC* (1975) *Über Gewissheit – On Certainty*, New York: Harper and Row.
- PI* (2009) *Philosophical Investigations: The German Text with an English Translation*, Revised 4th Edition, G.E.M Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte (transl. and ed.), Oxford/Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Z* (1981) *Zettel*, Second Edition, G.E.M Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), Oxford: Blackwell.
- CV* (1998) *Culture and Value, Revised Edition*, G.H. von Wright (ed.), Oxford: Blackwell.
- AWL* (1979) *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge, 1932-1935*, from the notes of A. Ambrose and M. MacDonald, A. Ambrose (ed.), Oxford: Blackwell.
- MWL* (forthcoming) *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930-1933, from the Notes of GE Moore*, G. Citron, B. Rogers and D. Stern (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BB* (1958) *The Blue and Brown Books*, First Edition, Oxford: Blackwell.
- PPF* (*PI* part II) (2009) *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*, included in L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations: The German Text with an English Translation*, Revised 4th Edition, G.E.M Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte (transl. and eds.), Oxford/Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 183-321.
- RFGB* (1979) *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, translate by A.C. Miles, Doncaster: Brynmill Press.
- RPP I* (1980) *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology Vol. I*, G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- RPP II* (1980) *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology Vol. II*, G.H. von Wright and H. Nyman (eds.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- LPP* (1988) *Lectures on Philosophy of Psychology, 1946-47*, P.T. Geach (ed.), Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

TLP (2001) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (Routledge Classics)*, D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (transl.), London: Routledge.

The number indicating the place where a text is to be found in Wittgenstein's works normally refers to the number of the remark, unless the work is not structured by numbered remarks (then it refers to page number or, in the case of *MWL*, to the date of the lecture).

Works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

PP (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception (Routledge Classics)*, London: Routledge.

PRPC (1964) *The Primacy of Perception*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

SG (1964) *Signs*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

SNS (1964) *Sense and Nonsense*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

INT (1969) 'An Introduction to Phenomenology', in *Phenomenology of Religion*, Joseph D. Bittis (ed.), London: SCM Press, 5-30.

VI (1969) *The Visible and The Invisible*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

The number indicating the place where a text is to be found in Merleau-Ponty's works always refers to the page number.

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p. 345 – Appendix II: A tabular representation of the categories of mystical experience according to M. Daniels's '5x5 model'.

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Research Questions

What is the relation between religious experience and Christian belief in God? This question is addressed in markedly different ways from various philosophical and theological perspectives, even considering only the approaches *within* the Christian tradition. Some see this relation in distinctly epistemological terms, as running from specific kinds of experience to belief in God (e.g. Richard Swinburne, William Alston). Others see the opposite direction of this relation to be crucial, i.e. the direction from the particular, linguistically-structured, Christian beliefs about God *to* religious experiencing, where the former *enables* the latter (e.g. Stanley Hauerwas, John Milbank). And, while some approaches assume or argue that only religious experiences with a clear subject-object structure are of any philosophical value (e.g. Keith Yandell), others assume or argue that only experience where any subject-object structure is transcended or dissolved are of interest (e.g. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Anthony Steinbock). From such fundamental decisions much of the rest of any philosophical treatment of religious experience and its relation to belief in God depends.

In the present study, the decisions about what is philosophically and/or theologically most important in religious experience are not taken lightly. But, given their fundamental and, to some extent, *a-rational* nature, the decisions as to the kinds of religiously-relevant experience we will take as most central for philosophical treatment will be introduced in the first two chapters, but then clarified and justified in a holistic manner as the thesis progresses. The aspect of experience which we will take as religiously most central and philosophically most interesting in the context of basic Christian concept-formation and belief-formation will be 'feelings of being' or '*existential feelings*' (Ratcliffe 2008: 39). Such feelings form the non-intentional background of most of our experiencing,

but can sometimes come ‘to the foreground’ as remarkable or *extra*-ordinary – in such situations in particular (but not exclusively) they can be of central religious relevance.

In order to answer the question how religious experience with existential feelings at its core is related to Christian belief in God, several closely related questions will need to be addressed. Three such questions are particularly central: 1) How does the conception of ‘religious experience’ with the focus on feelings differ from other influential models in theistic philosophy of religion – in particular, the model we will call the ‘Analytic perception model’ (W. Alston, R. Swinburne, K. Yandell) which deems any feelings philosophically irrelevant? 2) Of what *kind* are beliefs about God in Christianity, and how do they differ from other kinds of beliefs that are commonly of philosophical interest (e.g. common-sense or basic certainties, and more inferential or ‘scientific’ beliefs)? And, since Christian tradition clearly provides the concept and structures for Christian believing in God – and, according to an influential view (e.g. Charles Taylor, Stanley Hauerwas), Christian religious *language* also structures the religious *felt* experience of Christians – we also need to examine Christian ‘God-talk’, in the sense of the most central claims or utterances about God in Christianity: Put very simply, the third big question for our study has to be: 3) what do Christians *do* when they engage in God-talk?

By way of answering these questions, we will engage with the writings of several major thinkers in philosophy and philosophical theology. Two towering figures of modern theology and philosophy, respectively, will particularly stand out and demand a closer interpretive engagement in our study: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Although we will depart in notable ways from certain views of each, their work influences, inspires or guides much of the study of the present thesis. Schleiermacher’s emphasis on certain kinds of feeling as the ‘essence of religion’ will be taken up, reinterpreted and put to use in our philosophical-theological picture of the religiously (most) relevant kinds of experience for Christian believing in God. Even more so, Wittgenstein’s understanding of ‘belief’ and other psychological concepts, of ‘primitive

reactions', religious language and believing, and so on, will provide the basic framework for our discussion of these phenomena and deeply inform it. Our interpretations and uses of both Schleiermacher and Wittgenstein, however, will differ – sometimes substantially – from some very influential understandings of their work.

The combination of Schleiermacher and Wittgenstein may strike the informed reader as unusual and even potentially unworkable. In theological circles, Wittgenstein is normally associated with the so-called *Postliberal* school of theology of George Lindbeck, Hans Frei and more recently Nicholas Adams, which is defined in terms of a set of contrasts with the *Liberal* theology, which in turn is often associated with Schleiermacher as its 'father'.¹ Lindbeck specifically puts Wittgenstein together with Lindbeck's own 'cultural-linguistic theory of doctrine', and presents this theory in stark contrast with Schleiermacher, Tillich and the 'experiential-expressivist theory' of the same (Lindbeck 2009: 2-10, 17-22). According to the Postliberals, a Wittgensteinian understanding of doctrines sees them as a 'communal phenomenon that shapes the subjectivities of individuals' (ibid. 19), whereas for Schleiermacher, 'doctrines... are always derivative' (Marina 2004: 128). In philosophy of religion, too, it is not unusual to find Schleiermacher, on the one hand, presented as a prime example of an *apologist* for Christianity (Gutting 1985: 254), either as one arguing that through a religious faculty of intuition we perceive God (Brandt 1968: 101-117) or that we can *infer* God as 'the whence' of the 'feeling of absolute dependence' (Adams 2005: 38); while, on the other hand, D.Z. Phillips, as a major example of 'Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion' who argues that 'Wittgenstein's work ... stands outside the apologetic context' (Phillips 1988: 113), is seen as the opposite of a Schleiermacherian approach (or any other strand of Christian apologetics, for that matter) (c.f. Gutting 1985: 254). In addition, in philosophy of mind, it is not uncommon to interpret Wittgenstein's

¹ The expression most often used for Schleiermacher is the 'father of *modern* theology' (Marina 2005: 1); however, more often than not, this 'modern' is interpreted as 'liberal', especially with the historical development of post-Schleiermacherian German liberal theology and the subsequent Neo-orthodox, Postliberal and Radical orthodox rejections of the liberal tradition, in view.

'private language argument' (*PI* 243-271) as 'inconsistent with ... phenomenal concepts' (Papineau 2011: 175), or even denying phenomenal consciousness altogether (Dennett 1991: 81, 462), while positing 'immediate self-consciousness' as ontologically revelatory is thought to be *the* most central concept of Schleiermacher's philosophy (Frank 2005: 26-31; Thandeka 1992: 448). In the light of these well-known interpretations, the present thesis can be understood as (among other things) a prolonged attempt to correct – not all of the above interpretations (!), but – the constructions of stark, exaggerated or simply misleading contrasts between Schleiermacher on the one hand and Wittgenstein on the other with respect to several central questions of philosophical interest regarding religious experience, language and belief.

0.2 Methodological issues

While we will critique and depart from the prevailing models of religious epistemology (the 'Analytic perception model' (e.g. Alston), or 'inference model' which treats belief in God as a 'scientific theory or hypothesis' (e.g. Swinburne)) in this study, the approach taken is not *anti*-epistemological. In fact, it can be considered *pre*-epistemological, for it proceeds from the conviction that an attentive and responsible phenomenology of religious experiencing and of feelings, as well as a careful understanding of the nature of religious language (God-talk) and religious belief in God are necessary *before* any question about 'knowledge of God', or the justification of beliefs about God, can be properly addressed. This 'statement of conviction' also indicates our two main philosophical methodologies used in this study: one is phenomenological investigation, and the other 'grammatical' investigation, the latter (critically) derived from Wittgenstein's work. In addition, several theological perspectives and 'ways of reasoning' are interwoven into the study, as well as (minor) elements of sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and conceptual history.

Now, questions and criticisms can be raised in relation to the very idea of 'mixing' such various methods of investigation. In all of the sub-disciplines

mentioned we find powerful voices which argue in favour of a clear distinctiveness and strict limits of their own method, and sometimes for its superiority. An example from within the Wittgensteinian tradition of grammatical investigation is D.Z. Phillips, whose methodological commitment sees philosophy as having a very distinctive, meta-linguistic task of clarifying the meanings of concepts i.e. their use, and nothing more. Philosophy's goal is to dispel confusions which either ensue because of the lack of conceptual clarity or, more seriously, because of our 'metaphysical bewitchment by language'. While Phillips engages extensively with Christian theological – or, to allow a sympathetic reading, *religious* – thought throughout his corpus, he insists on a strong division between theology and philosophy:

As far as the philosopher is concerned, his work is over when he notes this situation [i.e. the role which our statements about God play in our worship and our lives], ragged as it is, with as much clarity as he can achieve. ... [A] theologian, on the other hand, is working within this situation, hoping to change it in certain aspects. [The theologian George Lindbeck] seems to think ... that the theological enterprise can be furthered by philosophical means. But he is not consistent in these matters, hence the difficulty of locating his audience. (Phillips 1988: 218)

In our study, we are not denying the distinctiveness of the philosophical and the theological modes of intellectual discipline, respectively. But it is hard to see that the only legitimate way in which such modes could (or, *should*) be related is by a strict and complete division of labour. And, linked to an insistence on such division by D.Z. Phillips, who has a hard time envisioning a philosopher and a theologian in one and the same person (ibid. 219), is another hard dichotomy he accepts but we will not: that between 'the realm of the philosophical' and 'the realm of the personal' (Mulhall 2007: 21; c.f. Phillips 1999: 113) according to which philosophical endeavour retains a distinctive neutrality in relation to actual grammars and forms of life which it tries to clarify. This high view of the philosophical enterprise as in an important sense 'detached' can and should be

questioned. In his otherwise sympathetic appraisal of Phillips' understanding of philosophy, Stephen Mulhall rightly asks:

[Is] not alteration in one's way of reflecting upon one's own life an alteration in one's life? After all, engaging in philosophical reflection is not something one does outside or apart from one's life. It is a (perhaps momentary and infrequent) part of one's life; and a religious life that includes confused modes of self-understanding is significantly different from one that does not. Furthermore, what shows that such forms of self-expression are an expression of confusion, if not the life that the reflecting person leads outside the contexts of such reflection? (ibid. 22)

And, continuing on the related topic of relationship of philosophy to other disciplined discourses, Mulhall makes another observation worth heeding:

If philosophy must itself be seen as one of the various ways in which we talk about things, it must stand in dialogical relations with other modes of discourse. In other words, philosophy cannot simply think of itself as standing outside the dialogical unity of discourse that is its distinctive subject matter; it must simultaneously recognize that what it has to say about that subject matter is itself a contribution to a dialogue. After all, if it were not such a contribution, how would it hang together with the other dimensions of our life with language...? ... [Philosophy] must attend to the conditions of its own possibility... and that internal dialogue can uncover presuppositions governing any particular conception of philosophical discourse that will themselves stake out the ground for an external dialogue with non-philosophical modes of discourse. (Mulhall 2007: 25-26)

A more realistic and more 'embedded' self-understanding of philosophy of this kind not only dethrones it from the alleged neutrality and detachment but also opens it up for combinations and 'joint projects' with ever-developing theological and scientific investigations. Both of these can enrich and influence any particular '*philosophy of ...*' – in our case, the philosophy of religious

experience, belief, and language (mostly Christian). The particular ways in which we combine and interrelate phenomenological and ‘grammatical’ investigations with theological and, to a much lesser extent, sociological and anthropological perspectives, will become gradually clearer as this study progresses. But, as a general rule, we will not shy away from taking certain theological views (deeply connected with ‘the realm of the personal’) as guiding our philosophical investigations and understandings, and vice versa – we take it that certain philosophical reflections and insights can lead us to less confused modes of Christian *religious* self-understanding and, ultimately, life.

To be a bit more specific: as will become apparent, the understandings of several important theological themes in this study, such as the understanding of revelation and of the notion of God, can be described as broadly Schleiermacherian and/or Tillichian. The adjective ‘broadly’ indicates that this label doesn’t mean a full endorsement of either Schleiermacher’s or Tillich’s (or indeed any other) theological system as a whole. It means, for example, that we understand revelation in a manner primarily of existential experience and expression of it, rather than as a supernatural, more or less direct verbally structured message from God. It also means that we understand the personal God of Christianity to be the most appropriate ‘simile’ or metaphor for the Ultimate reality that is the source of all Creation and goodness, rather than a quasi-scientific description mirroring a (male) super-empirical being which literally talks and intervenes in the world by ‘breaking the laws of nature’. How such a more ‘liberal’ understanding of God and revelation will feature in this philosophical treatise on the experience and knowledge of God will be seen and often explicitly pointed at. Furthermore, we will tease out and identify prescriptive or normative claims that are implicit in Schleiermacher’s and Tillich’s understandings of religion (either religious experience or faith/belief), as well as in Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion – something which is rarely adequately recognized by self-avowedly ‘descriptive’ Wittgensteinian philosophers themselves, but is nevertheless very relevant for the self-understanding of our religio-philosophical enterprise. A proper awareness of both descriptive and prescriptive aspects of our own philosophising and being

as explicit as possible about these will, therefore, be one of the ways in which we will strive to achieve clarity in this study.

Very similar questions regarding the mixing of methods, and regarding the relations between philosophical and personal realms as well as between the philosophical realm and that of other academic disciplines, can be addressed from the perspective of *phenomenological* investigation which we will base to a lesser extent on Heidegger's, and to a greater extent on Merleau-Ponty's and Matthew Ratcliffe's approaches.² The questions regarding the ways in which phenomenology and theology should be demarcated and related are very much alive in contemporary philosophy and theology.³ To include the grammatical investigation into the picture, we should say as a very vague meta-methodological statement that our understanding of the three-way relations between theology, phenomenology of conscious experience, and grammatical investigation doesn't privilege any of these ways of reasoning, at least not in a fundamental way. Admittedly, this puts us in a somewhat more difficult position than if any of these methods had a neatly privileged role in our study. However, such a methodologically-combined approach may also be the most fruitful in elucidating the very complex and interrelated phenomena that Christian felt experience, beliefs about God, and God-talk undoubtedly are.

² Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, while often critical towards scientific thought when/if it takes the third-person or 'objective view' as ontologically final or primary (*PP* ix, 62-65; compare Heidegger 1996: 9-12), also includes recognizably positive and dialogical attitudes towards contemporary scientific perspectives of his day (e.g. *PP* 54-59; see also Rouse 2005; Carman 2008: 78-134). Merleau-Ponty arguably saw himself as *more* open for *combining* phenomenology with scientific investigation than (early) Husserl and Heidegger before him, since he chides Heidegger for remaining 'fixed in [his] thesis of a pure and simple opposition between philosophy and the sciences of man or, as Heidegger put it, between the ontological and the ontic' (*PRPC* 94). For M. Ratcliffe's understanding of a mutually enriching relationship between phenomenology and science, see Ratcliffe (2008: 292-293).

³ Consider Jan-Luc Marion's famous notion of 'phenomenology of the gift' which links phenomenology with an anti-metaphysical theology of 'radical gift' (Marion 1991). As responses, see on the one hand, Derrida's critique of Marion's phenomenology as 'too theological' (Derrida and Marion 1999), and Milbank's critique of the same as 'not enough theological', on the other (Milbank 2007).

0.3 The aims of the project and the tasks of the chapters

Having these basic methodological remarks in mind, we can now state the aims of this research project. The overall aim of our study could be described as:

- *to suggest a model for understanding the relation between religiously-relevant experience and Christian beliefs about God, with a special focus on existential feelings in Christian religious experience.*

In similar terms we can also frame the intended main contribution of this thesis to the existent philosophy of religion literature: it is to employ the concept of 'existential feelings' at the centre of thinking about religiously relevant experience and the related Christian believing in God as well as God-talk, and through this, to bring into a mutually illuminating conversation a number of discourses in contemporary philosophy of religion which often live somewhat separate lives: Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion, philosophy of religious experience, phenomenology of religiously-relevant feelings, and philosophical theology (including Schleiermacher interpretation).

Other, related but partial aims of this project (with indications of the chapters where these are particularly addressed) are the following:

- to develop a phenomenological-theological framework for thinking about Christian religious experience (Chapter Two), with the help of a more general phenomenology of existential feelings (Chapter One).
- to put this framework in critical conversation with the 'Analytic perception model' of religious experience and examine the fundamental assumptions and 'conceptual regimes' which lie at the foundation of both (Chapter One).

- to offer a novel and theologically fruitful interpretation of Schleiermacher's 'theology of religious feeling' on the basis of a phenomenology of existential feelings (Chapter Two).⁴
- to critically examine, both exegetically and philosophically, the two most prevailing strands of interpreting Wittgenstein's understanding of religion: the *grammaticalist* (Chapter Four) and the *expressivist* (Chapter Six). In order to develop the conceptual framework for these discussions, an examination of the later Wittgenstein's concept of 'certainty' and the contemporary discussion of it will be needed (Chapter Three), as well as his understanding of psychological concepts more generally (Chapter Five).
- to develop an understanding of the Christian religious belief-*attitude*, i.e. to give an answer to the question what *kind* of beliefs are religious beliefs about God, compared to the basic or 'hinge'-certainties on the one hand, and inferential/'scientific' beliefs or opinions on the other? Our understanding of religious beliefs will be based on the detailed discussion of Wittgensteinian and Tillichian understandings especially (Chapters Four and Six).
- to develop an understanding of Christian God-talk by: a) looking at language through its 'six functions' (Jakobson 1990: 77) (Chapter Five), b) relating this way of looking at language to Wittgenstein's view of language as originating in 'primitive reactions' (Chapter Five) and Merleau-Ponty's focus on linguistic innovation (Chapters Five and Six), as well as by c) focusing on the *expressive* and *representational* functions of language in general (Chapter Five) and of Christian God-talk in particular (Chapter Six).

⁴ An earlier version of this interpretation of Schleiermacher's 'feeling' which provided a lot of material for Chapter Two in particular, has been published by *Religious Studies* in Andrejč (2012).

- to introduce and elucidate, both phenomenologically and theologically, the idea that certain (remarkable) existential feelings or changes in them can be 'religious-belief-inviting' (Chapter Six), and to combine the insights on religiously relevant existential feelings (Chapters One and Two), on the Christian belief-attitude (Chapters Three and Four), and the nature of basic Christian God-talk (Chapters Five and Six), into an overall picture of the interrelatedness of these phenomena.

The last aim described above also sets out the sequence of broad theme clusters in the thesis: Chapters One and Two move (roughly) from a general phenomenology of feelings towards a phenomenology of existential feelings with theological interpretation; Chapters Three and Four move from general 'Wittgensteinian' reflection on belief-attitudes towards a discussion of the 'religious' belief-attitude; and, Chapters Five and Six move from a general philosophy of language towards a philosophical and theological discussion of God-talk. In addition, Chapter Six also brings together all the different strands of this study into an integrated and 'cross-methodological' understanding of the interrelations between existential feelings, beliefs about God and God-talk.

While our reasoning throughout this study will progress logically, i.e. we will introduce new concepts and views as and when this will be needed for the development of our 'overall picture', this progression is not meant to constitute a neat 'cumulative argument' or even a connected set of arguments which would start 'from scratch' and presumably demonstrate a probable conclusion. Instead, the reasoning of this study is an interconnected set of phenomenological and conceptual elucidations, where their interconnections may not be obvious at every step of the way. However, it is hoped that, after the reasonings presented here are evaluated together at the end, a consistent and insightful theological-philosophical picture will emerge, one that introduces more clarity than it does obscurity – in fact, it is hoped that it would dispel some obscurities and misunderstandings which linger on in the contemporary philosophy of religious experience, Wittgenstein scholarship, Schleiermacher

scholarship, and the philosophy of Christian religious belief and language more generally.

CHAPTER ONE

Phenomenology of Existential Feelings within a Broader Philosophical Context

1.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next contain a philosophical discussion of Christian religious experience, with a special focus on the role of feelings in such experience. In the present chapter, we will arrive at a general philosophical understanding of feelings (especially of the so-called 'existential feelings') which will then be applied in the discussion of feelings in Christian religious experiencing.

We begin the chapter with a brief examination of the 'analytic perception model'¹ of Christian religious experience – represented here by Richard Swinburne, Keith Yandell and (especially) William Alston – which will lead our attention to certain deeper, methodological assumptions that predispose their view of feelings and their role in religious experience, the assumptions which 'analytic perception model' shares with Folk Psychology. However, this examination will serve us only as a point of departure, i.e. as a rather extreme position² (but popular in analytic philosophy of religion) from which our own understanding of feelings in Christian religious experience can be most clearly distinguished.

To prepare the philosophical terrain for the exposition of our view, we will first briefly examine and compare different views on feelings in recent philosophy: the Folk-Psychological or 'add-on view', the 'intentionalist view', and the

¹ It is important to note that the 'analytic perception model' examined here is distinct from some other recent philosophical re-appropriations of the 'spiritual senses tradition' in Western Christianity, represented by Sarah Coakley, for example (Coakley 2003; Coakley & Gavrilyuk 2012).

² Among the critiques of dominant analytic models for epistemology of religion which have influenced the work of this chapter in somewhat more indirect ways than those which are quoted in the thesis, are different versions of the feminist critique of epistemology by Jantzen (1995, 1998), Anderson (1998), Griffith-Dickson (2000), and Coakley (2003).

'existentialist view'. It will be a version of the latter that we will adopt: a perspective that builds on the work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others, and which focuses not so much on *emotional* as on 'existential' feelings (Ratcliffe). This phenomenological category is then elucidated through a phenomenological philosophical reflection, as well as critically examined. The view of felt experience that focuses on existential feelings will enable us, in subsequent chapters, to offer a philosophically and theologically fruitful way of thinking about aspects of Christian religious experience that we deem theologically, ontologically, but also (potentially and indirectly) epistemologically important.

1.2 Critical reflections on the 'analytic perception model' of Christian religious experience

1.2.1 The assumption of irrelevancy of feelings

William Alston's book *Perceiving God* (1991) contains detailed and original engagement with the then current epistemological critiques of theistic religious experience. His consistent and rigorous theistic epistemology of 'Christian mystical perception' has been hugely influential, transforming the whole field of analytic epistemology of religion and contributing substantially to contemporary analytic epistemology more generally. It may seem rather unfair, therefore, that we will here, its academic merits notwithstanding, focus only on certain points of his account of religious experience which turn out to be, from our point of view, problematic. We must do so, however, exactly because of the influence of Alston's epistemology of religious experience, and because of our specific focus on philosophical accounts of feelings and of how feelings are thought to feature in Christian religious experience.

In fact, the question of the place of feelings in religious experience is not a side issue for Alston: when he argues that God can be directly *perceived*, he does this partly as an answer against those 'who construe (mystical) experiences... as purely subjective feelings or sensations to which is superadded an *explanation* according to which they are due to God, the Holy Spirit, or some other agent recognized by the theology of the subject's tradition' (Alston 1991:

16). This attempt to avoid the presentation of (theistic) mystical experience as having primarily – let alone ‘only’ – to do with *feelings* turns out to be a systematic feature of Alston’s overall argument. Alston goes to considerable length to justify the choice of the term ‘perceive/perception’ in relation to the instances of God-experiences which are reported by mystics in Christian tradition. In his view, the feelings which typically accompany religious experiences (that much is admitted by Alston) occur only ‘in reaction’ to what are properly cognitive processes of ‘mystical perception’:

One nagging worry is the possibility that the phenomenal content of mystical perception wholly consists of affective qualities, various ways the subject is feeling in reaction to what the subject takes to be the presence of God. ... Our inability to specify any other sort of non-sensory phenomenal qualities leads naturally to the suspicion that the experience is confined to affective reactions to a believed presence, leaving room for no experiential presentation of God or any other objective reality (ibid. 49-50).

If religious experience could be ‘reduced’ to feelings in such a way, Alston worries, then all that would really remain experientially are merely ‘affective qualities’. For him, this means that any cognitive elements that may be involved can be nothing more than an *unsupported* belief (‘a *believed* presence’) to which any feelings that are experienced are a reaction. To escape this picture, Alston argues that, instead of stemming from feelings or affects more generally, mystical experience should be understood as analogous to our experience of other people, where, according to Alston, we first have to *perceive* other people via sense-perception, and only then we can have *felt* experience of them as ‘friendly, hostile, demanding, open’ or similar (ibid. 50). So, if Christian mystical perception is epistemologically worth any money at all, it has to involve ‘distinctive, *nonaffective* phenomenal qualia’ at their core (ibid. 51; emphasis mine). The reason why we are tempted to explain religious experiences as primarily feelings-based is, Alston argues, due to our lack of an appropriate language to describe the ‘nonaffective qualia’ experienced by the mystics; but this lack is understandable, given the sporadic and non-stable nature of the perception of God in comparison with sense-perception.

It has to be noted that Alston does not deny the *possibility* of, for example, a kind of all-embracing *felt* experience of mystery that is experienced as God-directed (the position he sees advocated in the works of Karl Rahner) (ibid. 34). He also allows a possibility that some religious feelings could be *cognitively* significant in a way that, as explananda, these can then be theoretically explained most 'naturally' from a Christian theistic perspective (ibid. 35). In a somewhat untypical moment, Alston even allows 'a possibility in principle' that affective experiences (like feelings of ecstasy, delight, bliss, love, peace, awe and wonder) could even mediate a veridical perception of God (ibid. 50). However, he then explains:

But although I do not see that it is impossible that a direct perception of God should be effected through affective qualities, I can't see that the supposition that this is so is any more than a suspicion, based on our lack of an intersubjective language for mystical nonaffective qualia.
(Alston 1991: 51)

From all this it should be clear that Alston, as it has been noted, exhibits a 'continuing reservation about the role of feelings in religious experience' (Wynn 2005: 15).

A similar refusal to allow feelings into a theistic philosophical discussion of religious experience is evident in the works of Richard Swinburne (1991) and Keith Yandell (1994). Throughout Swinburne's description of the five types of religious experience (Swinburne 1991: 249-252), considering these types as 'exclusive and exhaustive' (ibid. 252), a complete absence of the words like 'feeling', 'affection' or 'emotion' is notable.³ Instead, Swinburne regularly – although not as systematically as Alston – uses 'perception' and its cognates, as well as 'sensations', by which he means either the 'auditory or visual or other describable sensations', or some kind of sensations that are *analogous* to sense-perception, like 'sixth sense' (implying that this 'sixth sense' is similar to the remaining five in an epistemologically relevant way). We will return in

³ As one of these five types of religious experience, Swinburne (1991: 251) includes 'religious experiences which the subject does not have by having sensations', mentioning descriptions by mystics of their experience of God as 'nothingness' or 'darkness', as possible instances of such type of experience. But even here, remarkably, Swinburne avoids any reference to feelings, affects, moods or emotions (ibid.).

Chapter Four to some other features of Swinburne's well known, broader account of justification of theistic belief and his central emphasis on the inductive, science-like reasoning as the correct model of religious belief-formation; what we need to note here is that, when treating religious experience as a possible source of knowledge of God, Swinburne comes very close to Alston with his use of perception-language, consistently keeping 'feelings' or 'affects' out of the picture.

And, on the few occasions when Keith Yandell mentions feelings in his *The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (1994), this is always done in connection with *introspective* experiences that are defined in a sharp contrast to *perceptual* experiences (Yandell 1994: 42-43). As opposed to the latter kind, the introspective experiences are not veridical and have no epistemic value in Yandell's view. The category of 'feelings' is related to experiences that 'have no object, apparent or real' (ibid., 200) and which 'are not intentional' (ibid. 305-6). On the one hand, we can talk about 'momentary psychological states' like a 'feeling of bliss' (ibid. 281) which can at best be an acceptable affective *reaction* to perception of God. On the other hand, Yandell notes that other, more sentimental kinds of feelings are sometimes wrongly taken as 'evidence that God exists', quoting a testimony by the country singer Dolly Parton (ibid. 206) as an example. In general, then, Yandell's view of the relation of feelings to (potentially) epistemologically-relevant religious experience is – just like that of Swinburne – very close to Alston's, with a difference that Yandell's hard and exclusive distinction between introspective and perceptual experiences does not, even in principle, allow the possibility of any cognitive value of feelings, as Alston's view does at least *in principle*.

We do not need to continue with this demonstration to make the point that, notwithstanding the notable differences between their other epistemological views, Alston, Swinburne and Yandell see feelings or affects as epistemologically irrelevant part of any (even potentially) veridical religious experience, or worse: from the standpoint of the analytic perception model, admitting feelings as having any significant role in theistic belief-*formation* (and not being a 'mere reaction') would be tantamount to invalidating theistic belief.

1.2.2 The assumption of the cognitive-conative divide

Why this aversion towards the role of feelings in religious experience? One of the reasons lies, we suggest, in the fact that the strand of Western analytic epistemology to which these philosophers belong often includes a deep-seated assumption, or 'rule of grammar', sometimes called 'the assumption of cognitive–conative divide' (Helm 2001: 4). This methodological rule tends to go beyond the unproblematic attributions of the adjectives 'cognitive' to any process which apparently results in us (or other animals)⁴ adopting what we⁵ call 'beliefs' (true or not, knowledge or not), and 'conative' for any process which is apparently closely connected with what we talk about as volition, desires, wishes or preferences. Rather, it can rise to a wholesale theory of the mind and presuppose a sharp distinction between two basic kinds of mental states which supposedly constitute the 'basic architecture of the mind' (Nichols and Stich 2003: 13). These two are *cognitions* and *conations*, paradigmatic cases of which are taken to be *belief* and *desire*, respectively.⁶ The defining difference between one and the other kind of mental state is defined in relation to the *direction of fit* which characterizes each:

[Our] cognitions, such as belief and judgment, have a *mind-to-world direction of fit* in the sense that when there is a conflict between what we cognize to be the case and what really is the case, it is our cognitions that ought to change in order to conform to the world in order for these cognitions to be successful – to be true. ... By contrast, our conations,

⁴ The suggestion that animals have beliefs is, of course, strongly contested in much of Western philosophy, either analytic, continental, or even postmodern strands, mostly due to the understanding that there is no sense to talk of belief apart from linguistic structure (c.f. Hutto 2012). On the other hand, in cognitive science it is quite common to attribute beliefs to animals (for example, Bermudez 2003. For a useful overview, see Andrews 2011).

⁵ By 'we' I mean especially societies which have been decisively influenced by the Hellenistic and Judeo-Christian traditions. See Needham (1972) for an anthropological examination of relativities involved with the meaning of 'belief' and similar (but sometimes notably different) concepts in the cultures that have not been so influenced.

⁶ In accordance with their adherence to it, Nichols and Stich call the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide 'the basic architecture assumption' (Nichols and Stich 2003: 13). The cognitive-conative distinction is sometimes described also simply as the contrast between 'belief and affect', or 'cognition and affect'. For a good overview of the versions and terminologies used to express the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, see Hutto and Ratcliffe (2007: 1-16).

such as desire, have a *world-to-mind direction of fit* for when a conation is unfulfilled, it is the world that ought to be changed in order to conform to our minds in order for our conations to be successful – to be satisfied. (Helm 2001: 4-5)

Cognitions assess whether something is true or not, or probable or not; the standard of truth of cognitions is the world which is independent of the mind. Conations assess whether something is satisfactory or not, desirable or not. The standard of such assessments is ourselves, that is, our mind (broadly conceived). Crucially, the two directions of fit, and hence the two kinds of the intentional states, are *mutually exclusive* and, according to the received wisdom, *exhaustive* (ibid. 5-6). One and the same state of mind cannot be a cognition and a conation simultaneously.

Bennett Helm (2001: 5) claims that this divide ‘reinforces and is reinforced by’ the fundamental distinction in western philosophy between theoretical and practical reason. As the story goes, epistemology, as a meta-reflection on theoretical reason, should therefore deal only with cognitions: beliefs, judgments, inferences, and with any other processes or faculties which are deemed as bringing about beliefs – indeed, such that, at least potentially, bring about justified/warranted true beliefs.⁷ The belief-forming processes characteristic for immediate sense-perception and the simple beliefs which result from these are considered as a paradigmatic, albeit simple case of theoretical reason in action (more complex but still paradigmatic cases are beliefs enjoying very broad consensus by the natural-scientific communities, and the belief-forming processes that bring those about). By contrast, the notion of instrumental rationality or practical reason is related to deliberative action which corresponds to conations and the concerns about how to make the world to correspond to our minds. It is not with explanation or facts that practical rationality is connected, but with ethical considerations, like those of responsibility, virtues, free will, and similar. By the lights of the powerful assumption of the exclusive cognitive-conative distinction in the Western

⁷ Usually taken to be the ‘traditional four’: reason, sense-perception, memory and testimony – where the former two are understood as more fundamental than the latter two.

analytic tradition⁸, then, epistemology must remain concerned with those processes, faculties and states which produce beliefs, and, equally importantly, legislate those states of mind which distort the truth-aimed processes out of the realm of a legitimate epistemological concern, taking the case of sense-perception and the resulting perceptual beliefs as paradigmatic. As we have seen, 'feelings', no doubt, receive such a treatment from the pen of the analytic epistemologists of religion considered above.

But one might ask (and here we are getting closer to philosophy of feelings and emotions): why are 'feelings' or 'affects' seen as enemies of cognition? Or, in the case of Alston, Swinburne and Yandell, why is any involvement of feelings in religious experience seen as a threat to its cognitive nature, let alone its knowledge-producing capacity? It is not hard to understand the worry that desires, wishes and personal preferences would distort the process of acquiring knowledge. Do feelings, according to this analytic-epistemological picture, belong in the basket of 'conations', together with the states of mind mentioned above?

Not necessarily. By the advocates of the analytic perception model of religious experience, feelings can be seen as falling outside the realm of 'basic states of mind' altogether. But, in order to understand why the strong reservation towards feelings and their cognitive value is maintained despite distinguishing feelings from the category of conations, we have to look somewhat closer at contemporary discussions of emotions, feelings, and other 'affects'.

1.2.3 Philosophy of emotions and feelings

Developments in the philosophy and psychology of emotions and feelings in the last three decades have brought about many differing views, not all of which can be examined or even mentioned here. We will examine, however, a few influential positions or 'conceptual regimes' and then expound on one with which we will engage most extensively (the existentialist view of feelings).

⁸ See, however, Robert Audi's (2001) attempt to emphasise parallels between theoretical and practical reason and to offer a unified account of rationality that encompasses both kinds of Reason.

One traditional school of thought within analytic philosophy with a particularly strong tendency to talk about the human mind exclusively in terms of the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide is the so-called Folk Psychology, i.e. ‘a network of principles which constitutes a sort of common-sense theory about how to explain human behaviour. These principles provide a central role to certain propositional attitudes, particularly beliefs and desires’ (Horgan and Woodward 1985: 197).⁹ Due to its systematic focus on beliefs and desires, Folk Psychology either ignores affective states such as feelings (Kusch 2007: 175), or these are defined as mere ‘subjective colourings’ and explained away as secondary feedbacks of bodily goings-on (Frijda *et al.* 2004: 458). As a rule, in Folk Psychology feelings are understood as a non-essential addition to the essential (or ‘basic’, or ‘primitive’) constituents of mind, i.e. beliefs and desires. Peter Goldie, a known dissenter from such a view, has called such a view an ‘*add-on view*’ of feelings, according to which ‘they can tell us nothing about the world and how to act in the world’ (Goldie 2004: 92). The add-on view operates with a common understanding of intentionality as ‘aboutness’ and directedness of mind at an object of thought.¹⁰ Whereas desires and beliefs are always directed at and about something, this is not so with feelings, according to Folk Psychology. In other words: beliefs and desires are defined as intentional states of mind (leaving aside ‘confused’ cases, such as desiring ‘something-but-not-knowing-exactly-what’), whereas feelings are defined as ‘non-intentional affects’ since they ‘do not have “directions”’ (Solomon 2003: 4). As we have seen from the above overview of Alston’s, but also Swinburne’s and Yandell’s position, the signature of this neat and clean folk-psychological division of mind is seen all

⁹ Among prominent defenders of various versions of Folk Psychology are David Lewis, Jerry Fodor, Shaun Nichols, Terry Horgan, Stephen Stich, and Ian Ravenscroft. See Horgan & Woodward (1985), and Nichols & Stich (2003) for influential examples of two different Folk Psychological theories. See, however, the recent edited volume by Hutto & Rattcliffe (2007), as well as Rattcliffe (2007) for wholesale criticisms of Folk Psychology from variety of perspectives.

¹⁰ This understanding of ‘intentionality’ can be traced back to Husserl’s notion, which in turn is a descendant of Brentano’s modern revival of it. Husserl thought that intentionality, as mental directedness and aboutness, is constitutive of the mental, i.e. that any ‘person’s relation to the world and the things in it must always be mediated by intentional content’ (Dreyfus 1993: 19). His view of intentionality has been influential in both phenomenological and analytic traditions (in the latter, it has been taken up most influentially by Elisabeth Anscombe and John Searle, but also many others). We will have more to say about different shades of meaning of ‘intentionality’, however, in Chapter Three. A useful introductory, historical overview of the evolution of meaning of ‘intentionality’ in Western philosophy can be found in Jacob (2010).

over their understanding of feelings in the context of their (non)-role in religious cognition.

Now, there are different variants of folk-psychological theory of mind, each mired in different and more or less serious philosophical problems (c.f. Hutto and Ratcliffe 2007; Ratcliffe 2007; Gallagher and Hutto 2008). We cannot afford even a short discussion of different versions of Folk Psychology, at this point; a problem on which we will focus, which can be associated with Folk Psychology across the board as well as with the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide more generally, comes out most clearly in philosophical (but also psychological and psychiatric) theories of emotions. Emotions, it is widely accepted, are bound up with or 'include' *feelings*, while they are at the same time considered to be *intentional* states: emotions clearly seem to be 'directed at something' (Deigh 2004: 9). Let's call the feelings, that are associated with emotions like fear of, hope for, love towards, anger towards, happiness because, etc., *emotional feelings*. It can be recognized that this very minimal and common-sense acknowledgement about emotions already presents a philosopher with an interesting problem: How can we envision emotions (intentional) to involve feelings (non-intentional)? The problem with emotions does not stop here: they also seem, at the first glance at least, to be cognitive and conative at the same time: for example, fearing an approaching dog seem to involve a *cognition* of the fact that dog is approaching as well as a *conation*, a willing to eliminate or avoid the danger which the dog presents.

The standard solution to this problem within the folk-psychological framework is to explain emotions as *compounded* states. If we accept the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, a pure or basic mental state cannot be both a cognition and a conation at the same time. So, if emotions could include both cognition and conation, as well as 'feeling' as something 'added on', emotions can only be quite complex and compounded states which can be compartmentalized and reduced to the more elementary ones – which implies that, for the purposes of theoretical understanding, emotions *should* be so compartmentalized and reduced (Helm 2001: 6). Such compartmentalization has also been suggested as a solution to the central debate of the last few decades in philosophy of emotions, the debate between cognitivist and non-

cognitivist¹¹ theories of emotions,¹² where the central question has been whether emotions are essentially conations (more like desires, for non-cognitivists) or cognitions (like beliefs or judgements, for cognitivists) or some combination of both. What remains primarily important for us at this stage is that, for scholars on either side of this debate who accept the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, feelings or 'affects' do not play any essential role in emotion: those roles are reserved for intentional and more 'basic' states like beliefs or judgements and desires or wishes.¹³

However, a dissenting school of thought with a growing influence in contemporary philosophy of emotion sees feelings as vital to human orientation in the world and decision-making, and even to cognition/knowledge. For example, Michael Stocker argues against the tendency to reduce emotions to the reason/desire duality and claims that this picture distorts our understanding of emotions. He argues that 'affectivity' or 'psychic feelings' are indispensable for emotions, as well as for other 'affective' mental states like 'moods', 'interests', and 'attitudes' (Stocker & Hegeman 1996). The reductive tendency of those who adhere to strict assumption of the cognitive-conative divide squeezes out precisely what is distinctive for emotions as such, argues Stocker: namely, feelings (ibid.).¹⁴ Then, we already mentioned Peter Goldie (2004) who argues that feelings (having in mind especially *emotional* feelings) can be intentional. An emotion such as fear of a burglar involves a 'feeling towards' an object (burglar), an affective state which is itself intentional, directed and should not be

¹¹ The cognitivist-noncognitivist debate regarding emotions should not be confused with the debate between cognitivist and noncognitivist theorists regarding *value*, where the main question is how deliberation of value is possible, given that we act out of our personal motives (conations) but use our judgments (cognition) in this process as well. In other words: 'what is the source of the norms governing both how we deliberate and the conclusions we reach?' (Helm 2001: 11; See also the whole section, pp. 8-20).

¹² See contributions of Deigh, Solomon, De Sousa, Goldie and Calhoun in the volume edited by Solomon (2004b). In fact, the view of some contributors (Deigh, Goldie) to this representative volume was that the cognitivist-vs-non-cognitivist debates have to be superseded or at least reframed. See below.

¹³ For two collections of different contemporary views (philosophical, psychological, and some neuroscientific) on emotions, including the 'standard' one I am summing up in this paragraph, see Solomon (2004b) and Frijda *et al.* (2004).

¹⁴ Interestingly, Stocker goes even further when he claims that nonaffective claims *in principle* cannot explain feelings: 'affectivity cannot be explained away, accounted for, or described just in terms of nonaffective worlds and nonaffective judgments' (Stocker 1996: 43).

analysed by way of breaking it down into a (supposed) pre-existent belief, plus a desire or wish, plus an unintentional bodily feeling which is then subjectively registered as a mere colouring of experience. Rather, claims Goldie, the kind of feelings he calls *feelings towards* are a case of ‘unreflective extraspective emotional engagement with the world beyond the body’ (ibid. 96). Similarly rich views of feelings that see these as intentional have been suggested by Deigh (2004), De Sousa (2004), and Wynn (2005), as well as by the later Robert C. Solomon (2009).¹⁵ What is common to these accounts – let’s call them ‘intentionalist’ views of feeling – is that, on the basis of their intentionalist and cognitivist understanding of emotional feelings, they *resist* the all-too-elegant reductive move by Folk Psychology philosophers and other theorists of emotion who analyse emotions strictly within the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide and break them down into either cognitive or conative states of mind. In other words, the intentionalists resist presenting feelings only as ‘subjective colourings’ added on to the ‘complex of interlocking judgements, desires, and intentions’ (Solomon 2004a: 76) that emotions essentially are.

Finally, in addition to these two strands we can talk about a contemporary ‘existentialist’ concept of feelings. Although this perspective can be traced through Martin Heidegger back to German Romantic tradition (including Schleiermacher, as we will later note), a very influential version of it can be found in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. There, Heidegger first objects to the misrepresentations of affective states in much of Western philosophy, which portrays them as merely ‘accompanying phenomena’ with no relation to cognition (apart from their tendency to distract and obscure it) (Heidegger 1996: 178). We could say that Heidegger and the intentionalists share a common strong resistance against the reductive and dismissive view of feelings, characteristic for Folk Psychology. However, Heidegger also develops what some consider to be a ‘highly original thesis’ (Solomon 2009: 291), the claim that certain phenomenological kind which he calls *Stimmungen* – traditionally translated into English as ‘moods’ – include very basic, primordial ways of our

¹⁵ Throughout his career, Solomon has, rather famously, defended a version of a cognitivist view by which emotions are ‘a kind of judgement – or rather, a complex of interlocking judgements, desires, and intentions’ (Solomon 2004a: 76); but whereas the early Solomon understood feelings as strictly non-intentional addition to emotions (Solomon 2003: 25-33), the later – more accurately, the *latest* – Solomon changed his view (Solomon 2009: 303-307).

finding-ourselves-in-the-world. These pre-subjective 'feelings of being' or 'existential feelings' (Ratcliffe 2008) are non-intentional states which are ontologically prior to the intentional ones and make the latter possible (Heidegger 1996: 126-131). A more detailed examination of this view follows below; Here we must add that the existentialist view does not, of course, deem all feelings to be 'existential', but can be combined with important emphases of the intentionalist view: While it focuses on the non-intentional but primordial, existential feelings, it can unproblematically recognize the phenomenological category of intentional, e.g. emotional feelings. Furthermore, there is no contradiction for the existentialist in recognizing that, in some contexts, we can also talk of some ways of feeling as relatively shallow 'colourings' of our life-world or experience which do not structure our whole being-in-the-world in any phenomenologically significant way. Such shallower feelings may not easily fall within the categories of emotional and existential feelings – but we can leave this particular question unresolved. The thrust of existentialist view(s) of feelings is a special emphasis on the 'feelings of being' and on their important, primordial role in the structure of our life-worlds which many schools of philosophy outside of the existentialist-phenomenological traditions have failed to notice or simply ignored.

Although this review of the three perspectives on feelings ¹⁶ had to be brief, it serves two purposes for us. Firstly, we can now place the understanding of feelings with which Alston's, Swinburne's and Yandell's epistemologies of religious experience operate in the broader landscape of perspectives on feelings and emotions which have considerable currency in contemporary philosophy. Because these philosophers are working strictly within the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, feelings can for them only be 'add-on' phenomena in relation to cognitively important states of mind, and as such are epistemically completely irrelevant or even potentially obscuring and distracting mystical 'perception'. It has been argued by Mark Wynn (who defends the intentionalist view of emotional feelings and emphasises the place of these in religious experience) that Alston's dismissive attitude towards feelings distorts, at least to an extent, an adequate grasp of Christian religious

¹⁶ This is not to deny that significant differences exist among the accounts of thinkers within each of these, rather artificially delineated, 'groups'.

experience (Wynn 2005, 2009). One of the main aims of the present study, however, is also to explain why a view that is strongly informed by the existentialist understanding of feelings has greatest potential to enable such a grasp, so far as this is philosophically possible. While we can agree with Alston that some feelings which have religiously significant roles are indeed non-intentional, this does not mean that such feelings cannot have a cognitive role in a broader and more *social* understanding of religious belief and knowledge. Such a role, too, has to be explained differently than this is done by the analytic perception model. And secondly, with the short overview of the different understandings on feelings we have introduced the distinction between intentional and non-intentional feelings, and within one and the other of these, the phenomenological categories of *emotional* and *existential* feelings, respectively. While this distinction can be critiqued and calls for further examination, it will be relevant both for our own view of Christian religious experience and for the interpretation of Friedrich Schleiermacher's theology of feeling we will examine in the next chapter.

But before we get there, we need to examine another aspect of the difference between the phenomenological-existentialist approach to thinking about religious experience and the analytic-perception model. For this purpose, we will examine (again) Alston's, Swinburne's and Yandell's views on the importance of a clear subject-object structure of any epistemologically relevant religious experience and then, by way of contrast, explain the phenomenological way of thinking about experience in general, with a special attention to what phenomenological 'method' has to say about the subject-object structure of experience. This will prepare our way for a longer explication of the existentialist understanding of feelings.

1.2.4 The demand for subject-object structure

In order to provide examples of Christian theistic experiences which could (potentially) yield knowledge about God, Swinburne, Yandell and Alston consider only those religious experiences which have a clear subject-object structure, or in case of Yandell, a subject-consciousness-object structure.¹⁷

¹⁷ Yandell (1994: 26-32) considers also other kinds of religious experience which do not have subject-consciousness-object structure, like experiences of moksha, nirvana, kevala, or what he

In his exploration, Swinburne (1991: 246) limits himself to 'experience which seems (epistemically) to the subject to be an experience of God (either of his just being there, or doing or bringing about something) or of some other supernatural thing'. He recognizes that many mystical experiences, either in Christianity or within other traditions (including nontheistic ones like Buddhism) are reportedly not of a 'supernatural thing' (by 'thing' Swinburne means, in most cases, a spiritual being like Mary, an angel, or Poseidon), but explains that, by choosing this definition, he wants to pick out only those experiences that 'have apparent evidential value in pointing towards the existence of God' (ibid. 247, fn). For Swinburne, then, only experiences with clear subject-object structure can 'point towards the existence of God' since they have at least an apparent evidential value. With this qualification and provided that experience is veridical, Swinburne refers to God as an 'object of experience' (269) or 'object of perception' (263-6), comparing God to physical objects with causal powers on us so that we perceive them (270), etc.

As already noted, Yandell draws a clear line between *perceptual* and *introspective* experiences (Yandell 1994: 42-43). This distinction is importantly related to the question whether the experience involves an 'object' of experience, or merely what he calls an 'aspect'. 'John has a perceptual experience ... if it (phenomenologically) seems to John that John is aware of an item that (if it exists) is an object with respect to John' (ibid.). Introspective experiences, in Yandell's understanding, concern *aspects* rather than objects. 'John has an introspective experience if John (phenomenologically) seems to be aware of something that (if it exists) is an aspect relative to John' (Yandell 1994: 42). As opposed to introspective experiences which are merely of aspects, 'Subject/consciousness/object experiences, when veridical or reliable, typically inform one about items that populate one's mind-independent environment' (ibid. 52). It is not surprising therefore, that Yandell devotes 'the bulk of [his] attention' (ibid. 43) to religious experience which can be construed

calls 'nature mysticism'. But he does not regard such experiences epistemologically interesting or relevant for a Christian theist. There are, of course, accounts within the tradition of analytic epistemology of religion which don't confine its attention only to those kinds of Christian religious experience that have subject-object structure: For examples, see Pike (1994) and Davis (1989).

as perceptual and has the subject/consciousness/object structure, according to the strict dichotomy he introduces.

Alston takes a similar approach when he criticizes the reluctance to talk of God as an *object* of experience by theologians like Schleiermacher, Tillich or Rahner. He explains that he understands God as object only in a *logical* sense, and not in an ontological sense since Christian God is, of course, a person and not an inanimate object/thing. He also doesn't think he is guilty of taking God to be simply 'one being alongside others' since he understands Him to be a 'supremely personal being with Whom we are in personal interaction and Who is eminently active in our lives' (Alston 1991: 31). Talking about existentialist theologians, he even suspects that 'there is a hidden agenda in some or all cases. That is, it may be that their aversion to thinking of God as an object of experience rests on a reluctance or refusal to recognize that there is such a being as God who objectively exists as such' (ibid.). Whether theologians such as Tillich and Rahner really were closet unbelievers or not, it is clear that Alston, Swinburne and Yandell, in order for God to be construed as something one *perceives* (as opposed to 'feels' or 'imagines'), they need God to experientially appear as a perceivable *object* against the perceiving subject, full stop.

Now, before we look closer at the phenomenological way of elucidating experience, we owe (to Tillich, and to the reader) a short theological comment on the above claims made by Alston. He explains that he talks of God as an object only in a logical sense: an object in the *structure of the sentence* in which the perceiver is the subject (Alston 1991: 31). Of course, no Christian theist except the most radical proponent of *via negativa* (a complete quietist) could object to this weak sense of constructing God as an 'object'. As Tillich himself writes, 'the theologian cannot escape making God an object in the logical sense of the word, just as the lover cannot escape making the beloved an object of knowledge' (Tillich 1973: 172). A somewhat different but – purportedly – also minimal 'objectification' of God is put forward by Yandell who defines the claim 'God is an object' simply as a claim that God 'exists independently' from the subject (Yandell 1994: 37). So, if we accept Yandell's purported meaning of 'God is an object', all Christians who believe that God *is real* (leaving aside the question here whether a claim 'God exists' is theologically or ontologically

sound or not) independently whether humanity exists or not, believe that 'God is an object'.

Arguably, however, 'something much more ontological' happens when we consider the overall reasoning and the chosen language of both Alston's and Yandell's epistemology. What appears to happen is exactly what Tillich warns against:

The danger of logical objectification is that *it never is merely logical*. It carries ontological presuppositions and implications. If God is brought into the subject-object structure of being, he ceases to be the ground of being and becomes one being among others (first of all, a being beside the subject who looks at him as an object). He ceases to be the God who is really God... (Tillich 1973: 172; italics added)

Alston is well aware of this comment (c.f. Alston 1991: 31) but denies that it applies to his 'objectification'. However, it is hard to see that Alston has evaded the dangers which Tillich warned against. The language of epistemology (as any other), with its strong analogies with sense-perception and the systematic emphasis on the subject-object structure, has a power and a tendency to structure our thought and, if taken seriously or/and religiously, even guide our way of life; thus it unavoidably portrays the *reality* spoken-of in certain ways and not in others. Alston, Yandell and Swinburne don't attribute the subject-object structure only to the linguistic *expressions* of religious experiences of God. They attribute it also to the (chosen) first-person *experiencing of God as such*. The consistent analogy of 'mystical perception' (or, 'perception of God') with sense-perception has strong ontological and theological implications, whether Alston and Yandell like this or not. It is impossible not to see such an approach, as Wynn notes, as 'theologically partisan':

[It] tends to be aligned with those theologies which represent God as a particular individual (as a 'supernatural thing'), *rather than thinking of God as a kind of context or ultimate frame of reference in light of which we can make sense of individual things*. This latter perspective, although not much discussed in recent philosophy of religion, is well represented in the theological literature. (Wynn 2009: 147-8; italics added)

Tillich, or a contemporary Tillichian, could, then, still justifiably insist that Alston's, Yandell's and Swinburne's model of religious experience have far-reaching ontological, theological and even religious implications since they strongly suggest ways of construing or 'seeing' God – just as Tillich's own emphasis on 'ecstatic experiences' (Tillich 1973: 172-173) in religion which transcend subject-object structures, is, of course, theologically partisan in another direction. It will soon become apparent that our theological preference between these two emphases lies much closer to Tillich's – but not without good reasons, or so we will argue. Important sets of reasons for choosing (in the later chapters) elements of Tillich's theology in our account of the relation of religious experience and belief come from an appreciation of phenomenological investigations of *being*, not 'being' as mere 'existence of objects' but as human 'senses of reality'. It was this kind of philosophical investigation that has led phenomenologists to a reflective attention to existential feelings and their role in the structuring of our life-worlds. And to this strand of phenomenology we now turn.

1.3 Phenomenological investigation of the sense(s) of reality

Phenomenology as a method of philosophical investigation rests on a different set of basic commitments from analytic or Anglo-Saxon philosophy, although several commitments are of course common to both traditions. As developed by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenological inquiry of human experience attempted to investigate and describe the varieties of human experiencing, i.e. to describe any phenomenon *as it is given*, refraining – as much as possible and as long as possible, at least – from explaining it or 'positing which objects exist in the world and which not'. Phenomenology aims to be especially careful not to legislate phenomena of experience or dismiss some in favour of others on the basis of pre-judged notions.¹⁸ Anthony Steinbock expressed the distinctiveness of phenomenology thus:

¹⁸ On this issue, the later or post-phenomenological continental philosophy, such as Deleuze's, Levinas's, Derrida's and Caputo's, remains on the same page as the early phenomenology, despite their criticism, not only of Husserl's but also of Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's

Phenomenology is a type of reflective attentiveness attuned to givenness that occur *within* experiencing itself.

[It is]...concerned not merely with *what* is there in experience, but with *how* this 'what' appears to us.... [Phenomenologists] have traditionally expressed this 'how' of the appearance under the general title of 'givenness' or 'modes of givenness'. Experience means the way or mode in which something is *given* to us. (Steinbock 2007: 3, 2)

From several contemporary philosophical perspectives, however, much of the language of early phenomenology sounds over-optimistic, quasi-scientific, or simply misleading. Take Husserl's conviction that phenomenology is, or at least could become, a rigorous science that 'could clarify all species and forms of cognition' (Husserl 1964: 4).¹⁹ While, according to a sympathetic reading, Husserl understood phenomenology as a reflective rather than an 'ontical' kind of inquiry – i.e. 'reflective' in the sense of being concerned with 'making manifest' what is given, and not with establishing the existence of entities – it was more clearly with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty that this potential of phenomenological reflection came to the fore. Philosophy, conscious of its own limits, became 'a matter of describing, not of explaining or analysing'²⁰ (*PP* ix). In other words: in the hands of post-Husserlian phenomenologists, philosophy was self-consciously becoming an inquiry which aims at clarification and phenomenological awareness and not at a construction of a theory (Crowell 2009: 10).

Among the central preoccupations of phenomenologists is the *sense of reality*. This is not a linguistically-structured intellectual assent to the claim 'I believe that the world exists', or some such. We have a sense of realness of the world

phenomenological projects (See, for example, Derrida's critique of Heidegger in Derrida (2008: 102-161)).

¹⁹ This quote is taken from Wrathall and Dreyfus (2009: 2).

²⁰ Compare Wittgenstein's famous claim in *Philosophical Investigations* that 'Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it' (*PI* 124). While Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'description' is not the same as Wittgenstein's, the 'descriptive shift' in the philosophy of each has recognizable common features: for example, the insight that philosophy should not be in the business of 'explaining or positing theories' in a scientific sense. We will return to Wittgenstein's 'principle of non-interference' and to the relation of Wittgensteinian philosophy to phenomenology of feelings, in Chapters Three to Six.

(including ourselves) *before* we intellectually assent to anything – a sense which is, according to Husserl and subsequent existentialist phenomenologists, a part of our ‘natural attitude’, and which also structures our social life-world.

According to Merleau-Ponty – as well as the later Wittgenstein (as we shall see in the later chapters) – this natural attitude is not something that is within our conscious control to adopt or dismiss (*PRPC* 91-92, 163; c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 4). Husserl believed that the phenomenologist can ‘bracket’ this taken-for-granted ‘world-belief’²¹, or, the sense of reality of the world, in order to describe and investigate it – a method which he termed the *epoché* or ‘transcendental reduction’.²² While this doesn’t amount to doubting the reality of the world, it was meant by Husserl as a certain abstraction from the natural attitude which he thought was possible and necessary for phenomenological reflection upon it. At times Husserl went so far as to hope for an ‘accurate description [of] ... pure consciousness’ of experience (Husserl 1977: 37-41).

As hinted above, such a quasi-scientific understanding of phenomenology was challenged and rejected, already by Heidegger and even more fully by Merleau-Ponty,²³ which is why the phenomenological project of the latter is sometimes described as ‘deeply antithetical’ to Husserl’s (Carman 2008: 37). Merleau-Ponty didn’t believe that an ‘accurate description’ of something like the ‘pure and unadulterated totality of possible experience’ (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 10) is a sensible notion in the first place. Phenomenological ‘description’ is itself always a creative linguistic enterprise and cannot escape entanglement in history and

²¹ Whether this ‘natural attitude’ or a sense of reality could be said to consist (also) of *belief* is contested and something to which we shall return in the later chapters, especially in our examination of Wittgenstein’s and subsequent Wittgensteinian concept of ‘hinge-beliefs’ (Chapter Three).

²² *Epoché* and transcendental reduction are described as two sides of the same phenomenological inquiry, where, ‘[in] order to disclose the “life of depth” the essentially negative *epoché* must be supplemented by a transcendental phenomenological reduction in which intentional correlation is made thematic. Husserl characterizes this as a reduction to “pure” consciousness, that is, to intentionality... described simply as it gives itself’ (Crowell 2009: 21).

²³ See Merleau-Ponty’s related criticism of both early Husserl and Heidegger, for defending an unjustifiable ‘antithesis of philosophy and psychology’ (*PRPC* 94). Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, according to Merleau-Ponty, ‘defines the attitude of the philosopher without recognizing any restriction on the absolute power of philosophical thought’ (ibid.). Merleau-Ponty thought that Husserl and Heidegger should have realized – as the *late* Husserl did, in Merleau-Ponty’s opinion – that the relation between philosophy and psychology can only be ‘one of interdependence and reciprocity’ (ibid.).

the world; it necessarily rests on or includes a creative/constructive element of *expression*. As Heidegger wrote, 'we must not reinterpret what is phenomenologically given into expressions' – meaning *verbal* expressions – since the latter 'first originate in that one expresses them' (Heidegger, quoted in Wrathall 2009: 44). Even more clearly, Merleau-Ponty says:

The most important lesson which the [Husserlian] reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction. This is why Husserl is constantly re-examining the possibility of the reduction. If we were absolute mind, the reduction would present no problem. But since, on the contrary, we are in the world, since indeed our reflections are carried out in the temporal flux on that which we are trying to seize ..., there is no thought which embraces all our thought. (*PP* xv)

In other words: since our reflection is always 'in real time' and our thinking about any awareness or experiencing always *post eventum*, we cannot directly *think* or *observe* experience. There simply is nothing like 'introspection' which would be something like 'direct inner perception of consciousness', a process which wouldn't be a reflective, historical, 'post-event', and to some extent a necessarily creative (instead of 'purely representational') enterprise. Introspection as a mode of reflective awareness is very unlike scientific observation of the empirical world.

A related but even sharper criticism by Merleau-Ponty of Husserl's method (which hasn't lost its merit) as well as of analytic philosophy of Merleau-Ponty's time, is in the claim that both Husserlian and analytic philosophy presupposes that 'it can trace back the course followed by a prior constituting act and arrive in the "inner man"...', at a constituting power which has always been identical with that inner self' (*PP* xi). But this is illusory, since the self, or the subject, is not 'untouched by being and time'; it is not something stable and unchanging:

When I begin to reflect my reflection bears upon an unreflective experience; moreover, my reflection cannot be unaware of itself as an event, and so it appears to itself in the light of a truly creative act, of a

changed structure of consciousness, and yet it has to recognize the world ... as having priority over its own operations... (ibid.)²⁴

If this insight is worth its money, the subject or the self cannot be the fixed point in philosophising since it is itself unstable, precarious, constituted (whether we're aware of that or not) by the world, others, and oneself.²⁵ An important upshot of this is that the experiencing which conforms to the subject-object structure is not the ontologically most prior – or most 'fundamental', or 'deepest' possible, or 'primordial' – human experiencing. Merleau-Pontyan, as well as Heideggerian, phenomenology, therefore, takes us 'beyond a subject-object dichotomy often attributed to Western philosophical thought insofar as givenness is not necessarily attached to the appearing of an object over against a subject' (Steinbock 2007: 2).²⁶ In fact, together with the subject-object dichotomy, Merleau-Pontyan phenomenological reflection thoroughly questions also several other, hard and usually unproblematized dichotomies of Western philosophy, such as internal vs. external (inside vs. outside the mind), mental vs. non-mental, and last but not least, that 'particularly troublesome' (Ratcliffe 2008: 8) dichotomy 'between cognition and affect' (ibid.), often encoded in the wholesale assumption of the cognitive-conative divide we have outlined in the previous section.

²⁴ This Merleau-Ponty's argument is similar to Heidegger's critical re-definition of the 'self' (Heidegger 1996: 107-118, 137)

²⁵ It is worth noting that on this point, the Merleau-Pontian critique can constructively overlap with the psychoanalytical or Lacanian critique of the Cartesian subject as a stable starting point of thinking and unproblematized recipient of knowledge. It is through an ingenious application and interpretation of this Lacanian criticism of Cartesian subject that Grace Jantzen (1998) develops her argument against the systems of analytical epistemology of religion offered by Swinburne, Alston, and others. Our critique of the analytic perception model of religious experience, as well as more constructive account of it in the next chapter, can, to the extent that strands of Merleau-Pontian and strands of Lacanian criticism of the subject are compatible, be fruitfully combined with Jantzen's perspective.

²⁶ While Husserl's phenomenology has bracketed the existence of 'objects' and focused, among other things, on the sense of their realness, it has left the subject largely intact from 'phenomenological criticism' and has taken for granted Brentano's assumption that intentionality or directedness to objects (of thought) is a constitutive of the mental – something which, again, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty questioned. But even in his reflections on the givenness of objects, Husserl sometimes talked of 'hyletic data' which were supposedly pre-given in consciousness as sensations and which are then, according to Husserl, passively synthesised by the mind into properties of objects (Crowell 2009: 23). In rejecting such 'qualia' notions, Heidegger's and especially Merleau-Ponty's phenomenologies have significant points of compatibility with Wittgenstein's critique of any notion of 'data of consciousness', unlike Husserl's phenomenology.

By now, we hope that some of the reasons why a type of phenomenological enquiry seems to hold more potential for philosophical investigation of religious experience are becoming clearer. We will probably find such reasons persuasive especially if we suspect, either on theological or some other grounds, that affections may be philosophically and theologically significant for much Christian religious experiencing, or if we are inclined to take seriously the experiences of 'loosening' or even 'dissolving' of the subject-object structures in such experience (say, in relation to either God, or nature, or social context) which are characteristic of influential strands of Christian mysticism (and much mysticism beyond Christianity, of course, such as Buddhist or Sufi-Muslim). We want to attend to any expressions of such experiences – and many such have been and continue to be expressed in Christian tradition – and possibly to attend to and make manifest anything similar in our own real-life 'thrownness into being'.

A consequence of adopting such an approach of philosophical reflection for any possible 'epistemology of religious experience' would have to be, first, to abandon the starting point of the analytic perception model. If even the most basic insights by phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty are on the mark, the analytic perception model, both in treating God as 'an object of perception', as well as in treating the subject or self as a stable and unproblematic cognizer of such perception, is phenomenologically untenable. Phenomenology has a different basic orientation, as it 'has more to do with determining what the subject matter, in this case religion, really *is*, than with determining whether religious beliefs are justified' (Crowe 2008: 3). This doesn't mean that the phenomenological approach is incompatible with *any kind of* epistemological thinking that involves religious experiencing. But, if much mystical as well as more mundane religious experiencing can transcend the clear-cut subject-object structure, the demand for such a structure by Swinburne, Alston and Yandell as a pre-condition for any potentially knowledge-producing religious experience should be given up. Steinbock, in his recent phenomenological investigation of mystical experience as described by Teresa of Avila, Rabbi Dov Baer and Ruzbihan Bahli, expresses a worry with the ways in which much of Western epistemology deals with religious experience, along similar lines:

The presence of God is experienced [by Teresa, Rabbi Baer, and R. Bahli] in terms of epiphanic givenness of grace, hence, not provoked as is the case of the presentation of objects; [The] very formulation [by epistemologists] of the difficulty [with epistemological validity of mystical experiences] occurs for us because we live in the modern Western prejudice that 'the self' is the point of departure for these or other experiences. The assumption is that the individual self is self-grounding, and furthermore that we are somehow outside of the presence of God at the beginning and then possibly enter into his presence. We assume ourselves to be secular and then have to add on a religious dimension. This, however, is a reversal and an abstraction. The experiences of the mystics that we examined here were testimony to the opposite. Comparing God to a palace, ..., St Teresa, for instance, considers the possibility of ever being outside of this presence, even if we strive to be. She reflects: 'Could the sinner, perhaps, so as to engage in his evil deeds leave this palace? No, certainly not; rather, within the palace itself, that is within God Himself, the abominations, indecent actions, and evil deeds committed by us sinners take place'. ...

Since we are not self-grounding, the religious dimension of experience cannot in principle exceed human experiencing but is the mode of human experiencing itself. ... [T]he self-grounding character of the subject... is not primary, but when taken as the starting point, is already an abstraction from this ongoing generative movement that is ... the religious dimension of experience. (Steinbock 2007: 143, 145)²⁷

Like Steinbock, we will focus on the dimension of experiencing that assails the subject, i.e. that is in important respect pre-subjective, as that dimension which is 'most religious'. Certainly, such an attitude, just like our Tillichian rejection of the objectification of God by the analytic perception model, includes a theological preference; however, we suggest that such a preference is phenomenologically maximally responsible. In any case, we have now explained, I believe, the need to start our investigation from a very different

²⁷ Steinbock also chides the reserved attitude of much of Western philosophy towards emotional/felt experience along the lines of the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide as 'an act of unequalled arbitrariness' (Steinbock 2007: 158).

starting point than the analytic perception model. The discussion also brought us to the phenomenological category which tries to guide our attention to the realm of experiencing which transcends the subject-object distinction, namely, to the categories of 'moods' and 'existential feelings', a more detailed look at which is a subject of the remainder of this chapter.

1.3.1 Existentialist phenomenology of (existential) feelings

Heidegger in his *Being and Time* devotes some philosophical attention to affects in general and 'moods' in particular. At the centre of this significant work is the question about the meaning of Being, i.e. about a sense of what it is to be (Heidegger 1996: 2-3); in particular, the goal is to understand the human being's kind of being, which Heidegger calls *Da-sein* (ibid. 12). In order to illuminate the phenomenological 'structure' of our basic experience of being ('Da-sein's being-in-the-world'), Heidegger introduces several concepts; we will limit our attention to two of them: *Befindlichkeit* ['attunement'] and *Stimmung* ['mood'].

Heidegger coined the term *Befindlichkeit*²⁸ from the common German question 'Wie befinden Sie sich?', which translates as 'How are you?' or 'How do you feel?', but also as 'How/where are you situated?' "'Sich befinden"... has three allusions: The reflexivity of finding oneself; feeling; and being situated' (Gendlin 1978-1979). Heidegger explains (1996: 124) that we should view our 'being in the mood' (*Stimmung*) as attunement (*Befindlichkeit*). The mood is 'so far from being reflected upon that it precisely assails Da-sein in the unreflected falling prey to the "world of its heedfulness" ... It comes neither from "without" nor from "within", but rises from being-in-the-world itself as a mode of that being' (ibid.: 129). At the most fundamental level, moods include primordial feelings that disclose our relatedness to the world.²⁹ They are feelings that are not

²⁸ Gendlin (1978-1979) estimated that Heidegger's concept of *Befindlichkeit* is one of the most frequently misunderstood of his concepts, despite its central importance in *Being and Time*. Several scholars and translators have had difficulties in translating and explicating it (Ratcliffe 2008: 47). Joan Stambaugh, who had the privilege of having personal discussions about this term with Heidegger, translates *Befindlichkeit* as 'attunement' (c.f. Heidegger 1996: xv). She also approves translating it as 'disposition', which is a term of choice for Strasser (1977) who distinguishes between 'dispositions' and 'emotional feelings'. Stambaugh (in Heidegger 1996: xiii-xv), Gendlin (1978-1979), and Ratcliffe (2008: 47) all argue that Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of *Befindlichkeit* as 'state of mind' is inadequate.

²⁹ See Heidegger (1996: 63-66) for his understanding of 'the world' here.

understood as 'merely' internal states of mind, although they are, of course, felt *by* humans (who are *also* minds).

It is worth noting that the social dimension of Heidegger's 'Da-sein's being-in-the-world' is constitutive of it: it 'is always already with others' (ibid. 117), so that even 'knowing oneself is grounded in primordially understanding being-with' (ibid. 116).³⁰ There are aspects of sociality, then, that are prior to the fully constituted subject (which is not the same as saying that sociality *completely* constitutes the subject). And, if moods don't have a clear-cut subject-object structure, they are not only 'pre-subjective' but also 'pre-cognitive':

[Heidegger] departs from the traditional conception of feelings as sensuous states that 'merely accompany' the so-called 'higher faculties' of will and reason, and from the usual practice of classifying moods according to their qualities of pleasure, pain, and desire. Heidegger's basic idea is that moods are a unique and primary way of disclosing Dasein's Being-in-the-world, and a disclosure that is prior to the 'cognitive' disclosure of the so-called 'faculty of reason'. (Smith 1981)

There are moods which constitute our 'fundamental attunement' or a sense of belonging to the world before the abstract conceptualizations of the 'world out there' and 'me inside' (or 'the inner man') take place.³¹ Such moods (e.g. *Angst*, see Heidegger 1996: 172-177) are not intentional (they are not directed at an object), but make intentional states (including beliefs, emotional feelings, and articulated desires) possible (Heidegger 1996: 129).

As already mentioned, Matthew Ratcliffe (2008) has recently introduced the concept 'existential feelings', which is developed out of Heidegger's concept of 'moods'. In part, Ratcliffe's motivation for introducing this phenomenological category was to pick out feelings that do not fit well into the category of 'emotions' or 'emotional feelings'. He argues that categorizing all feelings as 'emotional' would 'obscure the important difference between states that are intentionally directed at particular objects, events or situations in the world, and

³⁰ See also Gendlin (1978-1979).

³¹ Compare Strasser's (1977: 182-184) treatment of 'dispositions'.

others that constitute backgrounds to all our experiences, thoughts and activities' (ibid., 37). Existential feelings are defined as:

non-conceptual feelings of the body, which constitute a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality. They are not evaluations of any specific object, they are certainly not propositional attitudes and they are not 'mere affects'. (ibid., 39)

Although developed out of Heidegger's 'mood', Ratcliffe's 'existential feeling' (EF) is a somewhat different concept. First, when Heidegger describes examples of 'moods', he discusses only a very restricted list, focusing for the most part on the contrast between an *everyday* mood and that of *Angst* or an 'uncanny feeling' (Heidegger 1996: 176; See also the whole discussion, ibid. 172-179). While Heidegger does include also 'elation' or 'joy', 'boredom', and possibly a few more such states³², Ratcliffe (2008: 39) argues that there can be much greater variety of EFs, with corresponding (or greater) varieties of expressions of them. Second, he suggests that the role of the body in our experience (including feelings) is essential and very relevant (not least for a fruitful interaction of phenomenology with scientific understandings of feelings),³³ although it is not really addressed by Heidegger's account. To remedy this, Ratcliffe builds his account of EFs also on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception with its emphasis on our *embodied* being, as explained below. And third, EFs include a variety of ways of feeling which can be '(a) short lived, (b) sustained over a period of time or (c) retained over the course of a life as habitual temperaments; but the English term "mood" only seems suited to (b)' (Ratcliffe 2008: 55). Accepting these reasons as weighty

³² For a 'list' and a discussion of these, see Smith 1981. See, however, Heidegger's inclusion of the *intentional* feeling of 'fear' also among the 'moods' (Heidegger 1996: 131-134). This means that Heidegger did not use the term *Stimmungen* to denote only non-intentional feelings, but also at least some of what we here call emotional feelings. He does note an important difference, however, between *fear*, which attunes us only to the particular fearful object, and *angst*, which attunes us *fundamentally* to the world (Heidegger 1996: 173-177). Only the latter would fall under Ratcliffe's category of 'existential feelings', and not the former. But we will disregard this exegetical point about the meaning of *Stimmungen* or 'moods' in Heidegger's *Being and Time* since it is not very relevant for our purposes.

³³ For a somewhat different psychological-phenomenological application of Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmungen* to our bodily relations with our environment, see Gendlin (1978-1979).

enough, we will use Ratcliffe's notion of 'existential feelings' rather than 'moods'.

Existential feelings are never absent, since 'all experience is structured by some variant of existential feeling' (ibid. 40). But in what ways are existential feelings expressed (in English, in the contemporary British, American or other English-speaking social contexts today)? Ratcliffe offers many examples from different contexts of expressions of what can be 'ways of experiencing the self, the world, and also the self-world relation, the three aspects being inextricable' (Ratcliffe 2008: 37). But some very simple expressions can be when people say they feel 'complete', 'separate and in limitation', 'at home', 'invulnerable', 'empty', 'at one with life', 'completely helpless', 'at one with nature', 'there', 'real', or 'disconnected from the world'. Also, 'the world can feel *unfamiliar, unreal, unusually real, homely, distant, or close*' (ibid. 7). While such feelings can be closely related to intentional, emotional feelings (e.g. traumatic emotional episodes in life can cause temporary or permanent alterations also in existential feelings, or, both kinds of feeling can 'flow' one into another in experience), it makes sense to accept that people often express with such expressions the ways in which they feel existentially, not just emotionally.

Many varieties of EF are 'mild' and constitute the background of what we consider to be normal life-experience or senses of reality. This can be Heidegger's 'everyday moods', or feelings of moderate 'disconnected-ness' from one-self, from others, or both, or from one's surroundings in general (which may last for a moment, for days, months or longer). It will probably also be considered 'normal' by most of us to feel, at what retrospectively may turn out to be a rather special time, 'more real' or 'intensively alive'. But, in addition to such cases, Ratcliffe also examines expressions of existential feelings in art (for example, Sylvia Plath's felt descriptions of a radical estrangement from the normal social life in her *The Bell Jar*) (ibid. 65-69), as well as in medical literature, such as radically unusual existential feelings experienced by people who suffer from schizophrenia, the Capgras illusion, or the Cotard delusion (ibid. 139-216). He combines a phenomenological approach with relevant psychiatric research for a diligent study of such cases, where his underlying methodological conviction is that it is often by analysing the unusual cases and

dramatic changes in EFs that an awareness and appreciation of the more 'normal' variants of EFs is possible for most of us.

Lastly, there is some attention in Ratcliffe's book also to existential feelings which are usually understood as more 'healthy' but may still be unusual, like those that feature in intensive mystical experiences, as well as in more moderate religious experiences (ibid. 272-275). However, there is much less attention devoted by Ratcliffe to existential feelings in mystical and religious experience than in, for example, schizophrenia. He devotes but a few pages where religious experiences feature in his essay to re-interpreting William James's position on religious experience which, according to Ratcliffe, is often misunderstood, as well as relating this reinterpretation to an illuminating discussion of 'philosophical stances' in terms of existential feelings (ibid.).

A prolonged discussion of the role of existential feelings in religious experiencing follows in the next chapter of our study. For now, we will simply state what is suggested by Ratcliffe and what we will, in essence, accept and then elaborate in the next chapter, namely that *many kinds of religious experiences in many religious traditions involve existential feelings*, although they are not, of course, 'solely a matter of existential feeling' (Ratcliffe 2008: 275). Our aim is not to trace, ethnographically, expressions of existential feelings in different religions. Rather, our phenomenological discussion will be conjoined, for the most part, with a distinct theologically-inspired attention especially to Christian religious experience. However, in order not to lose a broader perspective, here is how a non-Christian, Eastern mystic/Western physicist Fritjof Capra expresses his extraordinary experience:

I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing, when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance. ... I 'saw' cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I 'saw' the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in the cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I 'heard' its sound, and

at that moment I *knew* that this was the Dance of Shiva. (Capra 1992: ii)³⁴

On the other hand, in Christian contexts there are expressions of ‘feeling God’s intensive presence in everything’, ‘feeling shut out from God and from people’, or ‘realizing that the whole universe is a giant miracle of creation’, and similar – all these can be illuminated, we will argue, by employing the concept ‘existential feelings’. More examples and discussion of EFs and religious experience, especially Christian, follow in the next chapter; what only we might add for now is that, either in religious or non-religious contexts, the descriptions/expressions of EFs are normally highly metaphorical, sometimes not easily expressed, nor (theoretically) categorized (Ratcliffe 2008: 36-37).³⁵ Nevertheless, we can and do verbally express such ways of feeling to one another, as well as, of course, non-verbally (musically, with visual images, dance, etc.). Furthermore, we sometimes also talk *about* such feelings, of course, and do this more or less successfully: i.e. we talk about feelings in a somewhat more detached way, when verbally representing them *post eventum* and then reflect on this talk – as we do now. Such more theoretical talk of feelings is not without its risks, however – we will be reminded of these risks in Chapter Five (5.2.3) when examining Wittgenstein’s critique of the ‘atomic sensation’ theory of mind which Wittgenstein (*LPP* 281-282), rightly or wrongly, saw in William James.

1.3.2 Existential feelings and the body in the work of Merleau-Ponty and Ratcliffe

Before bringing this exposition of phenomenology of existential feelings, which largely draws on the work of Matthew Ratcliffe, to a close, we need to mention also the ways in which we may think about our body as the framework through which we feel, in general, and *existentially* feel, in particular. Ratcliffe attempts to remedy Heidegger’s account of Da-sein (Ratcliffe 2008:55-57), which he sees as largely ‘disembodied’, with Merleau-Ponty’s lucid phenomenological investigation of the embodied character of our being-in-the-world. A good place to begin this short examination of the relevant elements of Merleau-Ponty’s

³⁴ This reference is taken from Mark Wynn (2005: 69).

³⁵ For the discussion of the metaphorical nature of God-talk, see Chapter Six (6.2.1).

perspective is his critique of Western epistemological orthodoxies. There is a programmatic emphasis in his corpus that we humans properly understand ourselves, as well as perceive the world, not as disembodied minds, or simply as physiological machines – as a dualist and a reductionist, respectively, would have it – but as *living bodies*. According to this ‘bodily point of view’ (Carman 2008: 132) the body *as a whole* is a perceiving subject: ‘the self’ which is usually thought of as an entity of the mind and not the body, actually *is* the body, completely and fully. It is also crucial for any philosophical analysis of us in the world that – however trivial this sounds – the *body is (a part of) the world*:

The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions. Truth does not ‘inhabit’ only ‘the inner man’, or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself. (*PP* xi-xii)

For Merleau-Ponty, sensory perception is constituted by our bodily situatedness in and engagement with our surroundings. It is important to appreciate the distinctiveness of this understanding: We do not perceive the world of objects as detached subjects, as it were, in an indirect way through our ‘sensations’ (in the sense of ‘qualia’). By contrast, we already and completely *are an integral part of the world* we perceive in a way that the movement of us-in-the-world is constitutive to perception. Moreover, our head-turning, proprioception, touching, body position, focusing of our eyes, etc. are harmoniously intertwined with our conations and felt appreciations (ibid. 158-162) and constitute our ‘ordinary coping in the world’ (Taylor 2005: 34) which is *prior* to any knowledge. This understanding is distinct and opposed to Alston’s picture, for example, according to which we must first perceive other people *through* the intermediary of any of our five senses, which then produces a reliable knowledge of the existence of that person, so that only then can we have an ‘affective reaction’ (Alston 1991: 50). If Merleau-Ponty’s view that sense-perception is shot through and through with affectivity and participation is appropriate, the ‘detached-perceiver’ picture that emerges from Alston’s epistemology cannot be right.

A strand of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology which plays a crucial role in Ratcliffe’s account of existential feelings is the contrast between two

perspectives on the body: the *lived body* as a 'field' through/with which we feel, think and orient ourselves in the world, as opposed to the body *represented* or *felt as an object* of experience or thought (*PP* 84-102). The latter is the case when we specifically focus our attention toward our body or a certain part of it. For example, we can feel the (painful) thumb on our left foot in a focused and intentional way after we incidentally bump it somewhere. On the other hand, the lived body *in its totality* cannot be an object of experience because of its all-encompassing nature.

This 'lived body' or 'the feeling body' as Ratcliffe calls it (2008: 106-7) is understood as 'a framework through which world-experience is structured', so that the body 'can play an experiential role without being an object of experience' (*ibid.*). This account is somewhat different from and even opposed to the contrast, mentioned in the previous section which is suggested by the intentionalists regarding feeling (e.g. Goldie, Stocker), the contrast between 'feelings of the body' and 'world-directed feelings'/'feelings towards'. Instead, drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Ratcliffe offers three workable categories of how to think the body's role in feeling: (1) feeling as a direct experience of something other than the body *through* the body (*emotional* feelings), (2) feeling as constituting our relatedness with the world as completely embodied (*existential* feelings), or (3) a 'self-directed' feeling when the body feels 'itself' or any part of it ('*bodily*' feelings) (*ibid.* 36).

While not intentional, the felt 'pre-objective' aspects of our experience undergird or make possible for us the directed or intentional feelings and discursive thoughts – let alone anything with a status of 'knowledge'.³⁶ However, (the earlier) Merleau-Ponty did claim that, on the basis of our bodily engagement within the world (both natural and social), humans possess a kind of

³⁶ We should note here Merleau-Ponty's clarification of the relation between the 'pre-objective view' and 'knowledge':

The reflex, in so far it opens itself to the meaning of the situation, and perception; in so far as it does not first of all posit an object of knowledge and is an intention of our whole being, are modalities of a *pre-objective view* which is what we call being-in-the-world. ... [This pre-objective being-in-the-world] determines, infinitely more than they do, what our reflexes and perceptions will be able to aim at in the world, the area of our possible operations, the scope of our life ... It is because it is a pre-objective view that being-in-the-world can be distinguished from every third person process, from every modality of the *res extensa*, as from every *cogitatio*, from every first person form of knowledge – and that it can effect the union of the 'psychic' and the 'physiological'. (*PP* 92)

preconceptual understanding, and only on the basis of this sort of (felt) understanding can attach sentences, phrases and words to situations, things and events. An often quoted passage describes this ‘pre-objective understanding’ via an analogy:

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the country-side *in which* we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is. (*PP ix-x*)

Such an understanding is possible only from the perspective of an engaged bodily agent (Taylor 2005: 46). Merleau-Ponty rejects any philosophical theories of realism that first accept a boundary between the subject, supposedly dwelling in her inner world of sensations/representations, and the outer world of physical objects, for which the subject first needs to establish that it is ‘out there’ and ‘real’ before she can have justified beliefs about it. Actually, we are already *there*: we *are* the world; we are in the world before we begin to think, conceptualize, and much before we do philosophy or theology. Philosophical doubt in the ‘external world’ is only possible at the expense of ignoring or being oblivious to this kind of understanding we possess on the basis of our bodily engagement in the world. This is why – and here we find probably a strongest point of contact between Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein and Heidegger³⁷ – ‘...an adequate phenomenological account of ourselves and our experience of others ought to silence rather than answer the epistemological question...’ about the possibility of knowing whether the world is out there at all, ‘...just as our concrete experience of the world and others always inevitably smothers such doubts in real life’ (Carman 2008: 136).

We can now see how Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of embodied mind complements a Heidegger-based account of moods/existential feelings - a

³⁷ In relation to the work which an adequate phenomenological account of Da-sein should be able to do, Heidegger writes: ‘It is not a matter of proving that and how an “external world” is objectively present, but of demonstrating why Da-sein as being-in-the-world has the tendency of “initially” burying the “external world” in nullity “epistemologically” in order first to prove it. ... After the primordial phenomenon of being-in-the-world has been shattered, the isolated subject is all that remains, and becomes the basis for being joined together with a “world”.’ (Heidegger 1996: 191)

complementarity well exploited by Matthew Ratcliffe in his overall account of existential feelings. The pre-objective engagement which we, as lived bodies, have with our environment is the locus of what is described by Heidegger as 'Da-sein's being-in-the-world', and is experientially manifested in feelings. The fact that we are an integral part of, and have this felt relation with, the rest of the world, is also epistemologically significant; however, this significance is not in a 'directly perceptual' way, but in an indirect way at best. It is not only, or even primarily, 'physically true', but also 'in-depth-phenomenologically', that any cognition or knowledge that we may possess as individuals or as communities is possible only because of our embodied being-in-the-world. The distinction between the perceiving self and the 'outside world of objects' is a posterior, abstract construction to ontologically prior, pre-objective, and felt being-in-the-world.

1.3.3 Two criticisms of the concept 'existential feeling'

Before putting the notion of existential feelings into use in our philosophy of religious experience, we need to meet two most obvious criticisms of the concept of existential feelings. Since we are not positing, at least not directly, feelings as 'existences' or advancing scientific theories about affect, we will not engage with scientific literature on feeling here.³⁸ The criticisms in which we are interested in this chapter are themselves largely phenomenological – they question the 'reading' and the very conceptualization of these kind of feelings as 'existential feelings'.

The first criticism says that what Heidegger (1996: 175) describes as 'moods' which 'disclose the world as world' and Ratcliffe as 'existential feelings' are actually not a separate *kind* of feelings, but simply 'generalized emotions' (Solomon 1993: 71), as Robert Solomon has argued.³⁹ An emotional feeling of, say, disappointment that results from a painful rejection by a loved one can become an all-encompassing feeling of disappointment. According to Solomon,

³⁸ See, however, Ratcliffe's extensive engagement with psychological and psychiatric literature in his interpretation of existential feelings, especially in chapters 4-7 and 10 in Ratcliffe (2008).

³⁹ To quote his exact words, Solomon insists rather carefully 'that this [Heidegger's] distinction between emotions and moods is not a sharp distinction, and that the relationship between emotions and moods is one of mutual support and even identity' (Solomon 1993: 112). This is in keeping with our exegetical point above (fn. 32) about Heidegger's use of 'moods'.

such generalized disappointment is still intentional, yet now directed, not towards that loved person anymore, but towards 'the world', 'life' as a whole, or towards 'all people'. According to such understanding, we can talk about an emergence of a 'mood' or 'existential feeling' which colours all experience, directly out of an original emotional feeling – so much so that EF *is nothing more and nothing less than* that generalized emotional feeling (ibid.), although one may not be aware of one's own 'generalization' of one's emotions.

It is hard to deny that emotional feelings such as anger, sadness, or disappointment, but also gratitude or happiness, can significantly influence, sometimes for long periods of life, our ways of being-in-the-world, our 'sense of reality'. Most schools of thought in psychotherapy and psychiatry share a basic assumption that childhood anger, for example, can be 'buried' deeply in the unconscious and has, also by virtue of being unconscious, a power to significantly influence one's existential feeling (colour one's world) in the adult life – resulting, for instance, in indefinite but frequent 'bad feeling', or an often felt alienation from the social world, or an all-encompassing existential fear, or similar. In other words, emotional feelings, especially if these are strong and traumatic, result in existential feelings.

Ratcliffe addresses this challenge by distinguishing a causal or even a phenomenological *relatedness* between emotional and existential feelings which he accepts, from an *identification* of the two phenomenological categories, which he rejects. The latter would mean a complete lack of phenomenological distinction between one and other phenomenological kind. While at least some most recognizable EFs constitute the existential background of our discursive thought, emotional feelings, and other intentional states, the most recognizable emotional feelings do not. However, there is a multi-way relation between these so that sensory perceptions, beliefs, and emotional episodes can help focus one's attention to, but also to some extent influence, one's sense of reality or existential feelings. Despite this, Ratcliffe argues that 'the dependence is not symmetrical' (Ratcliffe 2012: 25): EFs determine the possibilities for thought, action, and emotional feelings in more fundamental ways than the other way around (ibid. 24-28).

Ratcliffe's answer to Solomon may seem rather too quick, but it does make sense. It helps to keep in mind that the argument between them is about *phenomenological* categories which are not, as such, 'observable' in a way that objects, i.e. existences in the world, are. When Ratcliffe insists that the world as a whole (phenomenologically speaking) '...is not an *object* of emotion, however general that object might be' (Ratcliffe 2008: 24), we should be aware that there is just no other way to 'argue' this other than inviting each other to reflectively 'realize' this through phenomenological attentiveness of the ways we feel. And, when Solomon is arguing against the distinction of the phenomenological categories of existential and emotional feelings, he is either in exactly the same position as Ratcliffe (i.e. engaging in a phenomenological elucidation), or he is engaging in a *causal* theory about how EFs come about. 'Introspection', as we've seen, is not a *scientific* method and should not be mistaken for scientific theorizing. A scientific discussion about the *causes* of this or that kind of feelings in the human body can be a very valuable, complementary disciplined exercise, but it cannot settle the phenomenological question – unless we subscribe to scientific metaphysics. For us that means the following: While we will find the category 'existential feeling' very much appropriate for phenomenological reflection on, or description of, religious experience, Wittgenstein's saying 'at the end of reasons comes *persuasion*' (OC 612) applies to any 'arguments' for adopting such a category (although this does not presuppose a hard and exclusive distinction between reason and persuasion/rhetoric).

A similar and yet somewhat different critique of the concept of existential feelings can be constructed on the basis of Charles Taylor's understanding of the 'subject-referring feelings' (Taylor 1985: 54-59, 76), or Bennett Helm's similar notion of 'reflexive emotions' (Helm 2001: 103-104). Helm defines reflexive emotions and desires as 'felt evaluations that are focused on one's being a certain kind of person' (Helm 2001: 104); their 'target' is oneself, whereas the targets of non-reflexive felt evaluations (emotions, desires, wishes, etc.) are other persons, objects or events in the world (ibid. 103). Reflexive emotions are pride, self-assurance, self-approbation, shame, mortification and remorse (ibid. 103-4), or feelings that one's own actions are or have been 'dishonourable', 'degrading', or 'shameful' (Taylor 1985: 55), but also feelings

that are related to one's 'dignity, ... integrity, or wholeness, or fulfilment' (ibid.). In an important sense, such feelings are *evaluative* in that they evaluate worth, desirability, or 'goodness' or 'badness' of actions or ways of being.

At least some reflexive emotional feelings are thought by Helm to constitute a kind of background sense of belonging to the world (understood by him as a 'social world'), which clearly overlaps with Ratcliffe's understanding of existential feelings (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 37). The problem is, of course, that existential feelings are thought to be neither intentional nor evaluative of any object, person or event (ibid. 39), not even oneself (self represented as object of feeling, that is). On the other hand, Helm describes reflexive emotions as being both intentional *and* evaluative, whereas Taylor also comes close to such descriptions of his 'subject-referring feelings' (Taylor 1985: 54-59). An additional and related strand of Taylor's thought on felt experiencing which we will meet again in Chapters Five and Six, is that *all* human feelings, and especially those 'higher' ones such as subject-referring feelings, are *constituted by language*:

'If language serves to express/realize a new kind of awareness; then it may not only make possible a new awareness of things, an ability to discern them; but also new ways of feeling, of responding to things. *If in expressing our thoughts about things, we can come to have new thoughts* [Herder]; *then in expressing our feelings, we can come to have transformed feelings* [Humboldt]. ... [The] development of new modes of expression enables us to have new feelings, more powerful or more refined, and certainly more self-aware. In being able to express our feelings, we give them a reflective dimension which transforms them. The language user can feel not only anger but indignation, not only love but admiration' (Taylor 1985: 233; emphasis added).

In short: both the idea of reflexive or subject-referring feelings, and the idea of human felt experience being constituted by language, tend to make the notion of existential feelings which are described as 'non-linguistic' as well as 'non-intentional' (Ratcliffe 2008: 37-39), all but inadequate.

Let's first address Taylor's thought that feelings are constituted or enabled by language. For a start, we should note that Ratcliffe doesn't claim that existential feelings are *pre-linguistic*, i.e. that language has *nothing whatever to do* with

how we existentially feel. In fact, most recently, Ratcliffe has more explicitly addressed this question and he now clearly recognizes a limited but definite influence of language on existential feelings:

It has been argued that, sometimes at least, the individuation of an emotion depends partly upon its linguistic interpretation I do not rule out the possibility that the same applies to existential feelings, that certain fine-grained distinctions made between existential feelings might be partly or wholly attributable to how they are interpreted. So the line between different existential feelings and different interpretations of the same feeling may, on occasion, be a very difficult one to draw. It becomes even more difficult once we acknowledge that existential feelings have a dynamic structure and that different interpretations have the potential to feed back into and reshape the relevant feelings.

(Ratcliffe 2012: 26-27)

We must distinguish this recognition, however, from saying that language as such *creates* new ways of feeling 'out of nothing', as it were. Language can enable us to *become attentive* to certain ways we feel (existentially or emotionally). Also, as Ratcliffe recognizes, existential feelings can surely be refined and even 'multiplied' as a result of linguistic communication, where by 'multiplication of existential feelings' we mean the claim that the very *naming* of novel or refined nuances of feeling can enable people to recognize, or recognize *better*, that particular nuance of feeling, reflect on it, 'explore' it further, etc. – with all the caveats about 'introspection' we've made above (feelings are not 'objects' of consciousness/inner perception!). However, these are, by and large, 'only' refinements of, and developments out, of the experiential-felt *being-in-the-world* which we inhabit. There is a 'below-linguistic', felt 'basis' which is 'already there' and which remains a feature of most of our highly conceptually structured experiencing – a feature which Merleau-Ponty called 'silence' (SG 43). So, existential feelings are not as such *created* by language, and this is one way of interpreting the general

existentialist dictum ‘existence is before essence’: [felt] being is before [conceptual] thinking.⁴⁰

As to the other idea, that existential feelings are nothing but subject-referring or reflexive sub-kind of emotional feelings: in fact, a conceptual framework which recognizes both existential and subject-referring feelings (the latter as a sub-category of *emotional* feelings) can be suggested, with acknowledging some blurred edges of these categories – there would be feelings where the line between pre-subjective and self-referring is not clear. Take the example of what we may refer to when talking about ‘*guilt*’. There can be a very much verbally-structured, self-referring kind of guilt which is often a relatively passing kind of feeling, related to a particular action (or non-action) of that ‘self’; on the other hand, there can be a different, deeply existential or ‘primordial’ guilt that constitutes the background of our being, a guilt that has been described as pre-subjective and which is ‘constituting the subject’ itself. Emmanuel Levinas related such guilt to the most basic notion of ‘responsibility for another’ (Levinas 1994: 114) – a notion to which we shall return in Chapter Two (2.3.4).

Admittedly, sometimes we can’t phenomenologically distinguish very well between these different kinds of guilt, or they may ‘flow’ one into another in a person’s life-episode, or be experienced as ‘fused’. But, according to Levinas and many who have recognized his descriptions as sensible, the concept of primordial guilt is to be distinguished from an episodic guilt, where the former can be seen as an existential feeling and the latter as a reflexive emotion.

More generally, we may affirm existential feelings as the more primordial, *less*-conceptual and non-intentional kind, and the subject-referring feelings as those that are much more deeply conceptually structured. We can think about the latter kind as special, distinctly self-aware kinds of emotional feelings. It would seem that it is often, especially if we become more aware and reflect on the varieties of our felt experiencing, possible to distinguish phenomenologically between feelings where *oneself* is an object, and the nonintentional existential feelings with no object which constitute the background to all experience. Again, we have no other ‘method’ here apart from non-scientific, attentive-reflective

⁴⁰ See also our further critical discussion of the inadequacies of Taylor’s view on the power of language to constitute our (human) experience in Chapter Five (5.3.2).

awareness, and no ‘theories’ but suggestions of such or other conceptual regimes. Hopefully, the *community* of genuinely attentive ‘reflectivists’ may come to common decisions regarding the use of phenomenological categories. Some such grammatical agreements are a stuff of common language-games, of course – for example, the distinction between ‘emotions’ and ‘moods’. Others – like the agreement that there is an important distinction between *reflexive* emotional feelings on one hand and existential feelings on the other – may be harder to achieve. But even if such agreement and the conceptual framework were to become more common, this would not be a *creation ex nihilo* of this categorical distinction, but as one involving genuine recognition, insight and resulting from greater reflective awareness.

1.4 Conclusion

We have now covered enough ground in terms of a general outline of phenomenological investigation of felt experience in order to be ready to turn our attention in the next chapter to (mostly) Christian religious experience and the role of existential feelings in it. We have mapped out different views of feelings in philosophy, and explicated the phenomenological approach to thinking about feelings, as well as explained the concept ‘existential feeling’ which will be very important for our study. Examining the analytic perception model of understanding Christian religious experience and the role of feelings in it, we have also rejected certain underlying presuppositions of such an approach, most notably the ‘assumption of the cognitive-conative divide’ as well as the demand for a subject-object structure for any religious experience which may even potentially be related to knowledge of God. Our investigation has not been epistemological, but it is in important sense *pre-epistemological* since an epistemology of religious experience without an attentive phenomenology will either assume or arrive at dubious understandings of the nature of such experience. Now, we need to examine an example of a philosophy of religious experience which holds more promise in terms of respecting the nature of existential feelings and their role in religion than does the analytic perception model: a philosophy based on the approach of Friedrich Schleiermacher.

CHAPTER TWO

Schleiermacher's '*Gefühl*' as Existential Feeling

2.1 Introduction

The framework for thinking about religious experience presented by Friedrich Schleiermacher more than two centuries ago is in many respects notably different from the Analytic perception model we examined in Chapter One. The main two aims of this chapter are: 1.) to reinterpret Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'philosophical theology of feelings' in the light of the phenomenology of existential feelings outlined in the previous chapter, and – more ambitiously – 2.) to offer an understanding of Christian religious experience deeply informed by such an interpretation of Schleiermacher.

Despite the fact that some of the work of this chapter could be considered exegetical (in particular in relation to Schleiermacher's *Speeches*), the main thrust of the discussion will not be historical-textual criticism of Schleiermacher. Our interpretative approach involves decisions about what is more and what less important in Schleiermacher's work, as well as a more modern philosophical and theological language through which we aim to take up and develop some of Schleiermacher's insights on religious feeling. While Schleiermacher's immediate context, influences, and audiences are taken into account,¹ the overall vision that encompasses both interpretative and constructive-philosophical aims of this chapter is to locate the discussion of interpretations of 'feeling' in Schleiermacher in relation to the contemporary philosophical discussion of the place of feelings in religious experience. We hope to show that Schleiermacher's theological and phenomenological attention to feeling (*Gefühl*) in religion deserves some reviving in the contemporary philosophy of religion, provided, of course, that we read it with a due critical distance.

¹ My understanding of Schleiermacher's embeddedness in the historical and ideological contexts of his time draws on Gerrish (1984, 1993), Lamm (1994), Crouter (1996, 2005), Bowie (1997, 1998, 2003), Nowak (2002), Marina (2008a) and Dole (2010), among others.

This chapter has an important place in the stream of thought presented in the overall study. It presents a phenomenological and, to a limited extent, theological groundwork for the in-depth discussion of the relation between existential feelings, beliefs about God and Christian God-talk which culminates in Chapter Six. It also provides an interpretation of Schleiermacher's understanding of felt religious experience which can be taken up fruitfully from the point of view of a Wittgensteinian understanding of religious *believing*, developed in Chapters Three to Five.

2.2 Social and nature-mystical interpretations of Schleiermacher's 'feeling'

Schleiermacher's understanding of feeling (*Gefühl*), both in his philosophy and his theology, has been disputed and interpreted in various ways. In part, this is undoubtedly because his concept of feeling, 'far from being merely ambiguous, is polysemous: "feeling" occurs with a very different meaning in different contexts' (Sorrentino 2010: 99). In addition to the well-known (and often misunderstood) claims about feeling, like the claim in the *Speeches* that 'religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling' (OR 22), namely, 'the basic feeling for infinite and living nature' (OR 24), and the equally well-known claim from *The Christian Faith*, developed earlier in the *Dialectic*, that feeling is 'immediate self-consciousness' (CF 3.2), there are several other 'definitions' of feeling in Schleiermacher's corpus which have posed a problem for those who wanted to present a consistent overall account.² This is not to say that there is no agreement on the understanding of 'feeling' in Schleiermacher whatsoever. For example, it is widely agreed that several of Schleiermacher's influential formulations of the concept *Gefühl* – especially in *The Dialectic* and *The Christian Faith*, but also *Aesthetics*, with a notable continuity all the way from the first edition of *The Speeches* – have important

² A helpful brief overview is provided in Hector (2010: 222-223), who lists the following descriptions of feeling in different Schleiermacher's works (apart from the ones quoted above): 'a disposition (*Gesinnung*)' (in the *Sendschreiben*), 'a "becoming-affected" (*Affiziertwerden*)' and a 'tuning' or an 'attunement' (*Stimmung*)' (in the *Ästhetik*), 'a determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*) of the self-consciousness' or 'the ground of each impulse' (in the first edition of *The Christian Faith*), and 'as astuteness (*Scharfsinn*) with respect to knowing, "conscience" (*Gewissen*) in respect to practical reason, and "tact" (*Takt*) with respect to one's manners' (Hector 2010: 222-223) in the *Brouillon zur Ethik* (BE). This is not a comprehensive list – see Hector (ibid.), both for the exact references in Schleiermacher and for a few more 'definitions' of feeling.

common emphases. For example, both the thought that feeling is distinct from reasoning and action, and that it is ontologically prior to both, are fairly uncontroversial constants. It is also not hard to see that the notion of feeling holds a central place both in Schleiermacher's theological and philosophical thought.

Notwithstanding this, the differences among the contemporary interpretations are sometimes striking. In our discussion, we will focus on a particular set of apparently opposing views, the contrast being that between social and nature-mystical interpretations. The former is represented by Kevin W. Hector (2010) and Christine Helmer (2003), and the latter by Thandeka (1992 & 1995). As we shall see, Hector claims that 'feeling' in Schleiermacher should be understood, first and foremost, as attunement to social circumstances – sociality is constitutive of feeling. With somewhat different emphases but similarly, Helmer relates Schleiermacher's understanding of the Church and Christ's person-forming activity in individual believers to his 'social mysticism', according to which the Church is co-constitutive of the distinct Christian experience, which at its centre involves religious feeling. On the other hand, Thandeka's nature-mystical interpretation sees the feeling of at-oneness – not with the Christian community, but – with *nature* through our organic being as the central and key understanding of religious feeling for Schleiermacher. Our choice of interpretations that belong to opposite ends of this 'social-vs-natural' spectrum will serve to show that the social and the nature-mystical interpretations of feeling in Schleiermacher can be successfully brought into a compatible account. This will be done by employing the notion of 'existential feeling' which can encompass most of the central claims of both interpretations while avoiding some unnecessarily exclusivist tendencies of each.

2.2.1 Social understanding 1: Kevin W. Hector

In a recent article, Kevin W. Hector (2010: 230) argues that Schleiermacher's notion of feeling should be understood as 'one's non-inferential attunement to one's circumstances'. He notes that, despite their differences, several of Schleiermacher's explications of feeling³ indicate that feeling for him denotes 'a pre-reflective harmony or at-one-ness between oneself and one's environing

³ *CF* 3; *CF* 32; *Dial O* 287; *Äst O* 46-51, 71.

circumstances. . . [which is] prior to knowing and doing, yet providing direction for each' (Hector 2010: 222). He quotes Schleiermacher's statement that in feeling 'the subject-object opposition is entirely excluded as inapplicable' (*Dial O 287*; Hector's translation), and the description of the feeling of absolute dependence as an 'immediate self-consciousness of finding-oneself-absolutely-dependent' (*CF 32*), to interpret *Gefühl* as 'how one finds himself' (Hector 2010: 223) in one's circumstances. Hector's conceptual framework draws, in part, on Heidegger's concept of attunement which we have examined in the previous section.

Beyond this basic reading, but still in a Heideggerian tone, Hector claims that, for Schleiermacher, such attunement is *inherently social*. By this he seems to mean more than the thought that feeling is merely 'circulated' in the community (clearly expressed by Schleiermacher in *CF 6.3-4* and *60.2*, for example). Hector claims that, since it includes a normative dimension which is a 'product of one's socialization in certain norm-laden practices' (Hector 2010: 227), we can explain 'a good bit' of what Schleiermacher meant by 'feeling' simply as internalization of custom.⁴ In accordance with this, all practical examples of non-inferential 'feel' for circumstances from a contemporary every-day life that Hector provides, in order to make clear how to understand feeling as attunement, are examples of one's attunement to some aspect of the social world (*ibid.* 223).⁵

Hector bases these stronger interpretive claims on Schleiermacher's understanding of *kind-consciousness* (*CF 6.2*), which could be described as a

⁴ Hector (2010: 220) presents his approach as a *pragmatist* one. In case it needs emphasizing, the claim that the community is prior to the individual in epistemology as well as in ethics is an important tenet of pragmatism. I will mention just two examples. According to Putnam, Dewey thought that we are communal beings from the outset. Even as a "thought experiment", the idea that beings who belong to no community could so much as have the idea of a "principle",... is utterly fantastic' (Putnam 2004: 98-103). Similarly, Rorty (1979: 171) writes that he sees knowledge as 'a matter of conversation and of social practice, rather than as an attempt to mirror nature'.

⁵ Hector describes the examples of 'feeling as attunement' with another descriptive definition of it thus: '*Gefühl* thus has to do with the innumerable ways in which one is affected by, and copes with, various circumstances prior to and apart from conscious reflection and judgement – the ways, in other words, that one is always already disposed toward or in "in tune with" oneself and one's environment. For example: one hears a Christian carol and is overcome with nostalgia (or revulsion); a teacher says "3 x 4" and the number "12" springs automatically to mind; one spies a misspelled word and it just looks wrong; a child runs in front of one's car and one hits the brakes before one has even realized what is happening' (Hector 2010: 223).

disposition, *essential* to human beings, towards a social/interpersonal way of existence with other human beings. Kind-consciousness is for Schleiermacher significantly co-constituted by feeling ('[everybody] always finds himself involved in a multifarious communion of feeling' (ibid.)) and in a dialectical relationship with self-consciousness – the two are understood as mutually shaping each other. Moreover, kind-consciousness and its expressions are necessary conditions 'for the continuous existence of the God-consciousness in every human individual, and also for its communication from one to the other in proportion to the different levels of human fellowship' (CF 60.3; see also 6.2-4,60.2). Hector puts Schleiermacher's claims that sociality, at least in the context of the church-life of the Christian community, is constitutive of 'religious' feeling⁶, at the very centre of his interpretation. Moreover, applying a pragmatist strategy to theology in taking social practices as 'theology's explanatory primitive', Hector suggests that all higher theological notions such as 'redemption' and 'indwelling of the Holy Spirit' are to be explained in terms of the former (Hector 2010: 242).

From the perspective of Schleiermacherian theology, an obvious question which suggests itself to Hector is: what about a particularly crucial instance of attunement in Schleiermacher's theology, namely Christ's own God-consciousness? According to Schleiermacher, Christ's God-consciousness was *not* constituted, at least not completely, by his social environment:

[Christ] must have entered into the corporate life of sinfulness, but He cannot have come out of it, but must be recognized in it as a miraculous fact⁷ [*eine wunderbare Erscheinung*]... His peculiar spiritual content... cannot be explained by the content of the human environment to which He belonged, but only by the universal source of spiritual life... (CF 93.3)

Christ's God-consciousness is understood here as 'something completely original' (Marina 2008a: 210), which transcends mere attunement to social practice. Hector seems to nod approvingly to this exemption of Christ himself

⁶ See also CF 32,100, 101.

⁷ Schleiermacher is careful not to define this 'miracle' in a sense of God's revelation as 'something absolutely supernatural' breaking into natural history. See CF (93.3, fn).

from his interpretation of religious feeling (including the God-consciousness in all other people except Christ). By positing that Christ's *complete* attunement with God preceded the founding of a community where this attunement circulates (Hector 2010: 230; See also Hector 2006: 318-319), Hector attempts to avoid the interpretive problem which a strongly-social understanding of 'feeling' in Schleiermacher would create in terms of the tension with Schleiermacher's theological understanding of Christ's God-consciousness.

2.2.2 Social understanding 2: Christine Helmer

At first glance, Christine Helmer's (2003) interpretation of 'feeling' in Schleiermacher, developed in her article on Schleiermacher's mysticism, may seem very different from Hector's. Notably, Helmer positively values the *mystical* element in Schleiermacher's theology of redemption, whereas Hector does not believe that his strategy 'would be attractive to those who appreciate Schleiermacher's "mystical" tendencies' (Hector 2010: 242). After a closer look, however, these two perspectives appear to be compatible, even mutually supporting.

Helmer argues against an influential interpretation and rejection of Schleiermacher by Emil Brunner, who famously accused the former of conflating nature and spirit and of abandoning the witness of the Bible by putting 'mystic human subjectivism' on the pedestal instead (quoted in Helmer 2003: 517). In the context of her argument against Brunner's accusations, Helmer consistently interprets Schleiermacher as a Christian 'social mystic' for whom the redemption of the individual believer 'is coconstituted with the creation of community' (ibid. 533) – the Church. She traces Schleiermacher's descriptions in the *Speeches* of mystical, felt communion, or even *union*, not with God but with all of humanity through loving relationships between human beings (*OR* 37-43), to his later 'soteriological and ecclesial construal of mysticism' (Helmer 2003: 533) in *The Christian Faith*, where Schleiermacher relates the subjective or mystical element of feeling closely to the communal element (life of the Church) (*CF* 32.1-3, 100.3, 101.2).⁸

⁸ Helmer's account does justice to something which Hector doesn't mention, namely that Schleiermacher's very definition of kind-consciousness is recognizably 'mystical': kind-consciousness is something 'which dwells in every man, and which finds its satisfaction only

People are assimilated into Christ's God-consciousness through the ecclesial mediation of *Christus Praesens*. One's relations to Christ and to the Church are therefore interconnected and related to the same kind of feeling; in Helmer's words, 'Christ's redemptive activity effects simultaneously the new creation of the individual and the constitution of the community' (Helmer 2003: 533). Helmer feels that in this way, the dangers of some of Schleiermacher's early mystical leanings, in which she sees a tendency towards annihilation of individuality through a felt union with the universe (either with non-human nature, or 'humanity'), are avoided via the later Schleiermacher's emphasis on Christ's person-forming activity in individual believers, which is still achieved through the spiritual community of the Church, however. For Helmer, crucially important is the inextricable connection between Schleiermacher's Christian social mysticism and his theology of redemption: '[for] Schleiermacher, the positivity of the Christian church is the condition for the possibility of a distinct Christian experience, which is the foundational redemptive experience of the believer with Christ' (ibid. 536), which is expressed in *The Christian Faith* by statements such as: '[Within] Christian communion, there can be no religious experience which does not involve a relation to Christ' (CF 32.1).

We can designate both Hector's and Helmer's accounts of feeling as *social* since: (1) both argue that the life of the Christian community, which involves 'deep' aspects of interpersonal relatedness and internalization of customs, is constitutive of distinct Christian experience, which for Schleiermacher is characterized by feeling. This 'multifarious communion of feeling' is a manifestation of kind-consciousness, which 'dwells in every man' (CF 6.2). (2) Both give a central place to Schleiermacher's claim that Christ's God-consciousness is circulated and transmitted through the community and that by this process an individual believer is brought into a redemptive relation with Christ (by partaking in Christ's God-consciousness). (3) Neither is sympathetic to nature-mystical strands of Schleiermacher's thought nor to interpretations which emphasize those strands.

It is to one such interpretation that we now turn.

when he steps forth beyond the limits of his own personality and takes up the facts of other personalities as his own' (CF 6.2).

2.2.3 Schleiermacher's '*Gefühl*' as relating to more-than-human nature

One of the more radical interpretations of Schleiermacher's notion of feeling is found in the works of Thandeka (1992, 1995). In a notable agreement with several contemporary philosophical interpretations/uses of Schleiermacher (for example, Redeker 1973; Bowie 2003: 183-220; Bowie 2005: 87-89; Frank 2005), Thandeka takes Schleiermacher's *Dialectic* as the key work to unlocking the meaning of *Gefühl* in Schleiermacher's corpus more broadly.⁹ In this important work Schleiermacher attempted to solve the problem which was left unanswered by Kant – or so was a prevailing view of the post-Kantian philosophers from Fichte, Jacobi, Hegel, to Schelling, who were trying to solve it in different ways (see Frank 2005: 17-23). The problem could be formulated in relation to the question of personal identity: What is it that guarantees the 'continuity' or 'identity of the self through time' (Marina 2008a: 89)? Different 'representations' or 'acts of consciousness' would be unrelated to each other if there were no 'identity of self-consciousness of the transcendental unity of the I' (c.f. Marina 2008a: 82). But what is it that underpins the unity of consciousness? Or, seen from an even broader perspective, bringing in the 'will' or 'conations' – what binds together 'thought' or cognitive receptivity (cognition) and 'will' or our active spontaneity (conations)? Schleiermacher's answer was 'feeling' or the 'immediate self-consciousness' (*Dial O* 286). Since neither reflection nor action can provide the linking of different moments into a whole, which must be the basis for the continuing self, Schleiermacher argues in the *Dialectic* that it is only feeling that 'contains an immediate reference to existence; it is the "feeling of Being"' (Frank 2005: 27; cf. Bowie 2003: 196-197) and can therefore be the transcendent ground of our being.

It is this 'existential encounter' which happens through the feeling of Being that 'lies at the core of Schleiermacher's life and work', claims Thandeka (1995: 13).

⁹ While Manfred Frank and Andrew Bowie (Bowie 2003: 183-220 and 2005: 87-89; Frank 2005) also take the *Dialectic* as the most important source for understanding Schleiermacher's 'feeling', their attention is more or less confined to the systematic philosophical aspect of Schleiermacher's 'feeling' (understood existentially, as 'feeling of Being') rather than the theological and mystical aspect. Thandeka, on the other hand, attempts to combine a philosophical interpretation with a strong focus also on the mystical-theological import of feeling, albeit in somewhat 'heretical' ways (from the perspective of Christian orthodoxy).

The most primordial stage of human consciousness - which she calls the 'initial stage of consciousness' - is a mystical experience of being:

At this stage, thinking is object-less and the self is subject-less.

Schleiermacher's reconstruction of the self is the self that emerges from this immediate encounter with the fullness of life. The self that emerges is human nature certain of itself and celebratory of itself *as an inextricable part of the nexus of natural world*. (ibid.; italics added)

According to Thandeka, it is at the 'null point of objective consciousness', the point of transition between thinking and willing (or, between two 'acts of thinking'), that the special experience of 'feeling of being' can happen. At this pre-cognitive and pre-reflective stage of consciousness we simply *are* the feeling of our nonindividuated self as a part of the natural world: the reality of the world is indistinct from the reality of oneself as a nonindividuated part of this world.

We are not individuated because thinking, which is the means by which we individuate, has been cancelled. Thus, as a nonindividuated part of the natural world, we are life, all of it! We are the world. (Thandeka 1992: 448)

So, in a stark contrast to Helmer's emphasis,¹⁰ it is exactly the non-individuated at-one-ness with the 'nexus of the natural world', including the very kind of cancellation of individuality against which Helmer's interpretation tries to build a theological defence, that Thandeka sees as central for Schleiermacher's notion of feeling and its greatest existential-theological insight.

We can notice some affinities between Thandeka's emphasis on 'feeling of Being' with the Heideggerian existentialist phenomenology, but even more, perhaps, with the Merleau-Pontian focus on the 'lived body', although she doesn't (explicitly) draw upon the work of either. By Thandeka's lights, feeling is (for Schleiermacher, and for her) a manifestation in our consciousness of the

¹⁰ It needs to be mentioned that in her more recent essay (Helmer 2010: 35-37), Helmer makes clear that she appreciates the central importance of 'the metaphysical understanding of "feeling"' in the *Dialectic* for the understanding of 'feeling' also in *The Christian Faith*. Yet, she still prioritizes the *CF* interpretation, since it 'fleshes out ... the "feeling of the lack" ... [developed in the *Dialectic*] in Christian theological terms' (ibid. 38).

fact that we are *embodied* beings (Thandeka 1995: 27, 99, 108). What cognitive thinking cannot do – namely, grasp or even ‘glimpse’ the transcendental ground of itself, which is life, our embodied, organic being – only feeling can. Since the feeling of being in which the subject-object distinction is cancelled is ‘the natal hour of everything living in religion’ (OR 32), Thandeka presses the point that ‘Schleiermacher, in stark contrast to Kant, celebrated the body as part of the human link to God’ (Thandeka 1995: 27). However, despite being ‘a link to God’, according to Thandeka this feeling of being is not only pre-reflective but also ‘pre-religious’ (ibid. 13, 104). This theoretical step ‘beyond the realm of the religious’, unacceptable for most contemporary Christian theologies¹¹ as well as theological interpretations of Schleiermacher, may be related to a notable lack of attention in Thandeka’s book (1995) to the relation of feeling to any aspect of religious community, the Church, or even interpersonal context in general. While we don’t find the claim here that the feeling of being is *pre-social*, it seems that Thandeka’s overall view at least suggests such a reading. To sum up: in clear contrast to Helmer’s, and even more to Hector’s interpretation, it is with an existential nature-mysticism, not social mysticism, that Thandeka connects Schleiermacher’s notion of feeling.¹²

Now, given these different and apparently contradictory interpretations of Schleiermacher’s notion of feeling, are we not forced to choose between social

¹¹ For example, the most influential theological schools in the UK in last twenty or more years – Postliberalism (Rowan Williams, David Ford, Nicholas Adams), Radical Orthodoxy (Catherine Pickstock, John Milbank), and Evangelicalism (Leslie Newbign, Alister McGrath, Tom Greggs), have been (arguably) partly formulated by virtue of their philosophical and theological arguments in favour of religious particularism and against any philosophical meta-theorizing about religion(s), which either starts from, or aims at transcending, a particular religious (Christian or other) point of view (John Hick, Paul Knitter and Gordon Kaufman having been seen as such) (See for example the essays by Williams, D’Costa, Newbign, and Milbank in the volume edited by D’Costa (1990)). Looking at Thandeka’s philosophical theology of feeling in the light of the particularism-vs.-pluralism discussions of the late 1980ies and 1990ies, we may (superficially) observe that Thandeka is more explicit about transcending religious particularity in favour of the supposedly ‘pre-religious’ feeling of Being than, for example, John Hick, whose ‘meta-theory of religions’ is still, at least purportedly, ‘religious’ (Hick 1989: 1) since it affirms the realness of ‘ultimate reality’ as something distinct from, or more than, ‘the World’ (ibid. 235-246). However, it is also true that Hick clearly believed in the possibility of ‘stepping back from one’s own tradition’ in order to provide a philosophical theory of all traditions from a standpoint of more or less dispassionate reason (Hick 1995: 42), which is due to his rootedness in the analytic tradition of epistemology.

¹² Elsewhere Thandeka does note Schleiermacher’s attention to intersubjective context, but she again emphasizes that Schleiermacher’s highest kind of feeling is the unitive experience . . . [that is] empty of thoughts and images’ (Thandeka 2005: 294). For Schleiermacher’s nature-mystical leanings in *The Speeches*, see (OR 25, 31-32, 53-54, 62, 68-69, 89, 95).

(Hector-Helmer) and nature-mystical (Thandeka) understandings? Or do we have to recognize a significant disunity in Schleiermacher's work? Or are these differences simply a result of selective focusing on some of Schleiermacher's texts and taking those as the key to interpret the whole, while ignoring or downplaying the others? By way of answering the last question, the answer must be 'yes' to a certain extent. Both interpretations have their favoured texts, which do seem to lend support to the greater, unifying claims they make about Schleiermacher's 'feeling'. One might conclude from this that there lies a serious inconsistency in Schleiermacher's work on the subject. While not insisting that Schleiermacher has been consistent in everything he wrote on *Gefühl* and its role in 'religion', we suggest that the answer to the first question above is, nevertheless, a qualified 'no'. We will now argue that the two interpretations considered here can be brought into a considerable proximity by a fairly unified account of feeling in Schleiermacher which is based on the phenomenology of 'existential feeling'. But our account will itself necessarily involve reading Schleiermacher's relevant works from another *particular* perspective – namely, from the 'existential feelings' angle – and take some of Schleiermacher's formulations of 'feeling' as 'more central' than others.

2.3 Schleiermacher's religious feelings as existential feelings

It is now time to have a closer look at Schleiermacher's writing. This 'look' will, for the most part, consist of a phenomenological reading of Schleiermacher's *Speeches*, especially the much-discussed Second Speech (OR 18-54), with connecting commentaries of the treatments of *Gefühl* in a few other significant works for our investigation, like *The Dialectic* and *The Christian Faith*. The choice of the *Speeches*¹³ is most sensible for our purposes for the following reasons: as a whole, the *Speeches* contain early formulations of most topics and positions, both philosophical and theological, which were later developed by Schleiermacher in more detail and sophistication in other works. Furthermore, the choice by the later Schleiermacher to narrow down his earlier, more inclusive understanding of feeling(s) as the 'essence of religion' (OR 22)

¹³ We will follow the text of the first edition of the *Speeches* (1799), translated by Richard Crouter and published in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series in 1988.

where a room for diversity of such feeling(s) is granted (although it may be a special *kind* of feeling, distinguished from other kinds, as we shall see), to the particular expression ‘feeling of absolute dependence’ (CF 4.4.) which is defined as no less than ‘[the] common element in all howsoever diverse expressions of piety’ (CF 4.1.) – this change from the earlier formulations in *the Speeches* to the later one in *The Christian Faith* doesn’t sit well with our more inclusive phenomenological focus on ‘existential feelings’, of which considerable variety can be a part of Christian religious experience. And finally: while the highly rhetorical, personal, and at times poetic style of the first edition of *Speeches* (1799), which we use here, may include a notable degree of conceptual ambiguity (MacKintosh 1945: 43-50; Proudfoot 1985: 10-11) in comparison with the later, more systematic works (like *Christian Faith* and *Dialectic*), it on the other hand contains the clearest efforts to phenomenologically *express* and investigate feelings which Schleiermacher understood to be ‘the essence of religion’, as well as efforts to direct readers’ attention to their own experiences. This provides us with a combination of a rhetorical-philosophical treatise (with a relatively ‘mild’ theological direction) with creative attempts to express religiously central, distinct kinds of feelings,¹⁴ which is, from our existentialist-phenomenological perspective, a preferable mode of writing than pure systematics. After all, it is not without good reasons that the *Speeches* have been described as ‘*the* classic of the genre of phenomenology of religion’ (Crowe 2008: 3).

2.2.1 ‘Intuition’ in the *Speeches*

As is well known, in the first edition of the *Speeches* the essence of religion is located not only in feeling (*Gefühl*) but in feeling *and* intuition (*Anschauung*). These two always go hand in hand; one without the other is ‘nothing’ (OR 31). While our focus is on feeling, we need therefore to look into the meaning of ‘intuition’ as well. This much is agreed by interpreters: ‘intuition’ here stands for some form of insight or cognition¹⁵ (Crouter, in OR 25, ftn9; Adams 2005: 36). It

¹⁴ Most notably, the celebrated ‘nuptial embrace’ passage (OR 31-32), but see also OR 41, 54, 106.

¹⁵ For the relation of Schleiermacher’s use of ‘intuition’ to its Kantian origins, see Ten Kate (2007: 401-403) who claims that Kant’s First Critique is ‘the exact source’ of the early Schleiermacher’s notion of intuition (*Anschauung*). See, however, also Lamm (1994) and Marina (2008a).

is also clear that the kind of intuition, which is the objective side of those all-important feelings which are 'the essence of religion' and 'intuits' the character of the universe as a whole (Schleiermacher terms 'intuition of the universe' (OR 24-25)). He writes, for example:

Religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling. It wishes to intuit the universe, wishes devoutly to overhear the universe's own manifestations and actions, longs to be grasped and filled by the universe's immediate influences in childlike passivity.

Religion ... lives its whole life in nature, but in the infinite nature of totality, the one and all; [it] wishes to intuit and to divine this in detail in quiet submissiveness.

[E]very intuition is, by its very nature, connected with a feeling. (OR 22, 23, 29)

Andrew Dole reads 'intuition' in these contexts as 'a view or an impression of some overarching, structural feature of the world as a whole or of all that exists; to have an intuition of the universe is to have a sense of its overall character' (Dole 2010: 82). It is worth noting that both 'intuition' and 'feeling' underwent changes of use/meaning from Schleiermacher's earlier to his later work. 'Intuition' in particular changed more dramatically, becoming almost entirely displaced by 'feeling' as the descriptor of the essence of religion by the time of the second edition of the *Speeches* (1806), and soon becoming associated much more with scientific knowledge instead (Adams 2005: 36-37; Forster 2002).¹⁶

But there is a considerable disagreement even regarding the meaning of 'intuition' in the first edition of the *Speeches*. Some have argued that 'intuition' is something non-conceptual (Crouter, in OR 25, fn9; Adams 2005: 36). Others, like Peter Grove, have suggested it is not only conceptual but 'an interpretation' (Grove 2004: 295; Grove 2010: 111). In terms of intentionality of

¹⁶ See also Dole (2010: 117-122) for an analysis of Schleiermacher's very clear differentiation of 'feeling' and 'intuition' in *Brouillon zur Ethik* [Notes on Ethics] (BE) written in 1805/1806, the time that roughly coincides with the second edition of the *Speeches*.

intuition in the *Speeches*, Brandt's fully cognitivist 'perception-model' of interpreting Schleiermacher's religious intuition, where intuition is intentionally directed at 'the Infinite' and is *prior* to religious feeling (Brandt 1968: 101-117), has been influential. Recently, Mark Wynn has used Brandt's intentionalist interpretation of Schleiermacher in his exploration of the intentionality of emotional feelings that feature in religious experience (Wynn 2005: 65-70). In a similar way, Adams also echoes Brandt's interpretation when he sees intuition as that half of the feeling-intuition pair which implies some kind of intentionality (cf. Adams 2005: 36). Working with a somewhat different philosophical approach, Dupre has interpreted intuition in the *Speeches* as an unfinished religious act that never reaches full intentionality although constituting a pull towards the religious 'object', which is, however, not really an object (Dupre 1964: 110). Like Dupre, Ten Kate sees intuition as a mediatory act between (non-intentional and non-conceptual) feeling and (intentional and conceptual) belief and knowledge, itself 'not coinciding with these opposite poles' (Ten Kate 2007: 396-397).

It may well be impossible to come up with a coherent meaning of 'intuition' in the *Speeches*.¹⁷ At places, it seems that Schleiermacher suggests something conceptual,¹⁸ possibly intentional; at other places, it seems he is talking about something non-conceptual and immediate.¹⁹ And, contra Brandt's reading, the

¹⁷ In addition to the works mentioned in this section, see also: Albrecht (1994), Lamm (1994 and 1996), Marina (2008a, 2008b), Proudfoot (2010), and Sorrentino (2010).

¹⁸ The claims which seem to indicate that intuition is something conceptual, are, for example, Schleiermacher's warnings that positing 'objective connection' between particular religious feelings and particular intuitions is 'completely opposed to the spirit of religion' since it falsely confines 'the whole of religion' (which is identified with religious feeling and embodied differently in many particular *religions*) to its own 'specific form' (OR 101-102); or, the claim that any two intuitions of the universe cannot be mutually opposed (OR 103); or the claim that every particular religion necessarily has one 'original' intuition of the universe as dominant in it and 'everything hereafter ... takes shape around it' (OR 104-105; 112-119). These formulations seem to presuppose logical connections between various intuitions, as well as some, however minimal, (conceptual?) content.

¹⁹ For example, Schleiermacher sharply distinguishes between intuition which is 'the immediate perception' on the one hand, and a building of a system or 'a whole' out of various intuitions, which is 'the business not of sense but of abstract thought' (OR 26); a similar thought seems to be implied by the statement 'What you know or believe about the nature of things lies far beyond the realm of intuition' (OR 29). Even more directly, in the discussion of the difference between theism and pantheism, Schleiermacher makes a distinction between 'intuition' and 'conceptualization', claiming that neither theism nor pantheism are 'separate religious intuitions' but 'different ways of ... *conceptualizing* the universe' (OR 103; emphasis added). Such ideas clearly express intuitions as something more primitive and direct ('perception'), in contrast with conceptual thought, especially of a more abstract kind.

formulations ‘intuitions of the universe’ or ‘intuiting... the infinite’ (OR 28) do not necessarily indicate intentionality of these intuitions, in a sense of an immediate directedness at something as *abstract* as ‘the universe’ or ‘the infinite’.²⁰ But we are not obliged to hold that Schleiermacher was consistent in his descriptions of ‘intuition’ or in his combined use of ‘feeling’ and ‘intuition’ in the first edition of the *Speeches*, let alone his use of ‘intuition’ in his overall corpus which, as we have already mentioned, has changed notably. Instead of offering definite exegetical conclusions, we can leave the question of the exact meaning of ‘intuition’, as well as of the relation of intuitions of the universe to religious feelings in the *Speeches*, open.²¹ We will, however, later in this chapter take liberty to sympathise with the creative interpretation of ‘intuition’ suggested by Dupre and Ten Kate, and entertain it as a possibility of a recovery of this concept in contemporary phenomenology of religion.

2.2.2 ‘Feeling’ in the *Speeches*

But now to our focal concept, ‘feeling’, where a less confusing picture emerges, or so we will argue. Schleiermacher clearly distinguishes feeling from discursive thought (which is necessary for beliefs, knowledge, and ‘metaphysics’) on the one hand, and from action (one’s deliberation and morals) on the other (OR 22-23). With the same move, he also locates ‘religion’ to a sphere entirely separate from ‘speculation as well as that of praxis’ (ibid.). Here, Schleiermacher is using

²⁰ See the previous note for Schleiermacher’s emphatic claim that intuition is ‘immediate perception’ and not ‘abstract thought’ (OR 26). It is also worth noting that Schleiermacher developed an understanding of the concept World/Universe and its relation to the concept of God a few years later which also forbids any *direct perception* of either World or God. Both ideas are highly abstract and equally transcendent (*Dial O* 304-305); they present the limits of all our conceptual thinking: ‘The idea of the World corresponds to the limit of our thinking as *terminus ad quem*... [whereas] the idea of the deity always accompanies our thinking as *terminus a quo*’ (*Dial O* 306-307). Given Schleiermacher’s explanations of the intrinsic connection between *abstract* ideas ‘God’ and ‘the World’ (or, universe) at several places in both *Dialectic* and *The Christian Faith* (CF 8.2, 32.2, 46.2, 54, 96.1; *Dial O* 297-307; see also Lamm 1994: 129), and given that for Schleiermacher, God cannot be directly perceived in *any way*, not even by way of feeling (*Dial T* 31; CF 4.4), the reading of ‘the intuitions of the universe’ or of the infinite in the *Speeches* as intentional are not plausible, unless in this meaning also, Schleiermacher has been very inconsistent (which is, of course, also possible).

²¹ Dole offers the following options of interpreting the relation of ‘feeling as the essence of religion’ and ‘intuitions of the universe’ as two most credible:

The idea of ‘accepting everything individual as part of the whole and everything limited as a representation of the infinite’ suggests either a kind of apperceptive *habitus* that provides fertile ground for the having of intuitions of the universe, or an awareness of the relatedness of all things that is stimulated by the impact of one or more such intuitions. (Dole 2010: 82)

'religion' in a normative sense of what he considers to be an 'essence of religion', and not in a descriptive sense of what phenomena, beliefs and practices are found in actual religions. And that essence of religion is, for him, feeling (together with the later abandoned and problematic 'intuition'). But not just any kind of feeling – it is sometimes overlooked that Schleiermacher in the *Speeches* distinguishes between *different kinds* of feelings. The most notable distinction is between the feelings which indeed are 'the essence of religion', and those which, despite being characteristic for religious lives, are not a part of religion's essence. We will look at Schleiermacher's phenomenological expressions/descriptions of the feelings essential for religion below; but, as Dole correctly observes, in the latter group of feelings which are not religion's essence, we can find a group of feelings which flow more or less directly from religion's essence and 'represent a development of that essence within the life of the individual' (Dole 2010: 83), in Schleiermacher's view. Such are, for example: feelings of tolerance towards fellow human beings, a feeling of reverence in the face of the eternal and invisible, a feeling of compassion, of agapeic love, and of remorse over sin.

But in addition to this, there are also other ways to distinguish 'feelings' according to the *Speeches*. We read, for example, about 'powerful and disturbing feelings of religion' (*OR* 30), which are incompatible with the 'calmness of mind' that is needed for proper moral conduct. In contrast, the proper religious feeling can and should *accompany* every action according to Schleiermacher - hence the claim: 'We should do everything with religion, nothing because of religion' (*ibid.*). To be driven by passionate feelings for one's religion is something quite different from living a (moral) life that is accompanied by a background consisting of proper religious feelings as by 'a holy music' (*OR* 30). A notable difference between these 'bad' passionate feelings 'for one's religion' and the feelings which are the background of appropriate religious life according to Schleiermacher seems to be, not merely that the former lead to immoral action and the latter not, but also that the former are intentional, and the latter a non-intentional background to religious life. The importance of intentionality is underlined by the fact that a few paragraphs later (*OR* 33-35) Schleiermacher again compares certain kinds of intentional feelings – this time more 'noble' kinds, which, according to Schleiermacher, his readers

tend to mistake for religion's essence - with what *he* considered to be such. He claims that even in the feelings of 'fear of the material forces' like thunder or sea, or in the feeling of 'joy at the beauty of corporeal nature', like the bloom of the flowers or brilliance of sunsets, we nevertheless cannot 'recognize the presence of an almighty being'. 'You will then find that these phenomena, no matter how strongly they move you, are still not suited to be intuitions of the world', although they can be 'a beginning' of religion: 'It may be that both fear and joyous pleasure first prepared the unrefined sons of the earth for religion, but these sentiments themselves are not religion' (OR 33-34).

Schleiermacher's view here appears to be that, although several kinds of feelings are part and parcel of religious life – some appropriately so, and some not; some rooted in religion's essence ('ideal religion'), some not – only a very particular, restricted *kind* of feeling is the essence of religion. How is this kind of feeling described? It has to do with experiencing union with the universe, a feeling of being 'one in all'; it is about 'fusing with as much of the universe as you find here' (OR 54); about experiencing 'communion between a person and the universe' (OR 59); about 'intuiting each thing as an element of the whole' (OR 62). A person who has religion 'is permeated by the influences of the universe and *has become one with it.*' (95; italics added)

[In] religion everything strives to expand the sharply delineated outlines of our personality and gradually to lose them in the infinite in order that we, by intuiting the universe, will *become one with it as much as possible.* (OR 53; italics added)

So, feelings which constitute the essence of religion according to the Schleiermacher of the *Speeches* are such that involve a smaller or greater degree of 'losing' oneself, even to the point of 'annihilating' oneself (OR 54) in a deep relation with the universe/the world. In some similarity to medieval mystical works, Schleiermacher on several occasions even gives 'practical-spiritual' advice on how to open oneself to this kind of feeling, with distinctive phenomenological descriptions of what the person will (probably) experience and will be able to recognize.²²

²² In addition to the 'mystical moment' passage mentioned above in the main text, two other unmistakable 'sets of spiritual instructions' are:

The most striking and probably most often quoted such passage is the so-called 'nuptial embrace' passage (or, 'the first mystical moment' passage):

That first mysterious moment that occurs in every sensory perception, before intuition and feeling have separated, where sense and its objects have, as it were, flowed into one another and become one, before both turn back to their original position – I know how indescribable it is and how quickly it passes away! ... Would that I could and might express it, at least indicate it, without having to desecrate it! It is as fleeing and transparent as the first scent with which the dew gently caresses the waking flowers, as modest and delicate as maiden's kiss, as holy and fruitful as a nuptial embrace; indeed, not *like* these, but it *is itself* all of these. ... I lie on the bosom of the infinite world. At this moment I am its soul, for I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own; at this moment it is my body, for I penetrate its muscles and its limbs and my own, and its innermost nerves move according to my sense and my presentiment as my own. With the slightest trembling the holy embrace is dispersed, and now for the first time the intuition stands before me as a separate form; I survey it, and it mirrors itself in my open soul like the image of the vanishing beloved in the awakened eye of a youth; now for the first time the feeling works its way up from inside and diffuses itself like the blush or shame and desire on his cheek. This moment is the highest flowering of religion. ... This is the natal hour of everything living in religion (OR 31-32).

[T]ry to yield up your life out of love for the universe. Strive here already to annihilate your individuality and to live in the one and all; strive to be more than yourselves so that you lose little if you lose yourselves.

Observe yourselves with unceasing effort. Detach all that is not yourself, always proceed with ever-sharper sense, and the more you fade from yourself, the clearer will the universe stand forth before you, the more splendidly will you be recompensed for the horror of self-annihilation through the feeling of the infinite in you. Look outside yourself for any part, to any element of the world, and comprehend it in its whole essence, but also collect everything that it is, not only in itself but in you, in this one and that one and everywhere, retrace your steps from the circumference to the center ever more frequently and in ever-greater distances. You will soon lose the finite and find the infinite. (OR 54, 68)

Ten Kate observes that Schleiermacher in these passages 'wishes to let us *feel* how intuition "works"' (Ten Kate 2007: 399; emphasis original).

It is not surprising that Thandeka in her body-focused, nature-mystical interpretation of Schleiermacher's 'feeling' elevates this passage as central to the meaning of feeling, not only in *the Speeches* but throughout Schleiermacher's corpus (linking it with formulations from *Dialectic*) (Thandeka 1995: 25-27). But it is notable that interpreters with quite different foci, like Christian Albrecht, also point to this highly metaphorical passage in the second speech as central for interpreting Schleiermacher's view of religion's essence in the *Speeches*. He describes the 'mysterious moment' described here as 'religious ur-affection' (*religiöse Uraffektion*), the highest and, in part, inexpressible religious feeling *par excellence*, the feeling of *oneness* with the universe which is prior and superior to both intuitions and other (valid religious) feelings. Albrecht, similarly to Dole, is in no doubt that Schleiermacher's focal claim here and through the *Speeches* is that a person's piety is genuine only in so far as all other elements of that person's religious life (feelings and intuitions, beliefs, practices, liturgy etc.) flow out from this *Uraffektion* (Albrecht 1994: 127-132).

For Schleiermacher, then, it is through one's relation to the universe as a whole that one moves 'from the finite to the infinite'. But, since 'the universe' cannot be experienced *as a whole*, this transition always happens through one's immediate surroundings or contexts of experience: '[In] our relationship to this world there are certain transitions into the infinite, vistas that are hewn through' (OR 62). The two realms of environment that Schleiermacher describes in the second Speech, or 'two examples' of religious feelings and intuitions, as he puts it, involve 'some of the prominent religious intuitions from the realms of *nature* and *humanity*' (OR 43; italics added). So, a religious ur-affection may be in relation to the immediate surroundings of the *natural* world (like stars at night, or a lake and trees, or indeed, a flower: in 'the smallest things just as perfectly and visibly as in the greatest' (OR 37)), or one's *social* environment (like the religious community of which one is a part, or, one's intimate lover). One cognitive upshot, or 'intuition', of the latter type of religious ur-affection is the realization that an overly individualistic understanding of human personality is illusory (or a misleading construction, we might say). Instead, 'everything human is intertwined and made dependent on one another' (OR 40). These, of course, are early formulations of the social-mystical strand of Schleiermacher's

account of feeling which Christine Helmer picks up in her interpretation. Importantly however, Schleiermacher does not talk of either of these 'worlds' or 'realms' – social, or natural – as though they would be experienced as intentional *objects* of religious (ur-)affection (c.f. Frank 2005: 30), but rather as *contexts* in relation to which one can experience anything from alienation (lack of 'religion', according to Schleiermacher, or an existential situation which may prepare one for 'religion') to complete at-one-ness (fully lived 'religion').

Describing it in more contemporary terms, we should say that Schleiermacher's religious ur-affection is pre-reflective and transcends the subject-object structure. Although one can be aware of it but for a fleeting moment of consciousness, this kind of feeling, according to Schleiermacher, seems to constitute 'a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality' – which is the role, of course, of existential feelings according to Ratcliffe (2008: 39). Establishing such broad but significant links between Schleiermacher and the phenomenological view is not a new idea. Heidegger himself, for example, in addition to being importantly influenced by romantic philosophy in general, explicitly acknowledged Schleiermacher as an important influence on his own phenomenology of religion, as well as 'an exemplar of a rigorous phenomenological approach to the subject of religion' (Crowe 2008: 68). In theological circles, Eilert Herms (1999) argued that Schleiermacher's *Gefühl* can be understood somewhat similarly to Heidegger's *Stimmung*, while criticizing Heidegger for ignoring or not realizing the theological implications of several of Heidegger's own views expressed in *Being and Time*.²³

But the parallels between our, more contemporary phenomenological category of existential feeling (Ratcliffe), and Schleiermacher's formulation of religion's essence in the *Speeches*, go even further than that. A significant feature of Schleiermacher's account is that a variety of feelings that 'are religion' is possible (*OR* 46) – for example, both nature-mystical and social-mystical, and, from a milder 'connectedness' to a complete 'unity' of feeling 'one in all' – just as Ratcliffe claims that there are many varieties of existential feelings which all have to do in some way with the *relation* of one with the world (Ratcliffe 2008: 8,

²³ See also Herms (2003: 41 -43) for his phenomenological-theological reading of Schleiermacher's notion of 'immediate self-consciousness'.

53-55, 285). While it is true that, when talking about examples, Ratcliffe focuses almost solely on the cases where the *social* world forms one's context of experience, he affirms also that EFs characterize our relation to the more-than-human or 'impersonal world' (Ratcliffe 2012: 6) as well.

We will not pay a similarly close attention to how feelings (both, the variety of experiences of ur-affection and other, intentional feelings in religion) are treated in other works of Schleiermacher. However, an obvious point to make is that, given the 'existential feelings' interpretation, it is hard to see how and why Schleiermacher's formulation of religious feeling that becomes central for him in *Christian Faith* – the feeling of absolute or 'utter' dependence (FAD) – could be so central or 'privileged', either in the Christian context or elsewhere. If feelings which are the essence of religion can be many and varied as it is claimed here, and expressions of them equally so, on what basis should such feelings be reduced to this particular, singular and unified formulation? This difficulty might be somewhat lessened by noting that Schleiermacher sometimes claims (e.g. *CF* 32.1) that the FAD is *not an expression of a particular instance of* religious existential feeling – as the early Proudfoot (1985 :22-23), for example, has interpreted it – but 'a radical abstraction that does not, by itself, occupy a moment of consciousness' (Wyman 2010: 197). If this is so, Schleiermacher's formula 'feeling of absolute dependence' should not be understood as an *expression* of (someone's, anyone's) feeling at all.

But this may be a too one-sided interpretation. First, Schleiermacher is at least ambiguous on this: while, for example, in *CF* 32.1 we read that in the analysis of FAD 'we abstract entirely from the specific content of the particular Christian experiences', in *CF* 4.4 we learn that the 'idea' which the term 'God' presupposes is 'nothing more than an *expression* of the feeling of absolute dependence'. And second, 'feeling of absolute dependence' can be understood as *one* among several expressions of a recognizable 'cluster' of ways we existentially feel which may, perhaps, be thought to easily flow into each other – together, say, with a deep 'feeling of contingency' which many Christians have experienced as intertwined with 'being at the mercy of God' (Phillips 1988: 282) and which has been expressed by Erazim Kohak by the following, simple words: 'We are, though only by a hair. We could easily not be. The stark white

glow of the January moon, pressing down on the frozen forest, sears away the illusion of necessity (Kohak 1984: 188).²⁴

In fact, the strong emphasis on the formulation ‘feeling of absolute dependence’ in the *Christian Faith* is somewhat balanced by the persistence of the ‘mystical’ point about ur-affection – the claim that it involves experiencing degrees of at-one-ness with one’s context and ‘transcending’ the subject-object distinction – in *Christian Faith* and other later works. The Schleiermacher of the *Dialectic* describes ‘feeling’ in terms very much like some of Heidegger’s descriptions of ‘mood’ or Ratcliffe’s of ‘existential feeling’ when he writes that in feeling the ‘subject-object antithesis remains completely excluded and is not applicable’, and that ‘immediate self-consciousness does not have knowledge of an “I”’ (*Dial* O part II: 287). And in *The Christian Faith*, in addition to the social-mystical descriptions of kind-consciousness mentioned earlier (*CF* 32.3), Schleiermacher again insists on a general point that in feeling ‘the subject unites and identifies itself with everything which, in the middle grade (of consciousness), was set over against it’ (*CF* 5.1).

With this continuity of the mystical nature of feeling, as well as the discontinuities, in mind, we can now move to the more constructive phase of our investigation: Towards a reconciliation of the conflicting interpretations by Hector, Helmer and Thandeka of Schleiermacher’s ‘feeling’, and then towards addressing the question: how can this whole discussion of Schleiermacher’s ‘feeling’ inform our investigation of Christian religious experience and the role of feelings in it?

2.3 Reconciling the interpretations of Schleiermacher’s ‘feeling’

2.3.1 On categories of mysticism

In order to reconcile social and nature-mystical interpretations of Schleiermacher’s concept of ‘feeling’ we need first to complete one more theoretical step, namely, to clarify the meaning of ‘mysticism’ and ‘mystical experience’ as we will use it here. In his recent study, Steinbock (2007: 21-27)

²⁴ I am grateful to Mark Wynn for pointing to this expression in Kohak, (Wynn (2009) and personal communication).

uses the term 'mystical experience' only for (phenomenologically) distinctly theistic experiences in which the 'givenness of the Holy *qua* personal presence ... [is] ... lived in an especially intimate manner' (ibid. 25).²⁵ In this study, we will not follow such a restricted use of 'mystical' but adopt instead a more inclusive understanding which can encompass also non-theistic and 'religiously-indeterminate' experiences. A phenomenological classification with such a broader understanding of mysticism has been recently developed by Michael Daniels (2003) for whom mysticism is the 'individual's direct experience of a relationship to a fundamental Reality' (Daniels 2003: 40). He distinguishes described mystical experiences along two lines or axes (See Appendix II): one according to the nature of the 'fundamental Reality' experienced (which can also be taken as phenomenological *context* of experience), and another according to the *mode* of experience.

According to Daniels, the *context*²⁶ which is reportedly mystically experienced can, for the sake of a theoretical 'making sense', be designated as one of the following: a god or God, community, nature, soul, or mind. Accordingly, we can talk about 'god-mysticism' (Daniels uses 'theistic mysticism'), social mysticism, nature-mysticism, monistic mysticism, and mental mysticism, respectively. The other axis represents the *mode* of experience, having to do with the relation between the subject and the context of experience. Different categories here correspond to the extent to which the subject feels herself as existing either opposite-to or at-one-with that context. Daniels proposes five categories along this axis as well: monistic (farthest on the 'opposite-to' side of the axis), dialogic, synergic, unitive, and non-dual (farthest on the 'at-one-with' side) (See Appendix I). Such categorization enables many distinguishable variants (5 x 5) of mystical experiences that can account, as already noted, for a broad variety

²⁵ More precisely, Steinbock uses 'mystical experience' as a subcategory of 'religious experience'. While 'religious experience' may include experiencing the Holy as 'owerpowering, absolute might' (Otto) in a non-theistic (non-personal) ways and contexts, or even as very indeterminate *mysterium tremendum* 'outside of any established religious tradition' (Steinbock 2007: 21), Steinbock reserves the adjective 'mystical' only for 'the self-givenness of the Holy *qua* Personal presence as this presence is lived' (ibid. 25).

²⁶ When describing the relationship between the mystic's 'self' or subject and the fundamental Reality, Daniels sometimes uses the term 'object'; Instead, we will always use 'context' for the reasons that are by now, hopefully, obvious: the givenness in many kinds of religious experience, in particular in the varieties of mystical experience (as defined by Daniels), often transcends the subject-object structure.

of actual descriptions/expressions of such experiences, while resting on as little theological or anti-theological judgements as possible.²⁷

It is important that, with this conceptualization, what may be considered as the 'Ultimate Reality' of the mystic's belief-system or tradition – for example, one and only God in monotheism, or the 'empty, formless existence' in Theravada Buddhism – is *not* necessarily the 'fundamental Reality' which is the *context*²⁸ of experience. For example, nature-mystical experience (of whatever *mode* of experience, from 'monistic' to 'non-dual') can be experienced by a Christian who presumably interprets and also *experiences* it as part and parcel of her Christian way of 'seeing' things (Daniels 2003: 49; Ratcliffe 2008: 272-273). On the other hand, 'god-mystical' ways of experiencing may be a part of a polytheistic religious life (for example, Hindu) in relation to one of the divinities believed in in that tradition (Shiva), and so is not limited to monotheistic religiosities.

One more point to make about our use of the term 'mysticism': According to Ratcliffe, many experiences which are considered mystical in the main religious

²⁷ We should recognize, however, that there is no categorization of mystical experiences (or, of any other experiences considered religious) that would be *completely* free from any theological (or anti-theological, or some other ideological) bias. While Daniels achieves a lot by way of correcting either theological or anti-theological biases of several influential philosophical and/or phenomenological categorizations and interpretations of mysticism (R.C. Zaehner (1957), W. Stace (1960), N. Smart (1965), F.C. Happold (1970), S.T. Katz (1978), and others (e.g. A. Rowlinson, K. Wilber)) in his own definition of mysticism as an 'individual's direct experience of a relationship to a fundamental Reality' (Daniels 2003: 40), the notion of 'fundamental Reality' (FR) is itself understood in a manner which is broadly affirming the value of (at least some) religious belief-commitment(s) that usually go together with mystical experiences within many faith traditions. There are similarities of Daniels' FR with John Hick's understanding of 'Ultimate Reality' (UR) (Hick 1989) although there are notable differences between the two concepts. While Hick's UR indicates some sort of *transcendent, single* Reality (necessarily 'religiously' understood), thought to be common to all religions, Daniels's FR is even 'less religious' than that. FR has merely three basic characteristics:

1. Absolute existence (i.e., it is understood to be self-existent and not merely a temporary or relative appearance).
 2. Absolute value (its value is experienced as self-evidential, not a matter of opinion or fashion).
 3. Fundamental human meaning (it has a profound effect on human life, imbuing it with a sense of purpose and significance).
- (Daniels 2003: 40).

Daniels' position on mystical experiences is meant to stand freer from the concepts of 'religion' (either theological, sociological, or psychological) than Hick's UR, and so encompass also those indeterminate experiences 'outside of any established religious tradition' (Steinbock 2007: 21) which Steinbock, on the other hand, deliberately excludes from the realm of 'the mystical'. Daniels is also explicit that 'Fundamental Reality' (FR), even in case of nature-mysticism, is not the same as the reductionist/physicalist concept of 'physical matter' (ibid.).

²⁸ See the previous footnote.

traditions can be understood as involving an awareness of more intense or 'deeper' variations of existential feelings, or significant changes in these (Ratcliffe 2008: 274-275). This view is consistent with both Daniels' (2003: 53) and Steinbock's (2007: 31-32) understanding that there is an important continuity between more 'normal' experiences and that of the mystics. In the language of existential feelings, this continuity is between the more 'widespread' existential feelings which are involved in most people's life-experience (at some points or other, more or less frequently: for example, feeling deeply alienated, or disconnected, or in harmony with, or intensively connected with, the 'world'), and the more unusual ones, including those extraordinary feelings of oneness which the 'recognized' mystics express.²⁹ By calling Schleiermacher's position 'mysticism', then, we are here not implying a focus *solely* on extraordinary or rare experience, but rather, as Schleiermacher attempted himself, to look at what is usually taken as ordinary felt experiences as continuous with the extraordinary and as including 'traces of the infinite'.

2.3.2 Schleiermacher, mysticism, and existential feelings

Granted such an understanding of 'mysticism', we recognize at least two strands of mysticism in Schleiermacher: nature-mysticism and social mysticism. While nature-mysticism is detectable in the *Speeches*³⁰ and, according to a plausible reading, in the *Dialectic*, social mysticism of somewhat different forms is arguably more prominent both in early as well as later works – including the *Speeches* and *The Christian Faith*, as Helmer argues. Helmer's emphasis on social mysticism in Schleiermacher, then, is somewhat more justified than Thandeka's emphasis on nature-mysticism, even if focusing on the *Speeches* alone. Unfortunately, however, Helmer tries significantly to downplay the importance of Schleiermacher's nature-mysticism. Out of her theological worry that 'problematic implications arise tending toward the elimination of individuality' if we accept the (early) nature-mystical formulations, she relegates

²⁹ This also helps disturbing the sometimes overstated contrast between 'ordinary believers' and 'religious geniuses', as found for example in James (1985, 30-31) and sometimes in Schleiermacher (*OR* 31-32, 50). However, Schleiermacher was also convinced that anyone *could* experience religious *ur*-affection and should strive for it (see, for example, *OR* 38, 54, 68; *CF* 4.1)

³⁰ Ten Kate observes that in the famous 'nuptial embrace' passage cited above, '[the] mystical narrative traditions of a fusion with Christ or God (Hildegard von Bingen, Theresa of Avila for e.g.) are rephrased here in the language of modern secular literature' (Ten Kate 2007: 399).

them to 'the rhetorical surface of the Speeches' and to 'Romantic influences' (Helmer 2003: 528-530). With this, Helmer is suggesting that 'romantic influences' – of which the centrality of the ur-affection of oneness must be a prime example – do not deserve a serious philosophico-theological treatment from a Christian perspective, or at least that these 'romantic' ideas are not fully compatible with Christian theology and therefore corrupt that which is properly theological in Schleiermacher.

As to Hector's interpretation of 'feeling' as 'one's non-inferential attunement to circumstances', its rootedness in (among other influences) Heidegger's understanding of attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) brings it into a considerable proximity to our reading of Schleiermacher's feeling in terms of 'existential feeling(s)'. However, there are two problems with Hector's interpretation from our perspective. First, it either excludes or devalues mystical tendencies in Schleiermacher (Hector 2010: 242) and, implicitly – or so it seems – in theology generally. With this move, Hector prevents his account from tapping valuable insights that may come from existentialist-phenomenological investigation into feelings of being (for example, from a less pragmatist reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time*). While we can agree that sociological and philosophical attention to social practices must have an important role in any contemporary theology that aspires to remain open for an intellectually responsible interdisciplinarity, it is an unusually strong commitment to take social practices as 'theology's explanatory primitive' (Hector 2010: 242), especially if by this it is implied that either theology or philosophy of religion is in the business of 'giving explanations': should we then understand theology as a 'social science', or as reducible to social sciences? From Hector's most recent work where he describes his philosophical theology as 'therapeutic anti-metaphysics' (Hector 2012: 31) and where he explicitly says that his account should not be seen as *reducing* the work of Holy Spirit's to social practices (ibid. 91-92), one would assume his answer would be 'no'; but this stands in some tension with his 'pragmatic strategy' in the earlier work on Schleiermacher we have consulted in more detail (Hector 2010: 218, 242-43). Furthermore: while interpreting feeling-as-attunement exclusively as internalization of social customs (Hector 2010: 226) has its legitimacy in Heidegger's understanding of Da-sein as 'being-with' (Heidegger 1996: 116), it doesn't do justice to either nature-mystical side of

Schleiermacher's descriptions of 'feeling', nor does it pay any attention to the strands of Heidegger's own understanding of attunement to the more-than-human, natural environment.³¹ On the other hand, while Thandeka does a good job in uncovering the nature-mystical strand of the meaning of Schleiermacher's 'feeling', the weakness of her account is its lack of attention to the social – indeed, 'deeply social' – dimensions of feeling in Schleiermacher's early and later understandings.

As we move towards the attempt at a resolution of the tension between these powerful interpretations of Schleiermacher's 'feeling', we are necessarily moving into a more constructive mode. We are suggesting, just as Helmer, Hector and Thandeka do, a reading of Schleiermacher's *overall* account of feeling 'that is the essence of religion'. Schleiermacher's understanding of feeling and its role in religion have of course developed through time, and he hasn't always been consistent. But the understanding of Schleiermacher's 'feeling' that we are developing is a creative construction, interpreted in contemporary language and for contemporary philosophical purposes; it includes both descriptive as well as normative elements, just as Schleiermacher's own account did in its own way. There is no attempt here to pretend that we are doing 'mere description' or even 'mere phenomenology', let alone suggesting that our project belongs to religious studies rather than philosophical theology. But it is hoped, of course, that the interpretation is phenomenologically responsible as much as possible, as well suited for a constructive contribution to the perspectives on religious language, practices and behaviour from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology.

The main premise on which we are both reading Schleiermacher and interpreting Christian religious experience, is that certain types of existential feeling or changes in these are philosophically *and* theologically most relevant, even crucial, aspect of much of Christian experiencing (as well as of much of 'non-Christian mystical experiencing'). By this, we are *not* talking about some

³¹ Admittedly, it is Heidegger's later work which is more concerned with our relation to the natural environment. For interpretations which shed light on this, see Wrathall (2011: 204-211), Foltz (1995: 123-159), and Hadot (2006: 303-309). However, See Foltz (1995: 37-52) for a reading of *Being and Time* with its nature-mystical aspect in view, or at least emphasising an openness for and plausibility of such interpretations.

pure, 'non-mixed' flow of pre-conceptual experience which would consist solely in existential feeling, let alone that such experience could be scientifically or directly 'observed' by introspection (by the 'inner man') 'in real time'.³² It is important to remember that, according to our understanding, much of Christian religious experience involves different aspects of experience intertwined with one another or 'fused' into a unified whole (cf. Ratcliffe 2008: 272-275). Such experiencing involves both discursive and non-conceptual aspects (usually) simultaneously. Often, experiencing which is regarded as religious by Christians involves emotional feelings – towards other people, regarding oneself, towards the 'believed-in' God, and towards more-than-human segments of the world, even artefacts/humanly produced objects (the cross, the Bible, etc.). While these kinds of feelings are significantly conceptually structured and co-constituted by language (c.f. Taylor 1985:74-76), we can recognize the non-discursive aspect of emotional feelings as well (Goldie 2004: 96; Wynn 2005: 146-148). Sometimes, experiencing or feeling 'the power of (conceptual) thoughts' – for example, the sayings of Jesus from the Gospel, or a sermon – can be central to certain types of Christian religious experience. But, if our (phenomenological and theological) emphasis is right, the *aspect* of Christian religious experiencing which is constituted by even *less*-conceptual existential feelings deserves even more theological and philosophical attention than other aspects. It should be clear by now that with this emphasis, we are not denying the place of either emotional feelings or discursive thought in Christian experiencing (c.f. Wynn *ibid.*).

It is important to appreciate that this picture corresponds to Schleiermacher's emphasis that only particular, historical religions can include actual elements of 'religion' (OR 104, 106) or God-consciousness; only in this or that historical particularity 'a marriage of the infinite with the finite' (OR 107) is possible; a universal, generalized religion cannot be realized or experienced by anyone (OR 97-99) – which, according to our reading, means (also) that something like an experience of 'pure existential feeling' is an impossibility. 'Religion never appears in a pure state' (OR 21), wrote Schleiermacher in the *Christian Faith*, since God-consciousness is always combined with other aspects like people-

³² See Merleau-Ponty's critique of the Husserlian and analytic notion of introspection in Chapter One (1.3) as well as the Wittgensteinian critique of introspection in Chapter Five (5.2.3).

directed 'emotions' (CF 6.3) and 'cognitive activities' (CF 60.2). As Jacqueline Marina puts it, each religious experience is for Schleiermacher 'a *situated experience* of the transcendent; that situatedness cannot be abstracted from experience' (Marina 2004: 133).³³ However, although it makes no sense to talk about 'pure pre-linguistic experience' as a durable (let alone 'observable') phenomenon of the human being-in-the-world, less-conceptual or even non-conceptual existential feelings are always involved in our experiencing in some form or another. In addition, in much of mystical experiencing (including Christian social and nature- mysticism), existential feelings may be of special intensity and depth. From a Christian perspective, both nature-mysticism and the 'romantic' kinds of social mysticism (which are not specific only to the Christian, but are characteristic of all 'multifarious communities of feeling' (CF 6.2)) can be seen as *creation-mystical* experiences that reveal to one one's deeper, irreducibly or 'essentially mysterious' (Tillich 1973: 109)³⁴, interconnectedness with the universe/creation.

Notably, Schleiermacher saw 'inward mysticism' in a rather non-favourable light. After criticizing the irreligious or 'industrious pragmatists' (OR 63) who indulge in the 'extreme of practicality' (ibid.) for their disregard of religion, Schleiermacher writes about two types of religious people (OR 64-65): outwardly and inwardly religious. The minds of the first are said to be 'readily

³³ We could say that our variant of the Schleiermacherian view on religious experience (including mystical experience), somewhat similarly as Daniels's (2003), takes a middle position between the constructivist view, which emphasised the role of language, history and culture in 'constructing' (anybody's) experience (Katz, Proudfoot), and the perennialist view (Otto, Smart, Forman, Barnard), which affirms that there is something universal that constitutes mystical experiences and transcends linguistic/cultural particularities. However, as recognized by many – including R. Forman (Andresen and Forman 2000: 7-10) who was in the middle of the debate throughout the 1980s and 1990s – this debate has reached a certain 'dead end' in which the proponents of each view painted their positions in terms of a black-or-white opposition with that of the other side where a more complex and combined positions were (and are) possible. For a similar, recent assessment of the constructivist-perennialist debate, see Taves (2009: 56-57).

³⁴ Pierre Hadot (2006) argues that it was with Romanticism that the notion of 'mystery' was finally dissociated with either the magical attempt to penetrate the secret messages which nature may store for us (our benefit, our magical use), or from scientific resolution of the 'mystery' of nature, understood as a puzzle to be solved. The Romantic thinkers, by contrast, arrived at a notion of a 'mystery in broad daylight', nature as essentially and irreducibly mysterious which can be experienced, felt, but not 'resolved' like a magical or scientific puzzle (Hadot 2006: 255-261). Plausibly, we can read Tillich's understanding of 'essential mystery' (Tillich 1973: 109) as a conceptual descendant of the romantic understanding described by Hadot, notwithstanding his reservations concerning the *political* legacy of romanticism which Tillich criticized severely, arguing it contributed to the rise of National Socialism (Tillich 1977: 13-44).

set on fire', but they are too easily satisfied with incidental combinations of aesthetic elements in religion, so that their religious flame is 'unsteady' and 'fickle' (OR 65). Schleiermacher thinks such a form of religiosity is not deep enough, although a genuine religious impulse is present in it. He has better things to say about the second group, the inwardly religious, 'to whose inner essence religion belongs'. But his praise of the latter is also not without reservation. It is because of their rejection of the pragmatic indulgence in the things of the world and the mechanistic view of it that such religious people turn inward, according to Schleiermacher. This is a characteristic of 'mysticism' – in a sense of inward mysticism, as he uses the term:

There is a great, powerful mysticism that even the most frivolous man cannot regard without deference and devotion... This person [an inward mystic] is not exactly satiated and overwhelmed by external intuitions of the universe, but is driven back upon himself by each individual intuition through a mysterious attraction and finds himself to be the foundation and key of the whole. (OR 65)

But Schleiermacher sees a clear problem with such a way:

[The] person to whose inner essence religion belongs, but whose sense always remains turned inward because he does not know how to cope with more than just that in the present state of the world, too quickly runs out of the material needed to become a virtuoso or hero of religion. ... Therefore, the universe is unformed and paltry in them; they have too little to intuit and, being alone as they are with their sense, forced to move but eternally in all-too-narrow a circle... (ibid.)

So, while Schleiermacher sees some religious value in 'inward mysticism' insofar it is marked by a rejection of irreligious and solely utilitarian attitude towards the world (objects, nature, persons), he also finds it spiritually imperfect and, ultimately, unsatisfactory. To intuit the infinite by way of feeling the oneness with the universe is different from both outward and inward religion as Schleiermacher describes these in OR 63-66 – Schleiermacher thought that his account brings together what is good in both.

It is plausible to read versions of mind-mysticism and soul-mysticism according to Daniels's categorization³⁵ in Schleiermacher's notion of (inward) 'mysticism' and his criticism of it.³⁶ But, perhaps more controversially, we should also see *god*-mysticism – involving experiences, well-known from mainstream mystical traditions in Christianity and Islam (for example, Maister Eckhardt, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Rumi) where God is described as 'the context' of experience in relation to which one experiences either separation from, or oneness with – as falling into this, in Schleiermacher's mind unfavourable, category as well. If we allow Schleiermacher's later works to inform our interpretation here, this can be seen even more clearly. In a recognizable contrast to the analytic perception model where God-experience is said to be a pure and direct cognition – a 'perception of God' through 'distinctive non-affective qualia' (Alston 1991: 51), or 'perceptive experience' where God appears as 'an object' (Yandell 1994: 47-57), or as a 'supernatural thing' (Swinburne 1991: 246) – Schleiermacher wrote that 'there is no such thing as an isolated perception of deity' (*Dial T* 31). But this, according to Schleiermacher, holds for any kind of sense perception (or, quasi-sense or extra-sense perception), *as well as for any 'perception' by way of 'feeling' (!)* (ibid.). God cannot be *directly* accessed in any way, since 'any possibility of God being in any way *given* is entirely excluded' (CF 4.4). In this, Schleiermacher follows Kant's epistemological limitation regarding knowledge of God, applying it, contrary to an influential reading of his position (e.g. Brandt 1968: 101-117), also to 'feeling'! It is only with these qualifications firmly in mind that we can consistently interpret, we suggest, Schleiermacher's claims like 'God is given to us in feeling in an original way' (CF 4.4), or that God is 'co-posit-ed' or 'implied' (*mitgesetzt*) in feeling (ibid.), or indeed, the cognitivist-sounding claims about religious 'intuition' in the *Speeches*.

³⁵ See Daniels (2003: 49, 51).

³⁶ This despite the occasional recognizably mystical expressions of the 'innermost activity' of human being offered by the early Schleiermacher – for example: 'Only [human being's] innermost activity, wherein his true nature abides, is free, and in contemplating it, I feel myself to be upon the holy ground of Freedom, far from every debasing limitation' (*SoI* 16). Such felt appreciation of 'holy humanity' in contemplating 'innermost activity' of humanity may include the 'conviction that the familiar phenomenal ego is not the real "I"' (Daniels 2003: 43), but it still falls short of being anything close to a conscious or even methodical attention to either individual soul/self or Psyche/mind as the *context* of mystical experience (see Daniels 2003: 49), whereas Schleiermacher's attention to 'nature and humanity' as 'vistas' through which one can come in touch with the infinite is very explicit and systematic (*OR* 43, 62).

It will become clearer in the coming chapters how belief in God and religiously-relevant existential feelings can be related from our perspective. For heuristic purposes, we will here go along with Schleiermacher's scepticism towards god-mysticism as well as towards soul- and mind-mysticism, and his phenomenological focus on, and theological affirmation of, social mysticism and nature-mysticism – with an important qualification, however, that even such a Schleiermarcherian stance need not rule out or delegitimize *all* kinds of 'sweet feeling of the presence of Our Lord' (e.g. Pike 1992: 84). Some such experiences can be interpreted in a more affirming way than Schleiermacher suggests: it can be understood through existential feelings as well, and not accepting the theological picture of God either presented as an object to the subject, or fused into one with the subject in such experience. But we will have to leave this question open for present purposes.

2.3.3. A few more expressions of religiously-relevant existential feelings

As we are bringing the discussion of the present chapter to its conclusion, it is helpful to bring to mind a few examples of expressions of mystical or 'extraordinary' experience which involve nature-mysticism or social mysticism from both Christian and non-Christian contexts, as well as more specific Christian 'mysticism of the Cross', understood also as (a special kind of) social mysticism. A classic example of nature-mysticism is the 'spiritual autobiography' of the British nature-lover and nature-mystic Richard Jefferies (2007: 3-13) who describes his feelings in nature in terms of 'losing himself...', or as 'being absorbed into the being or existence of the universe', or as losing his 'separateness of being' where he 'came to seem like part of the whole'.³⁷ Then,

³⁷ Interestingly, Jefferies explicitly notes that he experienced different *modes* or variations of his feeling, corresponding to the various degrees of 'losing his separateness of being', although 'the principal feeling was the same' (Jefferies 2007: 3). During a certain period of his life he took long walks on a regular basis, and these walks led him up a hill, away from the town into natural environment. As he distanced himself from the busy everyday life, he became steeped deeper and deeper into the feeling:

Moving up the sweet short turf, at every step my heart seemed to obtain a wider horizon of feeling; with every inhalation of rich pure air, a deeper desire. The very light of the sun was whiter and more brilliant here. By the time I had reached the summit I had entirely forgotten the petty circumstances and the annoyances of existence. I felt myself, myself. (Jefferies 2007: 1)

As he then spent time on that hill, Jefferies sometimes spoke 'in his soul' to the earth, the sun, and the air, and they were, in their own ways, 'speaking back', albeit not with words (ibid. 2) – this corresponds to what Daniels calls *dialogic* mode of mystical experience (Daniels 2003: 50).

consider the following two Christian nature-mystical examples, quoted by Dan Merkur (1999). In a description of his conversion experience, a late Eighteenth-Century Methodist, Thomas Oliver wrote: '*I saw God in everything*: the heavens, the earth, and all therein, showed me something of him; yea, even from a drop of water, a blade of grass, or a grain of sand, I often received instruction' (quoted in Merkur 1999: 9-10). Another Christian, a Roman Catholic priest, described his experience extraordinaire after a hard working day in Africa in this way: 'Suddenly, everything in myself became still, including my body, which had been in agony from stress and exhaustion. I felt the presence of God. The smells of the jungle and the river, the night sounds, the sensation of heat in the air – *everything seemed part of the Oneness of God*' (ibid.). Both of the latter two examples show how nature-mystical experiencing can be penetrated and co-structured by religious conceptualization and the beliefs of one's tradition which are bound-up with that conceptualization; on another hand, such experience can be affected also by scientific conceptualization and beliefs.³⁸

A nice example of social mysticism which is not tied – not strongly at least – to Christian concepts can be found in the early Schleiermacher who writes in *the Speeches* that, at times, in a communion of genuine, loving friends,

At other times – while 'being absorbed into the existence of the universe' – he felt a more complete union with all nature which corresponds to the unitive and nondual modes of the scale. Jefferies's 'obtaining a wider horizon of feeling' as he walked up the hill and then stayed in nature even longer, can be read as involving changes in the *modes* of an existential feeling, perhaps all the way from the numinous mode (nature appearing as the wonderful 'wholly other') to the nondual mode. Similarly, when Schleiermacher writes (*OR* 33-34) that intentional feelings of fear of thunder or beautiful admiration of the flower are not yet 'religion', but *can be* 'beginnings' of it, and when, on different occasions, he describes feelings of varying depths of communion, union or dissolution of one with the universe, this can plausibly be understood as different modes of mysticism.

³⁸ Wynn (2005: 68-9) cites a testimony of a pan-en-henic (nature mystical) experience of the physicist Fritjof Capra which we've quoted in Chapter One (1.3.1), in which Capra 'suddenly became aware of [his] whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance' for which he (religiously) knew that it was 'the Dance of Shiva' (religiously conceptualized layer of experience?). The experience was shot through with scientific awareness that 'sand, rocks, water and air around [Capra] were made of vibrating molecules and atoms, and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles' (Capra 1992: ii). Capra's statement that his physical knowledge 'came to life' through this mystical experience seems to suggest that his felt experience of the 'cosmic dance' was a fusion of religiously and scientifically conceptualized aspects of experience with a 'one-in-all' type of existential feeling.

...not only will you discover in yourselves all the manifold levels of human powers, but all of the innumerable mixtures of different dispositions that you have intuited in the characters of others will appear to you as mere arrested moments of your own life. There were moments when, in spite of all distinctions of sex, culture, and external circumstances, you thought, felt, and acted this way, when you really were this or that person. (OR 41)

Much more recently, focusing on loving relationship between intimate partners, psychologist John Welwood (1990) classified the connectedness between them into six degrees which somewhat correspond to Daniels's *modes* of experience regarding the separateness-from or at-oneness-with, the context of experience.³⁹ For example, the deeper communion which can happen between partners is described by Welwood in the following terms:

This often takes place in silence – perhaps while looking into our partner's eyes, making love, walking in the woods, or listening to music together. Suddenly we feel touched and seen, not as a personality, but in the depth of our being. We are fully ourselves and fully in touch with our partner at the same time. This kind of connection is so rare and striking that it is usually unmistakable when it comes along. While two people can work on communication, communion is more spontaneous, beyond the will. Communication and communion are deeper, more subtle forms of intimacy than companionship and community, taking place at the level of mind and heart. (Welwood 1990: 203)

These feelings in the context of an intimate partnership go beyond the intentional, emotional feeling of love towards, or appreciation of, let alone a *desire* after the loved one. But they may often be experienced as in a unifying whole with such emotional feelings or desires, or 'surrounding' them. The

³⁹ The six degrees of communion between partners are summed up by Daniels (2003: 48): Symbiotic fusion (the failure to establish a separate identity), Companionship (sharing activities and each other's company), Community (sharing common interests, goals or values), Communication (sharing of thoughts, feelings and other experiences), Communion (deep recognition of another person's Being), and Union (complete overcoming of boundaries of personality). Welwood is cautious regarding the final degree of losing of individuality, however, and notes that such complete non-duality 'is more appropriately directed to the divine, the absolute, the infinite. When attached to an intimate relationship, it often creates problems' (Welwood 1990: 203).

characteristics of the existential feelings Welwood describes appears to be that 'two persons become one' in them, also (to some degree) in a phenomenological sense of together inhabiting a deeper at-one-ness, an effortless felt communion on levels of being that are more fundamental than individual, socially-constituted 'persons' or subjects of one and the other partner.

All such examples of existential feelings which come '...from the realms of nature *and* humanity' (OR 43) can be interpreted and experienced Christainly, but versions of such feelings are of course expressed and felt by Christians and non-Christians alike. But there are types of existential feelings or changes in them which have undoubtedly had more central importance than others in Christian understandings of the world, human being, and God's relation to humans. Both Ratcliffe (2008: 273-275) and Wynn (2011) have suggested that religious conversions can be understood by way of (usually dramatic) changes in existential feelings. William James' analysis of a 'sick soul' (James 1985: 135-165) and of the thorough religious conversion (ibid. 184-258) describes these as involving 'changes in existential orientation', which Ratcliffe plausibly reads as changes (also) in terms of existential feelings.⁴⁰ Conversion experiences are typically (but not always) preceded by a change from an 'everyday' feeling⁴¹ to an unpleasant 'sick orientation', James observes. The latter can be experienced as a dramatic loss of meaning – as this was lucidly expressed by Tolstoy, for whom formerly '[life] had been enchanting' but 'it was now flat sober, more than sober, dead.' (c.f. James 1984: 152; c.f. Wynn 2012). Tolstoy (1987: 64) wrote: 'I fell to despair and felt that there was nothing else I could do except kill myself. And worst of all was that I did not even feel I could do that'. The lasting change from this radical existential deadness came when Tolstoy, with all his being, believed in God; not as a theological abstraction, but

⁴⁰ For expressions of feelings, both emotional and existential and not conceptually distinguished, in the testimonies of conversion experiences (both 'gradual' and 'instant') which James cites in *Varieties*, see James (1985: 66-68, 186-7, 191, 202-3, 213-4).

⁴¹ Ratcliffe (2008: 47-52) is following Heidegger (1996: 40-8) when he suggests that people are initially often lacking an awareness of existential feelings in their 'everyday' felt belonging to the world (for Heidegger, an everyday being-in-the-world is often an *inauthentic* Da-sein (ibid)). In the process of conversion, especially as experienced by those whom James describes as 'sick souls' (going through the radical loss of meaning as well as renewal of meaningful life religiously conceived), an awareness of existential feelings and their importance is characteristically awakened.

as an existential throwing of himself, his life, completely to God. The realization was: 'I have only to believe in God in order to live. I have only to disbelieve in Him, or forget Him, in order to die' (ibid. 65). This existential belief-act (or, a 'taking-hold', we might say) was, it seems, more or less simultaneous with the change in existential feeling. James cites other, similar expressions of conversion where, typically after a 'sick orientation', a fundamental recognition is expressed that 'reality is not exhausted by its content' (Ratcliffe 2008: 273; James 1985: 156-162, 485) or a new or renewed sense is acquired that 'something "more" exists' (James 1985: 510) – the 'more' which James, in the spirit of his time, calls 'a higher order of things' and the 'more spiritual universe' to which one belongs or is called to harmonize oneself with (ibid. 485). Despite the problematic nature of these Jamesian expressions from a Wittgensteinian perspective (something which we will examine in the section 5.2.3), James has clearly identified the existential change which often goes hand in hand with a change in faith-orientation.

2.3.4 Existential guilt and 'genuine Christianity'

We may also note here that, according to James, Ratcliffe, and Wynn, not only 'nice' or 'pleasant' existential feelings are religiously important or even central to (Christian) religious experience. The loss of meaning, characteristic of feelings of 'deadness' or 'complete emptiness of life', can be plausibly seen as an intrinsic part of Christian spiritual journey itself, although the depth, length and the ways *how* (Steinbock 2007: 2) such loss of meaning is experienced – let alone interpreted – by Christians may vary greatly. Other 'negative' or ambiguous existential feelings may include a feeling of *awe* at the face of nature, fused, however, with fear, horror and trembling, which can at the same time, paradoxically, be experienced to include a kind of 'calmness beyond the storm' (c.f. Phillips 1988: 280-281). For example, Otto's description of experiencing the Holy as *mysterium tremendum* includes what we are inclined to describe as 'negative' elements (see Otto 1958: 12-24, 125-190): 'terror', 'dread' (ibid. 16), or even 'panic' (ibid. 125). It is important to note that our affirmation of such elements in religiously relevant existential feelings, or, elements in emotional feelings which may be fused with and co-experienced in a 'unified whole' (Ratcliffe) with existential feelings, departs from Schleiermacher's predominant focus on 'positive' descriptions of religious ur-

affection and those religious feelings – also predominantly positive – which ‘naturally flow’ from the ur-affection according to Schleiermacher (Dole 2010: 83). It is true that in the *Speeches* Schleiermacher does claim that central to Christianity is a certain ‘mood ... of holy sadness’ (OR 119) for which it is said that it ‘does not seize Christians now and then but is, rather, the dominant tone of all their religious feeling, [accompanying] every joy and every pain, every love and every fear ... it is the undertone to which all is related’ (ibid.). And while this mood is for Schleiermacher related to the ‘original intuition of Christianity’ of which two sides are ‘corruption and redemption, enmity and mediation [of Christ, between the finite and the infinite]’ (OR 115), his overall account of ‘religion’ in *the Speeches* creates the impression of prioritizing various ‘good’ or ‘nice’ manifestations of feelings of oneness with the universe, as opposed to darker shades of existential feeling. It is, then, not because of his ‘mystical tendencies’ *per se* (Hector), or because of his romantic, nature-mystical leanings (Helmer) that we need to criticize Schleiermacher, but because of his prioritization of ‘nice’ feelings in the context of religious experiencing.

Among such ‘bad’ but, from the Christian perspective, religiously centrally important existential feelings we must also count the feeling of guilt – not just any kind of guilt, however, but the all-encompassing, ‘*primordial* guilt’, which was explored and particularly powerfully expressed by Emmanuel Levinas. In Bob Plant’s terms, Levinas’ twin notions of guilt and responsibility are ‘ontological’⁴²: ‘I am a trespasser because, simply through my being-in-the-world, I am Guilty of *taking another’s place*’ (Plant 2005: 137). Such guilt doesn’t happen to a fully constituted subject or self as an occurrence or a ‘disturbance’, as a consequence of an act which is experienced as wrong. Rather, the primordial guilt precedes the ‘I’ that is guilty and responsible:

⁴² Of course, Levinas, as is well known, strongly defended a primacy of ethics to ontology. He contrasted sharply his ‘philosophy of the Other’ particularly with Heideggerian ontology which, according to Levinas, continues to uphold the ‘primacy of the same’, ‘subordinates the relation with the Other to the relation with Being in general’ and so ‘...leads inevitably to ... imperialist domination, to tyranny’ (Levinas 1998: 38, 46). While Levinas’ correction of Heidegger, with its embeddedness in a dramatic historical context and personal stories of one and the other philosopher who knew each other (years after their interaction in philosophical circles in late 1920s at University of Freiburg, Levinas was a Jewish POW surviving a tough prisoner camp in Germany, while Heidegger became a Nazi member and professor at Freiburg University, as well as, for a time, its rector), is more than worth philosophical attention, it can also be seen as an ‘overreaction’ in terms of denouncing Heideggerian ontology as a whole, often in one sweep, as this is done in *Totality and Infinity*. See Raffoul (2005) and Wood (2005) for a critical look at Levinasian critique of Heidegger.

Responsibility for another is not an accident that happens to a subject, but precedes essence in it, has not awaited freedom, in which a commitment to another would have been made. I have not done anything and I have always been under accusation – persecuted (Levinas 1994: 114)

Such guilt, then, arises from a deeper being-in-the-world than an occurrence of guilt as a ‘subject-referring feeling’ (Taylor 1985: 54-59, 76) or ‘reflexive emotion’ (Helm 2001: 103-104) can. Although primordial guilt can be related and can ‘flow’ into the intentional, occurring ‘felt evaluations that are focused on one’s being a certain kind of person’ (Helm 2001: 104), it is best described with a different phenomenological category, namely as ‘existential feeling’.

Levinas, we remember, relates this subject-constituting Guilt with ‘religion’, i.e. a sense that, in the face of the other, ‘the trace of God is manifested, and the light of revelation inundates the universe’ (Levinas 1996: 95), or, the Word of God is ‘heard’ (ibid. 1998: 110). Plant’s diligent exploration of Wittgenstein’s and Levinas’s understanding of religion shows a deep similarity and complementarity between Levinas’s ‘onto-ethical’ understanding of religion and the later Wittgenstein’s emphasis that a radical guilt or ‘wretchedness’ is a mark of a truly religious person (CV 51). According to Wittgenstein, it is in an ‘infinite distress’ of a ‘soul’ (CV 52), where any consolation along the lines of ‘you are no guiltier than anybody else’ is perverse and irreligious, that ‘true religion’ is found (Plant 2005: 109-121).⁴³ A great deal more could be said, of course, about both Wittgenstein’s and Levinas’s broader understanding of religion.⁴⁴ What we need to address here, however, is Plant’s insistence that Levinas’s understanding of guilt is ‘emphatically *not* that of ... Christian theology’ (ibid. 136). It is argued that, since Levinas ‘does not seek atonement or liberation from his “ghosts”’ (ibid.), i.e. since the face of another calls into question, according to Levinas, any eschatological Happy end or ‘divine pardon’, the

⁴³ Plant (2005: 120-121) also correctly notes the deep influence of both Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky on Wittgenstein’s understanding of religiosity that is deeply ethical and existential at the same time.

⁴⁴ We shall examine Wittgenstein’s understanding of ‘religion’ in some detail in subsequent chapters. As to the reading of Levinas adopted here, it is arguably quite ‘non-Levinasian’, but this exegetical question shall not concern us here.

Christian resolution of guilt by way of divine forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice is incompatible with Levinas' understanding of the primordial guilt.

Such an assessment is a bit too quick, however. It rests on a narrow and/or uncharitable view of the Christian notion of divine forgiveness, which can be remedied by a more serious engagement with Christian theology of the cross, both historical and contemporary. While we can't take up this task here at any length, a brief critical engagement with Plant's incompatibility claim is due, with at least a gesture towards a reading of God's forgiveness and restoration of the sinner in Christ which resonates, according to our reading, with much of Levinas' notion of primordial guilt and responsibility. It is, of course, not at all rare within Christian theology to affirm that taking forgiveness (perversely) lightly is inextricably connected with taking one's sinfulness (perversely) lightly, where such affirmation needn't involve emotional blackmail. One of the hallmarks of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's notion of 'cheap grace' (Bonhoeffer 1959: 35-47) which he aims to expose is exactly an attempt to pacify one's consciousness by way of suppressing or avoiding the depth and the pervasiveness of one's sinfulness, with a self-assuring 'I'm forgiven and saved!' Such 'being saved' is nothing else but blasphemy against God which misses the divine work and the weight of Christ's sacrifice altogether. Although the main point of Bonhoeffer's notion of the 'costly grace' as opposed to 'cheap grace' is undoubtedly his insistence that God's grace 'is costly because it calls us to follow' (ibid. 37), whereas 'cheap grace' is a 'preaching of forgiveness without repentance, baptism without church discipline' (ibid. 36), there is, in the notion of 'costly grace', also an important reaffirmation and reinterpretation of Luther's emphasis that 'we are still sinners "even in the best life"' (ibid. 35). When Bonhoeffer warns against the misreading of Luther's saying, 'Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still', he tempers the emphasis on justification by reminding us that 'it was the gospel of the grace of God before which we are always and in every circumstance sinners' (ibid. 44).

But, more broadly and closer to our point: Despite the presence of the economic understanding of salvation in Christian thought (salvation as a 'business-deal' with God in a sense 'I will believe in Christ and obey you, and you will compensate me with eternal life. '), there is a parallel and equally strong tradition in Christianity which stands in opposition to it. It is exactly this latter tradition

which Wittgenstein picks up, through Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and others, when he insists that 'he who decides in favour of Christian belief because it promises salvation is not merely superficially religious, he is not religious *at all*' (Plant 2005: 119). Similarly, the Levinasian and Wittgensteinian conviction which Plant brings to the fore that 'the greatest immorality and blasphemy is to be found in the experience of *good* conscience, in believing that one's duty has been done and one's responsibilities placated before God or one's neighbour' (ibid. 121), can be seen in the 'parable of the Pharisee and the publician' in Luke 18: 9-14. We can remember that the Pharisee is thanking God that he is not like 'extortioners, unjust, adulterers', but that he performs his duties before God (and therefore, stands before him *in good conscience*); and the publician, 'standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner'. Jesus then concludes by saying that 'this man (publician) went down to his house justified rather than the other (Pharisee)'. It would be utterly irreligious, even within strands of orthodox Christianity, to read this parable as an advice that the publician *should attain the good conscience* of the Pharisee through accepting salvation in Christ. Our wretchedness is 'here to stay'; although, in Christ this wretchedness can become a constitutive part of a *transformed* person while outside of Christ, according to the orthodox Christian view, it remains a part of an untransformed person and can only lead to despondency.⁴⁵

If this is so, Plant's claim, that a Levinasian-Wittgensteinian understanding of guilt, responsibility and wretchedness is 'emphatically not ... that of Christian theology', is not well founded. The belief in the ultimate efficacy of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross to 'take away the sins of the world' (Jn 1:29) need not mean taking away the existential guilt and that haunting, primordial responsibility in the face of the other. There is no escape from the all-pervasive fact of wretched sinfulness and the responsibility which is bound up with it, even for those who fully accept God's grace and forgiveness.⁴⁶ Whenever Christ's

⁴⁵ Jesus' sayings, like Luke 17:10 ('So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty."') or Matthew 6:3 ('But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing') can be and have been read along these lines.

⁴⁶ See, for example, on Theresa of Avila's worry with self-deceptions in mystical visions, where humility, suffering and constant orientation towards 'humble serving' to others are signs that visions are from God (Steinbock 2007: 119-126).

sacrifice is used to dampen the primordial guilt and responsibility before the other, it is used irreligiously. But it can mean, as it did for Tolstoy, that Christ's 'becoming sin' on the Cross for our sake, can make it possible to be aware of sin's reality, to acknowledge it, and to bear it: to *live* despite the wretchedness, i.e. to 'not kill oneself'. This is not to claim, of course, that Levinas' rejection of the eschatological 'Happy End' can sit easily with orthodox Christian eschatological hope; and there are other incompatibilities between Levinasian-Wittgensteinian picture of religion and the larger Christian story. My point here is that the Christian 'remedy' for wretchedness and 'infinite distress' doesn't need to be interpreted, or *experienced*, as doing away with the existential, primordial, and subject-constituting guilt which Levinas 'makes manifest'.

2.4 Bringing it together

We can now, finally, return also to the redemptive social-mysticism 'in Christ' which Helmer sees as the very centre of the mature Schleiermacher's understanding of mysticism and of religious feeling. She writes

For Schleiermacher, Christ's redemptive activity effects simultaneously the new creation of the individual and the constitution of the community. Individual redemption is coconstituted with the creation of community. Schleiermacher pictures this coconstitution as the relation between the 'mystical element' (the individual's relation to Christ) and the 'churchly element' (the corporate life of believers). ... For Schleiermacher, the positivity of the Christian church is the condition for the possibility of a distinct Christian experience, which is the foundational redemptive experience of the believer with Christ (Helmer 2003: 536).

This reading of the *Christian Faith* identifies a very important thread in the later Schleiermacher's view of mysticism and religious feeling. But a broader and more variegated phenomenological view of Christian experience, based on our reading of both the early and the later Schleiermacher, enables us to understand more clearly how 'the new creation of the individual' in Christ can happen. While Helmer's theological worry with nature-mysticism leads her into denouncing Schleiermacher's nature-mystical leanings, from a Christian

perspective, nature-mystical aspects of experience and the existential feelings involved can plausibly be seen (theologically) as *related* to specifically Christian, person-forming aspects: Through the existential feelings that involve one's different degrees and ways of uniting of one's self with the world, the fragile and often illusionary nature of our 'I-constructions' can become apparent and spiritually relevant. But, for the Schleiermacher of the *Speeches*, this mystical 'losing' of one's individuality can be neither permanent nor absolute. In fact, it is portrayed as a fleeting moment in consciousness of which we become really aware only when it is already over (OR 31-32). So, the temporary losing of oneself 'as a part of the whole' in feeling can lead to genuine humility through a profound awareness of the deeper relatedness of everything in the world. This is one, but significant, way in which existential feelings involved in nature-mysticism can open up the possibility for a new creation in Christ. Schleiermacher's view that 'immediate self-consciousness does not have knowledge of an "I"' which 'only arises through the reflective self-consciousness' (cited in Frank 2005: 30) is a precursor to his affirmation of the person-forming activity of God in Christ that happens only in the Christ-believing community, or Church (CF 14).

On the other hand (and very generally speaking): Not only Schleiermacher's early nature- and social-mysticism, but also his later, Christ-oriented, redemptive social mysticism stand, in light of the broader Christian understanding and experiencing, in need of a Levinasian-Wittgensteinian remedy. To simplify: Despite Schleiermacher's identification of 'the holy sadness' as the 'dominant feeling' (OR 119) in Christianity, on balance, his overall account still seems somewhat 'too happy'. But if we accept that Levinas's and Wittgenstein's expression of existential guilt provides a valuable insight into experiential religion (from a Christian perspective), and that it could be linked with Schleiermacher's 'holy sadness', the emphasis on utter wretchedness and radical responsibility before the other (and simultaneously before God) 'even in the best life' provides a balance in our overall understanding of religious experiencing. Just like the nature-mysticism and social-mysticism which are not specifically Christian can open the possibility for the redemptive and 'new person'-forming Christ-mysticism, the primordial guilt and radical responsibility that assails and co-constitutes the subject as such

must be seen as an equally vital part of an overall picture, for the same reason: because of its existential and pre-subjective nature, albeit manifested in different, often painful and 'dark' ways.⁴⁷ If this reading of the mentioned types of 'extraordinary' existential feelings makes sense, such 'ways of finding ourselves in the world' are an important, even crucial part of an experiential Christian life.

There is also an interfaith dimension to this: The nature-mystical feelings, social-mystical feelings, and existential guilt have been expressed, it would seem, in one way or another, as 'religiously important' within many other religious traditions. From the Christian perspective, it may be suggested that such feelings are *transformed* 'in Christ' into distinct and religiously fuller forms; what can be said with more certainty is that existential feelings are in the contexts of different religious traditions intertwined and fused with different verbally-structured aspects of experiencing. To be sure, any 'case for Christianity' here is never 'mere phenomenology', but always involves rhetoric and 'calling into' seeing and feeling the world, God, community and oneself in particularly Christian ways. More critically towards much of Christianity, it has to be said that from our perspective, the Church has too often ignored or devalued the nature-mystical existential feelings, associated these with 'paganism' and sin, and confining 'true spirituality' to the social context of the Church and to 'true doctrine'.⁴⁸

More positively, our understanding successfully accounts also for the fact that the main themes of Christianity are *both* social (deeply interpersonal) and subjective-personal at the same time. The relationship of a person with God is understood to be inextricable from the interpersonal relations of that person with other people. Therefore, the earliest Christian formulations of the problem of sin, as well as of its solution in Jesus Christ, are concerned with interpersonal relations (and *through these* necessarily with relation to God), which involve the

⁴⁷ It is possible, of course, to overemphasise the 'wretchedness' and lose balance on the other side, as it were. Such unbalance, where an existential guilt gets bound up with self-hate and other self-destructive emotions and behaviour, is all too well known from Christian history.

⁴⁸ See how this point is argued by a penetrating eco-phenomenological critique of Christianity in Abram (1996), as well as how, from the perspective of a 'history of ideas' approach, a related point that Christianity contributed to the development of the mechanistic and utilitarian representation of nature, is argued in Hadot (2006).

sinner's growth in agape, the 'difficult love'. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death' (John 3:13). As Christ's God-consciousness is circulated and transmitted through the Church, the believers are assimilated into it through the ecclesial mediation of *Christus Praesens*. As Hector emphasises, sociality, or intersubjectivity, is co-constitutive of feeling in this context. One's attunement with this special community, which was and is co-formed by Christian narratives, belief-commitments and customs, is - at its best - a holy partaking in 'a restored community of wretched sinners' in Christ. If so, in the Christ-focused community, it is 'safer' to feel and be co-constituted also by the 'infinite' guilt and responsibility before the other, instead of being co-constituted by running from both guilt and responsibility, as well as from God and forgiveness.

2.5 Conclusion

It is now time for us to take stock of what we have been developing in this chapter. This chapter has attempted two things: to interpret Schleiermacher's phenomenology of 'feeling' and its place in Christian religious experiencing, and suggest a modern phenomenological view of Christian religious experience.

First, placing the reflection of this chapter in our larger story about the role of existential feelings in religious experience, we are suggesting that several different ways of Christian religious experiencing should be seen as involving existential feelings as their crucial feature. Speaking more generally, a range of nature-mystical and social-mystical experiencing can be Christian, i.e. fused and interpreted with Christian discursive thought and understanding, and brought to attention by virtue of Christian beliefs and values. Others have noted that Christian religious conversions can be phenomenologically analysed (also) in terms of changes in existential feelings (Wynn, Ratcliffe), while existential, primordial guilt and responsibility can be seen as central or prerequisite to any experiential contemplation, and religious understanding, of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for human sin. Although the kinds of Christian religious experience which we've touched upon here normally involve also highly conceptually-structured aspects of experience (very often also emotional feelings and sense-perception fused into a unified whole), we have focused on existential feelings

as that aspect which is from our perspective philosophically and religiously most relevant.

In the context of interpreting Schleiermacher on 'feeling', we were trying to build on, and bridge the gap between, different interpretations: the social (Hector, Helmer) and existential-mystical (Thandeka). We have affirmed Hector's Heideggerian reading of 'feeling' as 'attunement to one's environing circumstances', but have resisted both his exclusive focus on the social environment here, as well as his rejection of Schleiermacher's mystical tendencies for a thoroughly pragmatist reading. With Thandeka, we are able to go a long way in endorsing her existentialist phenomenology of 'feeling of Being', and her affirmation of nature-mysticism in Schleiermacher (esp. of the *Speeches* and the *Dialectic*), where in feeling we find a non-ratiocinated experience of 'human nature certain of itself and celebratory of itself as *an inextricable part of the nexus of natural world*' (Thandeka 1995: 13). We have attempted to remedy the notable lack of emphasis on the sociality in her account by endorsing Helmer's careful attention to Schleiermacher's social mysticism, from the love-mysticism of the early Schleiermacher to the redemptive Christ-mysticism within the Christian community which for Helmer is theologically the most valid insight of the mature Schleiermacher into religious feeling and experience generally.

By using the concept of existential feeling explained in the previous chapter, we have successfully offered an interpretation which, so we suggest, can account for several different descriptions of the 'feeling that is the essence of religion' in the early as well as the later Schleiermacher, while not claiming that Schleiermacher's understanding remained the same or even that it is consistent on all points. Most notably and controversially, we have suggested that the 'feeling of absolute dependence' has somewhat too 'ultimate' a place as a description of 'religious feeling' in *The Christian Faith*. Also, Schleiermacher's early as well as his later understanding of 'feeling' do not give enough phenomenological attention to 'darker' existential feelings such as 'primordial guilt' or 'wretchedness' – a lack which can be remedied by combining Schleiermacher's insights with those of Levinas and Wittgenstein.

CHAPTER THREE

Wittgenstein, belief-attitudes, and 'hinge-certainty'

3.1 Introduction

After outlining the phenomenology of felt experiencing and the concept of 'existential feelings' in Chapter One, and then applying both to a chosen variety of (largely) Christian religious experiencing (as well as interpreting F. Schleiermacher's 'theology of feeling') in Chapter Two, we are now entering a different topic and engaging with a different type of philosophical investigation: the later-Wittgensteinian grammatical or 'conceptual investigation' (*RPP I* 949). The prime task of the latter is to determine the grammatical status of utterances ('depth grammar') which can be obscured by the syntactical form of language ('surface grammar') (*PI* 664), and to uncover the actual meanings of words, concepts and utterances which are shown in the *use* of these in their contexts, as opposed to artificial definitions of meanings which tend to prescriptively generalize them instead of *describing* the actual (and usually variegated) meanings (*RPP I* 38).

In this chapter, our line of thought will proceed as follows. We will start by distinguishing knowledge from an 'utter' certainty, presented as a philosophically important insight by the Wittgenstein of *On Certainty*. We will then devote considerable attention to Wittgenstein's category of 'objective certainty' that is 'non-epistemic' and indubitable, although, following Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (2007), we will call it 'hinge-certainty'. In that discussion, a recent influential interpretation of *On Certainty* by Moyal-Sharrock will be as much our conversation partner as Wittgenstein's remarks of *OC*, as well as several other philosophers who have taken up these or closely related topics (e.g. G. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, J. Canfield, D.Z. Phillips). This discussion is relevant since equivalent notions to 'hinge-certainty' (based on Wittgenstein's *OC*) have recently been used by Michael Kober, Genia Schoenbaumsfeld, and

others to describe the nature of *religious* beliefs – the topic to which we arrive in Chapter Four.

Here, we will also take a step back and take a broader view of ‘belief’ as a ‘family-resemblance concept’, building on the work of social anthropologist Rodney Needham (himself influenced by Wittgenstein). However, we will combine this perspective with constructive suggestions in terms of appropriate sub-categories of ‘belief’: most notably, we will offer our own suggestion as to how the contrast between scientific propositional beliefs and ‘hinge-beliefs’ should be construed. In order to develop a viable suggestion, it will be necessary to engage with the grammatical questions about the meaning of ‘proposition’: we will be siding with Moyal-Sharrock in upholding a conceptual link between propositionality, bi-polarity and dubitability, against Peter Hacker and others who abandon such a meaning of ‘proposition’. However, we will side with Hacker and D.Z. Phillips, contra Moyal-Sharrock, by affirming different senses of ‘true’ and ‘false’, and therefore resist the narrowing of the meaning of ‘proposition’ to the content that is ‘empirically derived’ and liable to ‘doubt, verification or falsification’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 39).

All this will equip us, both conceptually and methodologically, to enter into a discussion of religious beliefs in the next chapter, which will again involve grammatical investigation as well as discussions of Wittgenstein interpretation, but at the same time introduce complementary perspectives and conceptualizations (most notably, a Tillichian understanding of religious faith and doubt).

3.2 Wittgenstein on knowledge and certainty

On Certainty (OC) consists of some of Wittgenstein’s latest philosophical remarks, written during the final two years of his life. In this collection, we find Wittgenstein’s most extensive reflections on what are usually taken as the central questions of epistemology: What is knowledge? What is certainty? What is the status of some very widespread and ‘basic’ beliefs that are rarely considered controversial, such as ‘Physical objects exist’, or ‘I exist’? It is widely agreed that the way in which Wittgenstein addresses these questions ‘does not

amount to a theory of knowledge in anything like traditional sense' (Williams 2007a: 52). The collection begins with a challenge to G.E. Moore's claim that he unquestionably *knows* the proposition 'here is one hand' while looking at his hand and inferring from this direct sense-perceptual experience.

Controversially, Wittgenstein *denies* that G.E. Moore has knowledge of what seems like a direct empirical proposition 'Here is one hand'. At the same time, however, Wittgenstein does *not* question the legitimacy of the assurance and certainty that G.E. Moore has in believing 'Here is one hand'. A dramatic rift is thereby established between *knowledge* and (a special kind of) *certainty*, and it is to this rift and to philosophical outworking of the difference between these two that the bulk of the reflections collected in *OC* is devoted.

By way of elucidating the concept of knowledge, one of the things Wittgenstein of *OC* often points to is the *community*, i.e. to the *sociality* of knowledge.

Wittgenstein denies that knowledge is a mental state, or that mental states are the 'makers' of knowledge, or constitute evidence for a particular belief and thereby contribute to its justification. Consider the following statements (the expressions which emphasise the social world are italicised):

For how does a man learn to recognize his own state of knowing something? (*OC* 589)

Moore wanted to give an example to show that one really can *know* propositions about physical objects. [It] would sound odd if Moore had said: 'I assure you, I know that's a tree.' A personal experience simply has no interest for us here. (389)

That he does know takes some shewing [showing]. (14)

Our talk gets its meaning from *the rest of our proceedings*. We are asking ourselves: *what do we do* with a statement 'I know...?' For it is not a question of mental processes or mental states. And that is how one must decide whether something is knowledge or not. (229-30)

If someone says he knows something, it must be something that, *by general consent*, he is in a position to know. (555)

Knowledge is in the end based on *acknowledgment*. (378)

[If someone] knows something, then the question 'how does he know?' must be capable of being answered. And if one does answer this question, one must do so according to *generally accepted axioms*. *This* is how something of this sort may be known. (OC 550-1)

Along similar lines, Wittgenstein made a point that knowledge presupposes the possibility of mistake and doubt. But, for a mistake (and hence for knowledge) to be possible, '...a man must already judge *in conformity with mankind*' (OC 156).

Put simply: knowledge is for Wittgenstein of the OC a deeply communal affair. Phrases like 'generally accepted', 'general consent', 'the rest of our proceedings', 'what do we do with a statement', 'shewing' (showing), 'conformity with mankind', and 'acknowledgment', point to social practices and social agreement as constitutive of knowledge. The crucial difference between knowledge and *belief* for Wittgenstein of OC is that 'only knowledge claims *commit* the speaker to give reasons' (Morawetz 1978: 98). In other words: for a belief to be a candidate for knowledge, not only does it have to be *possible* to formulate it in a symbolic system or language (which is contingent upon the existence of the community in more than one way) and share it in public; it must also be possible to argue for it in accordance with epistemic criteria adhered to by the epistemic community of the potential knower. Wittgenstein claims that the meaning of 'to know' comes from 'the rest of our proceedings' which are bound up with *our* use of this word and its cognates (OC 229). We cannot establish whether a given belief is knowledge or not by attending to our mental states and their features since we need communal standards in order 'to recognize' any such state as a 'state of knowing something' (OC 589). While, for the later Wittgenstein, knowledge can still be aptly described by the familiar but very general formula of 'justified true belief', for any justificatory process for a given belief to even get going, some kind of 'general consent' (OC 555) about such a process is needed.

Notably, this is not the same as claiming that what is knowledge consists *solely* in communal consensus. Groups of people cannot *arbitrarily* decide what is knowledge and what not. Such a naïve and voluntaristic version of relativism is not Wittgenstein's, although many argue that Wittgenstein of OC does exhibit at

least relativistic tendencies if not a fully-fledged epistemic relativism. But even the most explicitly relativist interpreters of Wittgenstein acknowledge that Wittgenstein was aware that ‘environment does have a causal influence on what we come to believe, [although] it does not determine how we must use our terms’ (Kusch 2002: 204). Wittgenstein’s insight here, we might say, is rather that any knowledge, as well as the very concept of knowledge, is contingent upon acknowledged, communal ways of acting within our environment and language-use into which the usages of ‘to know’ and its cognates are interwoven.

However, as we have already noted, Wittgenstein’s remarks do not constitute, nor are they intended to constitute, an epistemology – in so far as ‘an epistemology’ means a theory of knowledge or justification with ambitions to come up with criteria to distinguish knowledge from those beliefs which are not knowledge. Many take the later Wittgenstein – not only *On Certainty*, but practically everything that he wrote from the early 1930s and until the end of his life – as rejecting any ‘systematic philosophical views’ (Stern 2004: 54), let alone advancing an epistemological *theory*. Others, while acknowledging Wittgenstein’s anti-theoretical and therapeutic aims in *OC* and elsewhere, nevertheless take the remarks of *OC* as building blocks for systematic epistemologies.¹

But we need not enter into the debate whether advocating a *theory* of knowledge is anti-Wittgensteinian or not at this point. Instead, we will move to our central concern in this chapter, namely, to investigate the concept of ‘belief’, with close attention to Wittgenstein’s remarks in *OC* on the topic. But our detour to the remarks about knowledge in the *OC* is not without a reason: as it turns

¹ Two notable such epistemologies are the *contextualism* of Michael Williams (2007a, 2007b) and the *communitarian epistemology* of Martin Kusch (2002, 2009a, 2011). In the spirit of *OC*, both these positions strongly emphasise the *social* nature of knowledge, and the contextual, local nature of *any* epistemic justification. ‘Knowledge is an essentially social achievement. This implies that what is taken to be common knowledge is culturally variable’ (Williams 2007b: 107). However, contextualism and communitarianism differ in the fact that the latter embraces a version of epistemic relativism and much more heavily involves a sociological perspective – its findings, insights, and even the methodology – in its building blocks, in order to provide an account of ‘how contexts and standards are created and maintained, how communal judgments are possible, or how consensus is achieved’ (Kusch 2002: 139); whereas contextualism, while recognizing the legitimate role of a sociological approach and its results for epistemology, refrains from systematically involving sociology of knowledge and attempts to show that the contextual and communal nature of knowledge does not entail, or lead to, epistemic relativism (Williams 2007b).

out, for the Wittgenstein of *OC*, only some beliefs are knowledge-*apt*, whereas others are not, and this difference is related to the kinds of belief-attitudes Wittgenstein recognizes we (i.e. Westerners) hold. It is also important to realize that those beliefs that are not knowledge-*apt* deserve, according to the Wittgenstein of *OC*, just as careful philosophical attention as those that are. We will be guided in this chapter by Wittgenstein's sense of the philosophical importance of what he considered to be non-epistemic certainties.

3.3 A 'queer' belief-attitude: 'hinge-certainty'

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein claims that, underlying our language-games *within* which any talk of knowledge can have sense at all, there is something much more fundamental and primitive than knowledge. This something is *not* the structure of the 'outside world' which the structure of our language(s) and thought (and, consequently, knowledge) is supposed to represent, as the early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* thought (*TLP* 4.1). While Wittgenstein of *OC* does not deny that the world has something to do *causally* with what we believe, he claims that what underlies our most basic agreements is not 'the world' but something he calls '*objective certainty*'. This kind of certainty is not to be equated either with knowledge or with any attribute of it, although it is, especially in philosophical circles, often taken to be – mistakenly, in Wittgenstein's view – an element of the most secure form of knowledge there is.

Think of the claims 'Here is one hand' (*OC* 1), 'I am a human being' (*OC* 4), or 'I have never been on the moon' (*OC* 269). We noted that, in his response to G.E. Moore's claim that he knows the proposition 'Here is one hand' (looking at his own hand and reflecting on this visual experience), Wittgenstein argues that Moore's claim is nonsense (*OC* 9, 10) that Moore in fact does *not* know this 'proposition' (*OC* 21, 32), and that claiming this is knowledge amounts to 'misuse' of language. However, according to Wittgenstein, 'through this misuse a queer and extremely important mental state seems to be revealed' (*OC* 6). 'Here is a hand' is actually a kind of deeply certain belief, deeper and more fundamental than those beliefs about the world which *can be* justified. It is totally and utterly indubitable; doubting it is not only unreasonable, but it makes no sense (*OC* 58). On the one hand, we hold many empirical beliefs which,

after we have proven their truth 'beyond reasonable doubt', have become certain by virtue of applying a communally established evidential procedure. 'Here is a hand', on the other hand, is like a 'hinge'² (OC 341) on which, together with many other equally indubitable hinge-sentences, our whole knowledge-game of doubting and giving evidence has to turn. So "'knowledge" and "certainty" belong to different *categories*' (OC 308).

We can see, then, as the central claim of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* the claim that there are certainties which are completely indubitable and without which doubt itself cannot even get going. As Daniele Moyal-Sharrock explains, for Wittgenstein of OC,

[our] *knowing* something is not our ultimate way of being sure; it does not constitute our fundamental assurance about our world and ourselves. Underlying knowing is a bedrock, logically solid, *objective certainty*. A nonepistemic belief, not a knowable one (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 26).

Many examples of objective certainties are such that, in most contexts, due to them being utterly and completely obvious, they don't even get a mention; in other words: they *go without saying* (ibid.). Consider 'I am now sitting on a chair' (OC 552), 'I come from such and such a city' (ibid. 67), 'A is a physical object' (36), 'There are physical objects' (35-6), and 'I have a brain' (159). According to Wittgenstein, despite the deceiving appearance as if expressing a scientific and empirical belief (in a very broad sense of 'scientific', which is how, for the most part, Wittgenstein used the term³), these are in fact expressions of the *rules of*

² The relevant text in its standard translation (by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright from 1969) reads as follows: 'That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions [*Sätze*] are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges [*Angeln*] on which those turn' (OC 341). Here I am following Moyal-Sharrock's (2007: 34) translation of *Sätze* in OC 431 not as 'propositions', as it is usually translated (influentially, by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright in their 1969 English edition of *On Certainty*), but as 'sentences'. See the relevant discussion of (non)propositionality of hinge-beliefs below in the present chapter.

³ I will use 'scientific' in a similar, very broad way, throughout this chapter and the rest of this thesis. According to Gabriel Citron, the later Wittgenstein's broad use of 'scientific' when applied to beliefs or sentences is related to the meaning of the German *Wissenschaftlich* (Citron 2012a: 19, fn). Such a meaning of 'scientific', then, not only encompasses the beliefs, hypotheses, opinions, sentences, etc. which are characteristic for the contexts of natural and social scientific disciplines as we know them today, but a much broader range of beliefs, hypotheses, opinions, and accompanying sentences, which are dubitable, truth-apt and knowledge-apt, and which 'we can test or find means of testing' (LC 60) by empirical evidence. So, besides the strictly scientifically – in the normal modern English sense of the word – disciplined ways of testing and basing on evidence which pass as such in this or that scientific discipline, the 'scientific' beliefs

grammar for our language-games: 'I want to say: propositions [or 'sentences', German: *Sätze*] of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions [*Sätze*] of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language)' (OC 401). For example: we share an unquestioning reliance or belief which can be voiced by 'There are physical objects', but we don't 'profess' this belief or consider doubting it except in extremely rare circumstances (e.g. psychiatric illness, or in markedly non-commonsense meaning of 'physical objects', e.g. in the knowledge-game of atomic or nuclear physics). Such rules of grammar 'grammatically underpin what we say and do' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 58), but they are never really verbalized or expressed *in the usual stream of life*. Moyal-Sharrock emphasises that, when these do get a mention, this is 'for heuristic purposes' (ibid.): i.e. not as a part of (non-heuristic) language-games, like giving information, expressing views, opinions or even emotions, but (normally) only in 'meta-lingual' language-games such as teaching young children about 'very basic facts', or teaching children or unacquainted adults about the meanings of words, or in philosophical debates. So, while we may talk about 'expressing rules of grammar' here, it makes little sense to talk of directly '*expressing* hinge-beliefs'. We may 'voice' them heuristically, or express them *indirectly* through our behaviour or other speech-acts: for example, by saying 'Give me the keys!' one is indirectly expressing the utter reliance on, or the hinge-beliefs such as, 'There are physical objects', 'You have hands', and so forth. More generally, then, it can be said that we normally *show* or manifest hinge-beliefs in our deeds (linguistic or non-linguistic ones), our *action*, but not directly express them in a non-heuristic context, for '[it] is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of our language-games' (OC 204).

This may sound odd. How can 'Here is a hand' possibly be a 'rule of grammar'? After all, doesn't the later Wittgenstein (like the early Wittgenstein) hold that the "rules of grammar" ... serve to distinguish the sense from nonsense, ... settle what makes sense, and ... determine what is a correct use of language' (Baker and Hacker 1985: 40), as Baker and Hacker explain? Yes; but this doesn't mean either that rules of grammar stay fixed in the stream of communal lives, or

in the Wittgensteinian sense are also many of 'our ordinary everyday beliefs' (LC 54) which are bound up with public and empirical procedures of judging the believability, or justifying, such beliefs in accordance with evidence. Typical Wittgenstein's uses of 'scientific' can be found in CV 72, 98 and LC 58.

that they can always be verbally formulated, or that we always find ourselves in situations where boundaries between sense and nonsense are clear and non-negotiable.⁴ Given these caveats, it is possible to see the meaning of ‘grammar’ as described by Peter Hacker in the above ‘definition’ as the same one that reaches its pinnacle in *On Certainty*. Only that it has been broadened and clarified in such a way that under the notion of ‘grammatical rules’ it now includes many sentences that look like *falsifiable* empirical propositions, but are in fact not (OC 401; c.f. Morawetz 1978: 35-46). This shall become clearer as we proceed.

Before continuing, however, it will be useful to introduce some conceptual clarification. Since, in relation to ‘hinges’ we can talk about beliefs, or sentences, or the utter certainty as a belief-attitude, we will distinguish between

- 1) hinge-*sentences* (or, hinge-*remarks*);
- 2) hinge-*beliefs*, which can be ‘voiced’ by hinge-sentences or expressed or manifested in other, indirect ways; and
- 3) hinge-*certainty* (or hinge-*believing*, or hinge belief-attitude; instead of Wittgenstein’s expression ‘objective certainty’) which is the *kind* of belief-attitude.

Sometimes, when we will mean both hinge-beliefs and accompanying hinge-sentences (or, when we will not need a sharp distinction between these) we will simply talk of *hinges*. Daniele Moyal-Sharrock suggests the following taxonomy – Wittgenstein doesn’t – in order to distinguish between different kinds of hinges:

- *linguistic* hinges: these are the usual formulations of established grammatical rules of a spoken language (e.g. definitions of meanings of

⁴ This, I take it, is one of the implications of *PI* 69 and *PI* 71, where it is claimed that the concepts do not need clear boundaries to be useful, i.e. meaningful. We do not need to draw razor-sharp boundaries of the meaning of words or come up with general definitions to use language. But that also means that, in situations of shifting meaning of a word, there are usages that are on the boundary between sense and nonsense. ‘That red colour has attacked me’ may be nonsensical to many English speakers in a given situation; sensible to other speakers in that same situation; and, again in the same situation, it can even be somewhere ‘on the boundary of sense’ to someone who is ‘just beginning to get’ what the ‘artistically endowed’ speaker of that sentence meant.

words, either by explanation or by ostensive definition), logical syntax, 'mathematical propositions' (Baker and Hacker 1985: 40) etc. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein gives 'This colour is called blue' (OC 624), '2 + 2 = 4' (OC 455) as examples.

- *personal* hinges, which have to do with our personal lives in different ways, for example: 'I come from such and such a city' (OC 67), 'I am called L.W.' (567), and 'I am in England' (421),
- *local* hinges, which voice certainties that form the bedrock of thought for certain communities at certain times, like 'There is an island, Australia' (OC 159), 'Trains normally arrive in a railway station' (339), and the controversial example 'It isn't possible to get to the moon' (106),
- And lastly, it is suggested, there are *universal* hinges like 'There are physical objects' (OC 35), 'The earth exists' (209) and 'Things don't systematically disappear when we're not looking' (234). These 'delimit the universal bounds of sense for us' as human beings (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 103),

Now, the linguistic hinge-sentences have traditionally attracted much attention and reflection by philosophers, especially by logicians and philosophers of mathematics by whom Wittgenstein himself was initiated into philosophy (c.f. Monk 1991: 30-88). Much of *Philosophical Investigations* addresses questions related to linguistic hinge-sentences and the related question of what it is to follow a rule of grammar. What takes the centre stage in *On Certainty* are the other three kinds of hinge-sentences: local, personal and universal, all of which are 'nonlinguistic hinges' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 165). And, what gets in the way of our understanding of the nature of all nonlinguistic hinge-sentences is the fact that the same sequences of words *can* in different contexts (usually only in very special circumstances) express scientific empirical propositions.⁵

⁵ It may be much easier to see that this is so for local and personal hinges than for universal hinges. However, we can at least *imagine* the situations in which even 'The Earth exists', or 'Things don't systematically disappear when we're not looking' would be empirical sentences which convey new information in those, very peculiar, circumstances.

For example, while ‘Here is one hand’ can, in the context in which Moore has uttered it, only be a voicing of objective certainty, it can also be an expression of a scientific empirical proposition when, say, a CSI detective utters these words to his colleague in the course of identifying the parts of the driver’s body after a terrible car-explosion. Moore’s mistake, according to Wittgenstein, is a failure to recognize this *categorical* distinction between a scientific and a non-scientific *Satz*. The latter actually voices or formulates a rule of grammar, not a scientific empirical proposition. This failure manifests itself in Moore’s uttering the words ‘Here is one hand’ outside of any context in which these would have sense *qua* scientific empirical claim. To be sure, Moore is not alone in such confusions. Such ‘fluctuation’ of grammatical status of one and the same sentence happens, according to Wittgenstein, also in natural-scientific discourse, for example, and only careful grammatical investigation reveals that ‘what today counts as an observed concomitant of phenomenon A will tomorrow be used to define “A”’ (*PI* 79).

Hinge-certainty is depicted in several ways in *OC*. Some see great significance in the fact that, in over 10% of the entries in the book, *foundational* metaphors are used to describe hinge-beliefs (Stroll 2007: 34). Wittgenstein describes them as ‘the ground’ (*OC* 205), ‘the foundation’ (253), ‘bedrock’ (498), ‘the rock bottom of my convictions’ (248), or ‘the scaffolding of our thoughts’ (211). But this ‘ground’ is not meant as something epistemic and intellectual; Wittgenstein was not an epistemological foundationalist.⁶ The ‘place’ where any thinking, knowing or doubting, indeed any language-game has its ultimate origin is our acting, our biosocial ways of life which include ‘primitive reactions’, ‘instincts’, and ‘*Dressur*’:

I really want to say that scruples in thinking begin with (have their root in) instinct. Or again: a language-game does not have its origin in consideration [*Überlegung*]. Consideration is part of a language-game. (Z 391)

⁶ I am not sympathetic to Stroll’s and Moyal-Sharrock’s suggestion to describe Wittgenstein as “foundationalist” (Stroll 2007; Moyal-Sharrock 2007). Foundationalism has an entrenched meaning in philosophical vocabulary: it denotes a *theory* of knowledge in a sense in which Wittgenstein’s use of foundational metaphors is not even close. See Williams (2007a: 47-58) and Coliva (2010: 167-8) for recent formulations of the view why it doesn’t make sense to read Wittgenstein of *On Certainty* as a foundationalist.

This ground, then, consists of our non-reflective ways of going-on for which a default trust is characteristic, a trust like that of a baby in that milk will be there in her mother's breast (OC 478). The foundation for our language-games is for Wittgenstein something non-intellectual. However, it is significant that Wittgenstein is still content to call hinges 'beliefs' (OC 253) – it is safe to say that this is in accordance with the everyday use of 'belief' (in English and in many other European languages, at least). It is nevertheless a pre-epistemic, non-reflective and unhesitating trust, much like the trust characteristic of prelinguistic children and many animals, a trust that manifests itself in action (c.f. OC 472-479).

When Wittgenstein writes that our language-games are grounded in our animal-like *action*, he is also saying that our *epistemic* practices and methods as systemic wholes are ultimately based on non-intellectual 'grounds'. 'When a child learns a language it learns *at the same time* what is to be investigated and what not' (OC 427). This is to say that knowledge is ultimately *groundless* (epistemically speaking), since knowledge-games and 'games of giving and judging reasons' are neither reasonable nor unreasonable (OC 559; c.f. Kusch 2009b). The question of reasonability regarding an epistemic practice as a whole is a wrong question. According to Wittgenstein, this is not easy to accept or even to realize – especially, perhaps, for us as members of the modern, knowledge-driven societies. 'The difficulty is to realize the groundlessness of our believing' (OC 166).

3.4 'Belief' as a family-resemblance concept

However, certain difficult questions loom large here. For example: if hinge-certainty is a non-ratiocinated trust, characteristic also of prelinguistic children and animals, this would commit us to saying that animals have beliefs. This may resonate with the inclination of *some* to describe animal behaviour, but does it make sense to say that animals have beliefs? Many philosophers think not, insisting that, since to believe is to assent to representational content or a proposition, an ability to verbally structure representation, i.e., a mastery of complex language, is necessary for believing (c.f. Switzgebel 2010; see also Hutto 2012: 13). If we don't accept this 'complex-language requirement' for

belief, what could an alternative minimal and necessary characteristic of belief be – such, say, which would encompass at least scientific empirical beliefs and hinge-beliefs? Did Wittgenstein offer anything explicit, or at least give clues?

Here we need to remember that the later Wittgenstein rejected the idea that ‘seeking essences’ or determining ‘necessary and sufficient conditions’ for ‘belief’, for example, is the business of philosophy. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein’s response to the traditional metaphysical question ‘what kind of thing anything is’ is related to his notion of ‘family-resemblance’ – a metaphor which Wittgenstein applies to the understanding of meaning. As explained on the example of ‘game’ in a famous passage:

Consider, for example, the activities that we call ‘games’. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, athletic games, and so on. What is common to them all? – Don’t say: ‘They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called “games”’ – but *look and see* whether there is anything in common at all. – For if you look at them, you won’t see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. (*PI* 66)

Wittgenstein goes on reminding readers that, if we look, we notice that some games are entertaining, others not; some demand patience, others not; in some games there is winning and losing, in others not; etc. He concludes:

And the upshot of all these considerations is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing: similarities in the large and in the small. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family-resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family – build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so forth – overlap and criss-cross in the same way. (*PI* 66-67)

In the same broader context, Wittgenstein suggests the same for concepts like ‘number’, ‘leaf’, and ‘green’, (*PI* 67, 73); there is no essence, no one common characteristic to all things we call ‘number’, or ‘leaf’, or ‘green’, respectively. Just family resemblances. The implication is that this holds for most, if not all concepts: it holds at least for concepts used in an enormously broad variety of

language-games where applications of concepts is *not* all the time rigorously controlled, i.e. ‘everyday language-games’, and even very many scientific and otherwise disciplined language-games. As Wittgenstein points out, the point of the ‘family-resemblance’ view of meaning is not that we cannot give the concept of ‘game’, say, rigid boundaries. Of course we (i.e., the community) *can* do that. But when asked for a meaning of ‘game’ according to the traditional philosophical endeavour of seeking understanding of something through a definition or by suggesting minimal and necessary conditions, one is not asked to *draw* boundaries but to ‘say what the boundaries are’ (*PI* 68). Importantly, Wittgenstein rejects the challenge itself: it is not possible to *discover* (fixed) boundaries of concepts, only to *draw* them. What one can discover are only ‘complicated network[s] of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing’ (*PI* 66), where we need to remember that the notion of ‘similarity’ in such a context is not, and cannot be made, analytically precise.⁷

⁷ How we interpret the family-resemblance understanding of meaning has far-reaching implications and goes to the heart of contemporary discussions of what Wittgensteinian philosophy or ‘grammatical investigation’ is all about. For David Stern (who takes Stanley Cavell as a forerunner of his reading of Wittgenstein on this matter), the upshot of the family-resemblance view of language as found in *PI* is not only that we can’t determine any universal, common characteristics of most class-concepts. He sees it as leading to the following ‘Pyrrhonian’ conclusion:

Wittgenstein’s narrator [in *PI*] is denying that if one understands a word, such as ‘game’ (or ‘language’, or for that matter, any arbitrary predicate, F), one must be able to formulate a rule that enables us to say whether any chosen item is an F. More generally, he opposes the idea that there is something lying behind my use of my words that justifies me in what I say, something over and above our use of the words, which can be used to provide a philosophical legitimation for it. (Stern 2004: 116)

This is contrary to the well known interpretation of Wittgenstein by Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker, who see grammatical investigation as consisting in ‘an *exact description* of how expressions are explained and used’ (Baker and Hacker 1983: 210), where this exact description is to be understood in terms of ‘describing, tabulating, and marshalling ... the rules for correct application of words’, as Gabriel Citron interprets it on the basis of more recent work of Hacker (Citron 2012b: 35). Also recently, Oskar Kuusela has objected to Baker’s and Hacker’s understanding of grammatical investigation, suggesting an interpretation of grammatical investigation which is compatible with Stern’s reading mentioned above of Wittgenstein’s use of family-resemblance metaphor. According to Kuusela, aiming to describe and to marshal the rules for *correct* application of a concept is not in line with Wittgensteinian *descriptive* philosophy: it *draws* boundaries instead of simply laying out the games which are played at a given point in time in a given place in a particular context by a particular community, etc. ‘To say that a word must be used in such and such a way in order to express a particular concept is still to make a statement about how that word must be used’ (Kuusela 2005: 112). As we will suggest below and in Chapter Four, there are both descriptive and prescriptive strands of Wittgenstein’s philosophy; for us, Kuusela’s and Stern’s philosophical point is appreciated by way of advocating the maximum transparency and explicitness about the prescriptive (normative) elements in philosophical language-game, as explained below.

So, what happens when we think of 'belief' as a family-resemblance concept? And what would a family-resemblance view of 'belief' mean for our discussion of the kinds of belief which we see in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*? A thorough exposition of a Wittgenstein-inspired family-resemblance view of 'belief' cannot be found, according to my knowledge, in relevant philosophical literature, but in the social-anthropological work of Rodney Needham (1972). This may not surprise us, given Wittgenstein's insistence that it is by an attentive *looking at* the actual uses of words and forms of life (*PI* 66) in which these are embedded that a family-resemblance nature of concepts becomes apparent to us.

Beginning with an examination of the well-studied culture of the Nuer people in Africa, Needham argues that none of about a dozen Nuer words which have been translated into English as 'belief', 'believe', and so on, (by anthropologists, missionaries, official translators, etc.) precisely coincides with their supposed English counterparts, and most of them have variety of uses which vary greatly from the use of 'belief' and its cognates (Needham 1972: 14-26). Furthermore, the etymology of the English word 'believe' itself tells a story of complicated, contingent histories of several concepts in various cultures that contributed to it and amalgamated into one, modern English 'believe'⁸. More importantly, there is no one unifying characteristic of the contemporary English 'believe', no single core, even though there is a strong temptation to expect something like it:

Our linguistic predispositions constantly persuade us to assume some unitary principle or object of classification underlying the usages of belief; yet however much we turn about the concept, and scrutinize it under new aspects, this unitary feature is just what we cannot find. (Needham 1972: 109)

⁸ This includes Gothic, Old English and Middle English words (*galaubjan*, *gelefan*, and *beliven* respectively) whose meanings were much closer to contemporary English word 'trust' than to 'believe'; the Hebrew *he'emin* in the Old Testament (variety of uses, including something like 'to believe a report', also 'to trust', but it also acquired specific meaning to denote the relationship of Israelites to *Yahweh*); the Greek *pisteuein*, which in the New Testament could have similar meanings to Hebrew *he'emin*, but also more pronounced association with 'obedience', and in later Christian antiquity something like 'putting faith in God's revelation/Scripture/teaching', etc.; and finally, the more recent, modern notions of scientifically evidenced and justified belief (Needham 1972: 40-50). Needham's point here is that '[our] conception of belief, so far as it has been religiously moulded, is demonstrably an historical amalgam, composed of elements traceable to Judaic mystical doctrine and Greek styles of discourse' (ibid. 49), and, of several other influences besides.

In a similarly Wittgensteinian manner, it is noted that our ordinary discourse and Folk psychology (Needham calls it 'common-sense psychology')

...tend to induce us into two capital errors: first, the assumption that there must be something in common to all instances of believing; second, the assumption that there must be a mental counterpart to the expression of belief. An equally fallacious inference derives from the conjunction of these two assumptions, namely that what is common (and thus essential) to all instances of believing is the manifestation of the mental event or state. (ibid. 122)

Needham again follows Wittgenstein (Z 113) when remarking that it is, in fact, to be expected for all psychological verbs like 'believe', 'think', 'know', 'feel', etc. that they will have 'extremely ramified and extended uses', and that the uses of such words often 'appear confused' (Needham 1972: 123), even though this doesn't make them any less useful or communicable in everyday language-games (Z 113-115; *PI* 69, 71). Towards the later, more theoretical part of the book, however, Needham adopts a more 'eliminativist' tone, claiming:

As soon as we focus upon [the concept of belief] and ask 'What *is* belief?' the concept disintegrates. (Needham 1972: 125)

[The] phenomenon of belief consists in no more than the custom of making statements about belief. ... The odd-job uses of 'Belief' can be separately rendered by other words or by the substitution of other forms of expression, and the word can be so far translated away that the concept must disintegrate in correlation with the dispersal of its connotations. If grammar tells us what kind of an object something is, then the grammar of belief tells us that there is no such object. (ibid. 131)

To interpret this point properly, we need to bear in mind two points. First, one among several points of Needham's argument (ibid. 93-98) is that the *markers of 'belief' are not experiential* – i.e. 'belief' is not a phenomenological category (as is 'feeling', for example). This point is very much in line with the later Wittgenstein's understanding that concepts such as 'intending', 'believing', 'knowing', and even 'thinking', do not express 'states of consciousness' or 'experiences' (*RPP II* 45, 257-258). They are more complex psychological

concepts than 'feelings', 'moods', 'images', 'sensations', etc. which do express 'experiences' (more on Wittgenstein's understanding in Chapter Five (5.2.2)). And second: as a social anthropologist Needham is, after all, in the business of social-scientific theory-building, or at least determining the limits of such an enterprise. As such, his methodology moves beyond mere grammatical investigation of the variety of meanings of 'believe' and its cognates, and enters also into the mode of 'asking for existence of entities'. We can read his work as a precursor to the interpretation of the later Wittgenstein adopted by the Sociology of (scientific) knowledge tradition (the so-called 'Edinburgh programme': Barry Barnes, David Bloor, Henry Collins, Martin Kusch), where – to simplify – Wittgenstein's call to '*look and see*' (*PI* 66) is heeded by engaging in a rigorous, systematic and (usually) localized sociological and historical study of the uses of (scientific) concepts in chosen contexts. Down this route, we arrive at a socio-epistemological understanding of how scientific knowledge (i.e. knowledge as 'belief' with particular social status) functions. Often, sociologists of knowledge offer also more general judgements about scientific language, meaning, and language in general (c.f. Barnes 1995; Kusch 2002, 2006). The conclusion regarding the concept 'belief', either in contexts of scientific discourse or outside of them, from such lines of investigation, must be that belief is not a natural kind but a 'social institution' (Kusch 2006: 347).

It is in this spirit that we should also take Needham's statement that 'the grammar of belief tells us that there is no such object' as 'belief' (Needham 1972: 131). However, this is only one possible way in which to take up the insight and the challenge of the later-Wittgensteinian family-resemblance view of meaning in relation to 'belief'. And, even if we do choose to focus on 'belief' as a social institution, and use the methodologies of sociology or social anthropology and conclude that there is no such *natural* object as 'belief', this doesn't mean to say that 'nobody in fact doesn't believe anything', or that 'when we think we believe something, we actually don't', or that we cannot or should not talk about different kinds of belief-attitudes. The issue here is an appropriate understanding of the nature of psychological concepts and the communal dynamics of their use, and not whether we do in fact believe anything or not.

For us, 'belief' and its cognates (but also 'knowledge') are *socio-psychological*⁹ concepts which can be variously analysed from the perspectives of different disciplines. We shall revisit the point that beliefs are not a phenomenological category in Chapter Five (5.2.2-5.2.3) when we revisit Wittgenstein's investigation of the nature of psychological concepts, and in Chapter Six when we discuss how existential feelings (phenomenological concept, non-intentional) and beliefs about God (socio-psychological concept, intentional) are related (6.5.1).¹⁰

3.5 Descriptive vs. prescriptive philosophical discourse

The Wittgensteinian family-resemblance view of 'belief' has been taken up, not only by sociological, anthropological, or psychological theorizing, but also by more constructive suggestions within philosophy. What I mean is that a typically descriptive mode of philosophy, so characteristic for much of the later Wittgenstein's work – 'philosophy as grammar' which, in our case, reveals the family-resemblance nature of the concept 'belief' but refuses to legislate between what *must* be called 'belief' and what not – *can be* conjoined with further, more normative, i.e. prescriptive moves, without an apparent contradiction. This is contrary to the position of those Wittgensteinian philosophers who see philosophy's job *exclusively* in descriptivist terms (c.f. Phillips 1999: 45-46, Kuusela 2005: 121). But it is possible to follow up grammatical investigation of 'belief', for example, by a constructive suggestion as to how we might draw the boundaries of the concept 'belief', in order to, say,

⁹ By saying that 'belief' is a *socio-psychological* concept we mean that beliefs are typically strongly co-constituted by, or partly consist in, social processes, institutions, negotiations and (tacit or explicit) agreements, and that they are at the same time 'held by' individuals, i.e. related to the aspects of our individual lives which we describe with other psychological or mental descriptions (expecting, anticipating, being certain, intending, being of an opinion etc.), as well as structure and/or guide most other aspects of our individual and social lives. A similar concept to our 'socio-psychological' is, for example, 'socio-*mental*' in the discourse of social psychology (see, for example, Friedman and DeGloma (2005)). Our understanding of beliefs as 'socio-psychological' category has been influenced by Martin Kusch's communitarian view of belief, without fully agreeing with Kusch, however, that there is a sharp distinction between 'purely individual beliefs' and 'group-involving individual beliefs' (see Kusch 2002: 143).

¹⁰ See also Appendix I for additional discussion of how the socio-psychological nature of beliefs is related to the question of the intentionality of *hinge*-beliefs.

lessen some of the confusion which can ensue from variegated uses of 'belief', either in philosophical language-games or beyond them.

What we are suggesting is that we needn't see any prescriptive suggestion in terms of philosophical word-use as being antithetical to Wittgenstein's commitment to a predominantly descriptive job of philosophy to clarify the grammar of language. Most strictly descriptive understanding of philosophy seems most apparent from a famous Wittgenstein's remark in *Philosophical Investigations*: 'Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it. ... It leaves everything as it is' (*PI* 124), but also from several others.¹¹ Two brief points may be made on this issue. First, there is a disagreement between Wittgensteinian philosophers whether Wittgenstein's way of doing philosophy demands an austere and complete refraining from any prescriptive suggestions in relation to use of words or not. D.Z. Phillips (1999: 45-46), for example, insisted that Wittgenstein's 'methodological principle of non-interference'¹², found in *PI* 124, has, both, been meticulously followed by the later Wittgenstein, and, should be followed by philosophers today and always. However, as argued by Clack (1999: 122-123) and Mulhall (2001: 110-111), Wittgenstein didn't follow the principle of non-interference in all respects or always. For example, his distinction between 'religion' and 'superstition', to which we return in the next chapter, is far from 'merely descriptive'. Rather it is a creative move in a philosophical language-game which carries a normative force, since superstition is, for Wittgenstein and for most of his audience (and for us today), associated with cheating oneself and is something to be ridiculed (*LC* 59) or 'avoided' (Mulhall 2001: 110).¹³

¹¹ For a rich list of references to the relevant remarks by which Wittgenstein most clearly outlines philosophy's job as a descriptive, 'conceptual investigation', see Kuusela (2005).

¹² This exact phrasing is taken from Plant (2005: 69).

¹³ To be fair, it needs to be added that the distinction between 'superstition' and 'religion' was made by Wittgenstein, not in a published work or even in notes for a planned published work, but during his lectures to relatively small group of students in Cambridge compiled posthumously in the *Lectures on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Wittgenstein didn't want these remarks to be published since he felt he 'talked freely as ideas came' and didn't consider these thoughts to be his fully 'considered opinions' (Monk 1991: 403). According to Ray Monk, however, this doesn't mean that they don't reveal significant aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophical thinking: 'Precisely because he was speaking in a spontaneous and unguarded manner, [these notes] provide one of the most unambiguous statements of his purpose in philosophy, and of how this purpose connects with his personal *Weltanschauung*' (Monk 1991: 404).

Another example is the very distinction from *On Certainty* between ‘subjective certainty’ (which can be knowledge) and ‘objective certainty’ (can’t be knowledge, is beyond the possibility of doubt) (OC 194). Similarly an unmistakable ‘drawing of boundaries’ by Wittgenstein in OC is also between an ‘empirical proposition’ and a ‘hinge’, i.e. ‘grammatical’ proposition (OC 308, 341). These are only a few examples of Wittgenstein’s prescriptive linguistic moves, but it suffices to show that he did not always stick to his ‘principle of non-interference’ in the strongest way which seems to be implied by PI 124.¹⁴

And second: there are many constructive moves in contemporary philosophical discourse which are deeply inspired by the later Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language. One such is Moyal-Sharrock’s (2007) interpretation of *On Certainty* with which we’re engaging here. She suggests, for example, that her own way of fleshing-out the meaning of ‘proposition’ is strongly implied but not systematically followed through by the ‘third Wittgenstein’ (i.e. the Wittgenstein of OC; we shall return to Moyal-Sharrock’s understanding of ‘proposition’ shortly). Another systematic view which is deeply informed by a Wittgensteinian understanding of psychological concepts but tops it up with prescriptive suggestions is Daniel Hutto’s account of ‘belief’. Hutto suggests that the ‘common core’, or ‘minimal and necessary characteristic’ of belief is not propositionality but intentionality (Hutto 2012: 14). This suggestion, too, clearly departs from a merely descriptive investigation of ‘belief’ and doesn’t stick to the

¹⁴ For comparison, see also Joachim Schulte’s intricate and somewhat different than the strict descriptivist reading of Wittgenstein’s understanding of *descriptive* nature of philosophy (Schulte 1993: 26). Schulte relates Wittgenstein’s principle of non-interference (PI 124) with the remark in which Wittgenstein likens his descriptivist understanding of philosophy with the impressionist way of painting, as opposed to the ‘the old way of painting’ (presumably a strictly representationalist and meticulously detailed way of painting) (Wittgenstein, quoted in Schulte 1993: 25). Schulte interprets this thus:

Wittgenstein, whose aim in philosophy is not explanation but description, wishes to give an unvarnished account of the subjects he tries to deal with. He wishes to draw a picture which represents our everyday impression of these subjects and whose only difference from this impression consists as it were in its having a frame, that is, in its admittedly being a picture. The salient point is this: that such an ‘impressionist’ picture is in no sense a simple copy of the represented subject; through an extremely complicated technique it strives to make us aware of the fact that our everyday way of seeing works by means of leaving out and adding, by means of distorting and rectifying things [unlike ‘the old way of painting’ which focuses on details and particularities, but fails to illuminate the ways our everyday of seeing works]. (Schulte 1993: 26)

While Schulte is not explicit whether this ‘making us aware... [how] everyday way of seeing works’ leads to (should lead to, may lead to...) any normativity in terms of the use of language or meanings of concepts, we can very well imagine it could.

family-resemblance understanding of 'belief'. Without any further discussion of Hutto's suggestion here, we can recognize, however, that any philosophically prescriptive meaning of 'belief' such as Hutto's which encompasses both verbally-structured propositional beliefs and the manifestations of 'animal trust' is at least *more* in line with some central Wittgenstein's insights regarding the meanings of 'belief' than are the definitions of 'belief' by those philosophers – and there are plenty – who insist that verbally-structured content and propositionality are necessary conditions of belief.¹⁵

In any case, what is vital for us is to see the importance of the issue of descriptive vs. prescriptive nature of philosophical discourse, in relation to the meanings of concepts that are much used in philosophy. It will resurface as a central issue in the next chapter in relation to Wittgenstein's and Wittgenstein-inspired understandings of the nature of religious belief. More generally, it is relevant in the context of the discussion about the nature of philosophical inquiry and the related question, the question of the relation between 'the realm of the philosophical' and 'the realm of the personal' in philosophising. Is there a strict and hard dichotomy between these, with philosophy being a descriptive/contemplative intellectual endeavour completely distinct from and, in an important sense, 'detached' from, the realm of the personal which is bound up and intertwined with 'everyday language', its normativities of meanings, and its 'attachedness', as D.Z. Phillips thinks (1999: 43-46, 62-63)? Or does the personal – in one way or another, more or less visibly – not only shape one's philosophical style but also inform the philosophical endeavour, as Stephen Mulhall suggests (Mulhall 2007: 21)? In the introduction, we have sided with Mulhall's vision of this matter, since '...[after] all, all engaging in philosophical reflection is not something one does outside or apart from one's life' (ibid.), and

¹⁵ Hutto suggests that his account of beliefs as being minimally and necessarily intentional mental states explains a broad variety of application of belief in everyday and different scientific discourses, including the wide-spread talk of animal beliefs which cannot have verbal content, but can be considered as intentional mental states. At the same time, his account offers solutions for, or enables a vanishing-away of, several philosophical problems which are arguably created by the insistence that complex language and propositionality are necessary conditions for belief – a notion which Hutto rejects (Hutto 2012: 14-18). In our additional discussion in Appendix I of whether it makes sense to call hinge-beliefs intentional or not, we suggest a different 'regime' about intentionality of hinge-beliefs than does Hutto, however: given the very complicated and indirect ways in which hinge-beliefs can be seen as related with either (phenomenologically) intentional or non-intentional experiencing, we conclude that there is no elucidating or non-arbitrary way of calling hinge-beliefs 'intentional' (c.f. Appendix I 1).

because 'philosophical confusions are not restricted to inhabitants of certain disciplines, or sectors of culture, or classes within societies, or societies as a whole' (Mulhall 2001: 115). Despite philosophy being a meta-discourse on other discourses, at least from philosophy's perspective there is a continuity between everyday language and philosophical language even though this continuity may not be discernible from the 'outside' (i.e., from the perspective of an everyday-language speaker who is unacquainted with philosophical terminology). As Wittgenstein made clear, philosophical language-games are necessarily *parasitic* on the ordinary meanings and everyday language-games (c.f. *PI* 120). Presumably, philosophical *concerns* are also, to that extent, parasitic on the 'ordinary concerns' of the personal realm. Among such ordinary concerns and ordinary language-games we have to count, of course, religious commitments/concerns, and 'first-order' religious language-games (but not elaborated, academic theology), respectively.

The dynamics between the descriptive and prescriptive (or normative) is relevant also to the question of how the language and the task of philosophy are to be understood and pursued in relation to the language-games and tasks of other disciplines: either natural sciences, social sciences, or humanities, including theology. Since philosophy is bound both to influence and to be influenced by the discourses of other disciplines (Mulhall 2007: 22), the normative force of the established meanings of terms in these other disciplined discourses affects philosophy, especially when philosophy has closer engagements with those disciplines (philosophy of biology, philosophy of psychology, and so on), although this shouldn't, of course, happen uncritically and below the radar of the grammatical investigation of such meanings. The crucial thing is, we suggest, that any prescriptive moves which draw boundaries of meanings in philosophical language-game are conscious of their *normative/non-descriptive* nature and, if possible, explicit rather than implicit or even worse, disguised in 'descriptive' philosophy.

3.6 The non-propositionality of hinge-beliefs

Having considered these larger, methodological questions, we can now return to the topic of hinge-beliefs and address a question whether hinge-beliefs are (i.e. should be considered) *propositional*. The Wittgenstein of *On Certainty*, as we have seen, draws a boundary between two different *kinds* of belief-attitude: scientific-propositional belief-attitude on one hand, and the ‘objective’ or ‘hinge-certainty’ on the other. Interpreters disagree, however, on the question whether hinge-certainty is a *propositional* belief-attitude, i.e. whether hinge-beliefs are propositional beliefs, or not. It is not controversial that, according to *On Certainty*, hinges are non-ratiocinated (OC 475), that they usually ‘go without saying’, and that they are held with an utterly unquestioning trust: they are indubitable. A less straightforward suggestion, put forward by Avrum Stroll, D. Moyal-Sharrock, John Canfield and a few others, is that hinges are *nonpropositional*. To many, this sounds like a contradiction in terms since ‘[most] contemporary philosophers characterize belief as a “propositional attitude”’ (Switzgebel 2010); in other words, for most philosophers, especially of the analytic tradition, belief just *is* an attitude of accepting a *proposition* as true. Accordingly, whatever *kind* of belief the utterance ‘Here is a hand’ may express (or voice), the content of this belief is a proposition ‘Here is a hand’, or else it is not a belief.¹⁶

In terms of interpreting Wittgenstein’s view, many Wittgenstein scholars (e.g. Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker, D.Z. Phillips, Hans-Johann Glock, Brian Clack, and others) have noted that Wittgenstein had no problem with using the term ‘proposition’ (*Satz*) for hinges (be it linguistic hinges like ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ or ‘Red is a colour’, or the nonlinguistic hinges like ‘Earth exists’ or ‘My name is L.W.’). The ‘Third-Wittgenstein school’ (Stroll, Moyal-Sharrock, Canfield) argues, however, that the very late Wittgenstein increasingly regarded as propositional *only* those beliefs and statements which are ‘empirically derived’ and liable to

¹⁶ Philosophers of mind who recognize the significance of our deep tendency to ascribe beliefs to animals and pre-linguistic children (both are thought to be incapable of holding propositional attitudes) sometimes come up with a different term for such, hinge-like mental attitudes, or, the ‘associative, automatic and arational’ mental states (Gendler 2008b: 557). T. S. Gendler, for example, has recently introduced the term ‘*allief*’ in order to distinguish these from beliefs (Gendler 2008a, 2008b).

'doubt, verification or falsification' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 39). It is not crucially important for us here what Wittgenstein exactly thought on this matter and *when*, or even whether he was consistent in his use of 'proposition' or not.¹⁷ But one may ask, why bother, in the context of our study, with the meaning of the technical term 'proposition' at all?

The reason why it is important to decide whether and how to use the concept 'proposition' in contemporary discourse of philosophy of religion as well as in theology, and what to make of the 'proposition'-talk in this context, is the following: For Wittgenstein and probably for most contemporary philosophers concerned with the concept 'proposition', propositionality is linked with bipolarity, i.e. the possibility of beliefs and statements being either true or false. The use of 'true' and 'false' for *religious* beliefs and statements is one of the most deep-seated grammatical features of most variations of Christian language-games (Tillich 1973: 100-101) (as well as Jewish, Muslim, and many other). However, in the next chapter we will be examining an influential school of Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion (M. Kober, G. Shoenbaumsfeld, among others) that describes religious beliefs in terms of hinge-beliefs. It is therefore sensible for us to address the question whether it makes sense to say that hinges can be 'true' or 'false', and hence whether it makes sense to describe hinges as 'propositional' or not.

For contrasting views, we will take as influential representatives (early) G. Baker and P. Hacker for one view, and D. Moyal-Sharrock of another. So, why is it important to Moyal-Sharrock (beyond the exegesis of Wittgenstein) that the application of 'propositional' should be restricted solely to dubitable, and even 'empirically derived' and 'falsifiable' statements and beliefs? Alternatively, why should we affirm, in Baker's and Hacker's view, the propositionality of hinges?

Baker and Hacker (1985) didn't, in fact, use the categories 'hinge' or 'objective certainty' but (in the context of their interpretation of *Philosophical*

¹⁷ Notably, the German *Satz* which is in English translations of Wittgenstein's remarks usually translated as 'proposition', can also be translated with its more primary meaning, 'sentence'. According to Moyal-Sharrock, many of Wittgenstein's uses of *Satz* do not by themselves provide conclusive indications as to whether 'proposition' (the content of the sentence) or 'sentence' (the string of words itself) better captures what he was talking about (c.f. Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 34-35), which is partially why there is an exegetical disagreement here and an apparent need for interpretation.

Investigations) the more common ‘grammatical utterances’ or ‘grammatical remarks’ which correspond to hinge-sentences from *On Certainty*.¹⁸ Mostly, their examples are what Moyal-Sharrock calls *linguistic* hinges (definitions of words in the ordinary language, rules of logic, rules of mathematics, etc.), but they also include some nonlinguistic ones, such as ‘Time flows’ or ‘The world exists’ (Baker and Hacker 1985: 269-289). Central to their affirmation of calling all such hinges ‘propositions’ is the worry that, by denying that the rules of arithmetic, for example, are propositions and can be true or false, we are going against the established language use in arithmetic according to which we say that ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ is true and that ‘ $2 + 2 = 5$ ’ is false (ibid.: 276). Baker and Hacker are insisting here that we need to stick to the Wittgensteinian principle of non-interference (*PI* 124), especially in relation to non-philosophical discourses – in this case, the language-game of basic arithmetic which is a part of ‘everyday language’, of course. It is not a job of the philosopher to legislate such culturally entrenched customs of attributing ‘true’ and ‘false’. However, the authors recognize that the meanings of ‘true’ and ‘false’ in the case of different kinds of propositions can be very different, and philosophers do well if they clarify these differences, try to help people see through the ‘surface grammar’ (*PI* 664) and free themselves from ‘bewitchment by language’. Focusing on ‘necessary propositions’ of logic and mathematics especially (linguistic hinges), Baker and Hacker wrote:

Necessary propositions and empirical propositions have very different roles and ... these differences are masked by the parallel use of ‘true’ and ‘false’. Of course, we cannot deny that $2 + 2 = 4$ is true or that $2 + 3 \neq 5$ is false, for we do use ‘true’ and ‘false’ thus. What we need to do is unmask the differences in use between true necessary propositions and true empirical ones, and the profound asymmetries between the negations of true and empirical propositions and true necessary ones. (Baker and Hacker 1985: 280)

¹⁸ See, however, Moyal-Sharrock’s (2007: 163-165) explanation of the differences which the ‘Third-Wittgenstein school’ of philosophers see between the Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations* and the Wittgenstein of *On Certainty*. The central change seems to be exactly the broadening of the ‘grammatical remarks’ category, from what we, following Moyal-Sharrock, are calling ‘linguistic hinge-sentences’ (some of which seem to be about the world, but are actually grammatical remarks, the Wittgenstein of *PI* reminds us; for example, ‘Red is darker than pink’), to the inclusion also of nonlinguistic hinge-sentences, like ‘Here is a hand’, ‘My name is L.W.’ or ‘I have a brain’, into the same broader category of grammatical remarks.

Accordingly, Hacker is happy to leave the concept 'proposition' to remain a family-resemblance concept without legislating its meaning in any way (Hacker 1989: 170), even to the extent that he rejected the conceptual link between propositionality and bipolarity – for Hacker, not *all* propositions are either true or false, although a very broad and important class of propositions is – in order to 'save', we might say, the propositionality of such hinges as rules of arithmetic (ibid. 133).¹⁹

Moyal-Sharrock (2007: 49-51) contests Baker and Hacker's interpretation of the principle of non-interference. Philosophers simply can't abandon the normative dimension of the task of conceptual clarification in the name of this principle, she argues, so that, in order to distinguish the *depth grammar* from the *surface grammar* (PI 664), philosophers should not only 'make manifest' but also *correct* misleading categorizations. Whether she is exegetically correct or not – she insists, also contra Hacker (1989), that Wittgenstein thought throughout his career, both that rules of arithmetic, or any other hinge-sentences, are 'neither true nor false' (AWL 70), and that propositionality is conceptually linked to bipolarity (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 38-42) – she argues that philosophers should not only follow Wittgenstein in this, but also take up the task where Wittgenstein has left it, namely the task of ever more clearly distinguishing between propositional beliefs on one side and hinges on the other. This includes the refusal to regard the rules of arithmetic and other hinges as bipolar, since 'only what is susceptible of doubt' and what is 'empirically *derived*' can be 'expressed by propositions' (ibid. 42, 39). Moyal-Sharrock argues, however, that this does *not* mean interfering with the ordinary, *non-philosophical* language-games (ibid.: 49) but merely elucidating them.

What could we say about this grammatical disagreement over the propositionality of hinges and over the meaning of 'proposition' itself? First, there seem to be implications, if not clearly expressed views, in Moyal-Sharrock's way of distinguishing philosophical and ordinary language-games that remind one of D.Z. Phillips's *too sharp* distinction between the realm of the

¹⁹ A more recent voice from the *On Certainty*-inspired debates which rejects the conceptual link between propositionality and bipolarity is Annalisa Coliva. She is happy to maintain that, by Wittgensteinian lights, hinges do fail at bipolarity but 'they are still propositions, albeit with a normative function, rather than descriptive one' (Coliva 2010: 10).

philosophical and the realm of the personal. It is problematic to assume that philosophers' employment of specially-defined concepts (like 'proposition' and 'hinge' in the present discussion) with the corresponding desire towards ever-sharper conceptual distinctions somehow give us special insight into the meanings and 'nature of things'. In fact, Wittgenstein criticized such an understanding of philosophy exactly with the specialized philosophical use of 'proposition' in mind (cf. *PI* 101-116)! Philosophical discourse cannot be neatly sealed-off from ordinary language into a closed linguistic community; philosophical language-games are necessarily parasitic on ordinary meanings (cf. *PI* 120). What is missing from Moyal-Sharrock's account is a recognition that philosophical games *do* in fact interfere with the language-games outside philosophical communities (any notable influence on ordinary language by philosophers is rarely achieved, but it is *possible* and it does happen, nevertheless²⁰). This means also that her own definition of 'proposition' and 'true' *may* well interfere, and is allowed to *hope* to interfere,²¹ with ordinary mathematical language-games (for example, it could be suggested to the general public, mathematicians and teachers by so-minded philosophers that $2 + 2 = 4$ should only be considered 'right' but not 'true' and $2 + 2 \neq 5$ should only be considered 'wrong' or 'erroneous' but not 'false').

²⁰ The probability that a philosopher would influence everyday language of any larger linguistic community seems normally to be extremely low, and perhaps similarly low probability holds for her chance to influence scientific; even in influencing the *broader* philosophical discourse she may fare only a little better. But, although rare, a few philosophers (arguably, Wittgenstein is among them) do succeed in leaving their mark with their creative concepts or phrases on the broader linguistic practice, even on the practices of subsequent generations. Peter Berger, in order to illustrate this rarity of *any* individual visibly influencing the language-practices of broader communities, compares language with a stream, a broad and dynamic river, into which many individuals and small groups of people who use it, throw different things ('new words or new combination of words') into it. Most of these sink or fade away immediately; some catch on and persist for a time and can be noted in this or that part of the river, but also fade away; a very few, however, remain as a feature of the river all the way to the end (Berger & Berger 1976: 84). Phrases like 'language-games' or 'paradigm shift' (T. Kuhn) are examples of such influential philosophical concepts, although it is also arguable that the meanings of these concepts are often radically changed as they travel from philosophical to non-philosophical uses.

²¹ Compare this very different and non-Wittgensteinian view of the job of philosophy by Nancey Murphy:

Philosophy at its best helps to sum up the most basic characteristics of an era past. Philosophers also criticize these assumptions and occasionally suggest improvements or replacements. Thus, at their best, philosophers may, if their arguments win the day, help to shape the era to come. So the descriptive and constructive tasks are not independent. (Murphy 1998: 479)

On the other hand, aspects of conceptual distinctions Moyal-Sharrock suggests may strike us as sensible or 'wise': for clarity's sake and *especially* in the context of philosophical discussion (but not necessarily restricted to it), it makes sense to restrict the meaning of the concept 'proposition' to linguistically structured content that can be true or false, and is, at least in some respects, dubitable. Such an insistence becomes especially relevant in the light of the need to distinguish nonlinguistic hinge-beliefs (like 'Here is a hand') from scientific empirical beliefs (also 'Here is a hand' but in a very different contexts, e.g. CSI investigation) where an identical utterance may be a verbalization of one or the other. The very fact that G.E. Moore and so many philosophers (of all people!) failed to see the radical difference between these two kinds of belief-attitudes is a reason enough, one may be inclined to suggest, for insisting on the conceptual link between propositionality, bipolarity and dubitability. We should not forget, though, that this link – that propositional beliefs are by definition dubitable and bipolar – is a *rule* of grammar for our philosophical language-game, not a scientific proposition; there are no context-free, timeless or sharp meanings of 'proposition', 'true', and 'belief', which could be discovered. As the later Wittgenstein remarked: '[The] basic evil of Russell's logic, as also of [Wittgenstein's own] in the *Tractatus*, is that what a proposition is is illustrated by a few commonplace examples, and then pre-supposed as understood in full generality' (*RPP I* 38).

Another case against the nonpropositionality of hinges, however, can be construed on the basis of 'borderline' examples for which it is hard to say whether they are scientific empirical beliefs, or hinge-beliefs. For this, Wittgenstein's own example 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' (*OC* 106) is as good as any other. It is often considered to be Wittgenstein's most questionable example of a hinge-belief, especially in the light of the development in space travel and moon missions of the last fifty years, and the related circumstance that, today, this is scarcely believed by anyone. For Wittgenstein, the belief 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' was apparently a hinge (*OC* was written in or slightly before 1950) and as such neither true nor false. This is, as we have seen, controversial enough. But Moyal-Sharrock argues for an even more counterintuitive point which, in her view, follows straightforwardly from Wittgenstein's overall view of hinges in *OC*: She claims that this hinge was

never *falsified*. Not even for people who shared the 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' hinge-belief with Wittgenstein in 1950 – let's assume this was the majority of world's population – and have subsequently lost this belief in the light of the first moon-walk nearly two decades later. If Moyal-Sharrock and her reading of OC is right, the process of falsification of 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' hinge-belief, for which many assume has taken place, is just a deceptive appearance: a trap of a common misunderstanding of hinges, similar to the one into which G.E. Moore fell when taking his 'Here is a hand' as a true, empirical and falsifiable proposition.

The idea (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 143-5) is this: the assumption, that the *same proposition* has changed from a hinge-belief 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' to a falsifiable (and ultimately *falsified*) empirical hypothesis 'Man cannot walk on the moon', is simply wrong. There isn't anything like *a proposition* that supposedly remains unchanged in such a process. From situations where people might have voiced with these words a (nonpropositional) hinge-belief, to situations where a propositional hypothesis or opinion is being expressed by the same string of words, only two 'things' remain relevantly the same: first, the fact that we call the doxastic attitudes in both cases 'belief'; and second, the string of words (sounds, symbols), i.e. the *sentence* 'It isn't possible to get on the moon', but not a 'proposition':

The fact of Armstrong's walking on the moon did not negate what was expressed by the sentence 'Man cannot walk on the moon', for *that* was not a proposition at all (it was a nonpropositional certainty that belonged to the *foundations* of our language-game); what it did was prompt the withdrawal of the hinge from our foundations. (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 144)

In short: the non-reflective, indubitable certainty which may have been voiced by the words 'It isn't possible to get on the moon' was gradually 'removed from our foundations' (ibid.). During roughly the same time (presumably some time before Armstrong's first moon-walk) the intellectual, propositional hypothesis 'It is possible to get on the moon' began to be formulated and then believed by

increasing numbers of people.²² So, even in the case of this questionable, borderline example from the *On Certainty*, Moyal-Sharrock insists to the very end on the radical difference between the hinge-belief and the empirical-*propositional* belief (where both are expressible/voiceable by ‘It isn’t possible to get to the moon’) and denies that the hinge ‘It isn’t possible to get on the moon’ was ever falsified.

There is an impression here, however, that the discussion has moved from mostly descriptive investigation of meanings into an increasingly prescriptive, even legislative battle over the use of words – in this case, an attempt to legislate the meaning of ‘proposition’. While we have accepted that normative decisions and ‘bids’ in philosophy over meanings of concepts are not necessarily sinful, to use statements such as ‘[We] shall examine the meaning the term “proposition” has for Wittgenstein, and conclude that what have been called “hinge propositions” are not propositions at all’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 33), is to give a strong impression of promising a ‘cool’ *inference* from considerations in exegesis of Wittgenstein to a discovery of facts *about* propositions. This is somewhat misleading, however, since any suggestions as to how to use the word ‘proposition’ are not discoveries or descriptive statements about the matters of fact, but regulative speech-acts which attempt to regulate philosophical language-use (and beyond).

And there are important questions which are not really addressed by Moyal-Sharrock’s account, but such that seem to hold a clear potential to shed light on this discussion. For example, what should we make of moral beliefs and religious beliefs –two widespread classes of ‘belief’ in everyday English language (and many other languages), both considered to be bipolar in many contexts – if we try to consider them through the lens of the dichotomy between mutually-exclusive hinge-beliefs and ‘propositional beliefs’ only? In relation to religious beliefs, this question will be a subject of our next chapter, so we will

²² If this Moyal-Sharrock’s interpretation of belief-changes is appropriate, we should also say that many others who were still sceptical about the possibility of man walking on the moon *before* but leading to the first man in space or first actual moon-walk, may have been out of their utter certainty about the impossibility of such endeavour, but adopted at the time a propositional, scientific-empirical hypothesis ‘Man cannot walk on the moon’, expressible by the same string of words as the formerly held non-propositional, utter certainty (hinge). And this new propositional belief that man cannot go to the moon was then properly *falsified* by the successful moon mission.

not dive into it here. At this stage, I want to express my doubts whether the nature of moral and religious beliefs could be sufficiently clarified and made understood on the basis of the contrast 'hinge-beliefs vs. propositional beliefs' alone, as this contrast is construed by Moyal-Sharrock's reading of OC. In relation to these two classes of beliefs, Hacker's (and early Baker's) call to pay attention to the fact that there are different senses of 'true' and 'false' when attributed to different kinds of sentences or beliefs (Baker and Hacker 1985: 280) holds much more promise of enabling understanding – a point which has been explored further and pressed in philosophy of religion by D.Z. Phillips, who insisted that '[issues] of sense are logically prior to issues of truth and falsity. It is only when we appreciate the sense of religious beliefs that we can see what calling them true or false amounts to' (Phillips 2000: xi).²³ Stroll's and Moyal-Sharrock's strict narrowing of the concept of 'proposition' (and consequently, of the legitimacy of application of 'true' and 'false') only to empirically derived beliefs or statements which must be 'candidates for doubt, verification or falsification' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 39), strikes us as exceedingly legislating. Why not follow Wittgenstein's less restrictive and simple rule instead?

[A] child might be taught to distinguish propositions from other expressions by being told 'Ask yourself if you can say "is true" after it. If

²³ Of course, the application of 'true' and 'false', in English and in most other Indo-European languages, is not restricted to beliefs or statements at all. Martin Kusch (2002: 212-3) brings this point out nicely by reminding us that we learn to use the words 'true' and 'false' in certain situations and not in others. We commonly attribute it, not only to statements and beliefs, but also to persons ('He is a true friend'), and materials (e.g. 'This is not true silver'). Spreading the meaning of 'true' over such different kinds of 'objects', i.e. the development of our use of the word 'true' in such different situations, rests on the history of our judgements of *similarity* between the newly encountered situations and the earlier ones in which we used it correctly (by community's standards of the time). But there is no community-independent metric for similarity which could unambiguously determine what is similar enough and what isn't; 'similar', in the everyday language-game, is not a precise concept and can partly function exactly because of its ambiguity. This means that meanings of 'true' and 'false' are subject to social negotiation:

Different ... communities may develop their arrays of exemplars – say, of 'true friends' or 'true statements' – in many different ways, and there is no vantage point from which communities can be judged right or wrong; no vantage point, that is, other than the local and contingent vantage point of some other community. (Kusch 2002: 214)

This inherent relativity of 'true' and 'false' does not make our use of these words completely arbitrary. We find broad and, indeed, strong agreements regarding attributions of 'true' or 'false' in many situations, while less agreement in others. While our use of 'true' and 'false' is not *determined* by the environment, it has a strong causal influence on what we believe and in this way, indirectly, on our use of concepts (cf. *ibid.*: 204).

these words fit, it's a proposition'. (And in the same way one might have said: Ask yourself if you can put the words 'This is how things are:' in front of it). (*PI* 137)

However, contra Hacker and agreeing with Moyal-Sharrock, it seems very sensible to uphold the conceptual link between propositionality, bipolarity, and at least some kind of dubitability (a possibility of doubt). But dubitability is not the same thing as 'being empirically derived, verifiable, and falsifiable'. A concept of 'dubitability' need not entail anything about the *procedures* of establishing truth and falsity of beliefs, but only a more 'naked' liability, as a belief (of whatever kind), to being doubted. Since we can recognize beliefs which are utterly and completely indubitable (hinges such as 'I exist', or 'Red is a colour'), we will follow Moyal-Sharrock's suggestion that such hinges should not be considered bipolar or propositional. But this implies for us, contra Moyal-Sharrock, that to (normatively) suggest "Red is a colour" is neither true nor false' outside philosophical discourse is not a transgression but, in certain social and educational contexts, a legitimate job of the philosopher. Importantly, we want to retain a broader view of belief-and-doubt games such that it encompasses beliefs which are neither indubitable hinge-beliefs nor *empirical* propositional beliefs, since it is not necessary to hold that scientific-empirical verifiability and/or falsifiability are necessary conditions for doubt.

This means that the pair 'hinges vs. empirical propositions' is exclusive, but not exhaustive – there may be beliefs which don't fall under one or the other category. Interestingly enough, Moyal-Sharrock comes very close to recognizing this near the end of her book (2007: 191-198) where she accepts the distinction between what she calls 'primary' and 'secondary' trust. Only primary trust or ur-trust is completely 'groundless, unreasoned, unreflective, nonpropositional, grammatical, unhesitating, unswerving and foundational' (*ibid.* 195), and it is this kind of trust which constitutes Wittgensteinian hinge-certainty. Anything less, so to speak, is a 'secondary form of trust' which, although it may be very deep, still 'has distrust as its flip-side' (*ibid.*) and is, therefore, bipolar! 'Distrust' here, however, need not have to do with empirical procedures of establishing truth or falsity, but simply with 'the moment I ... give the object of my trust a thought' (*ibid.* 194). We will remember this distinction in the next chapter when we will address the nature of religious beliefs *and*

doubts. For now, we must resist the legislating move, found in Moyal-Sharrock, which loads the adjective ‘propositional’ with ‘empirically derived’, ‘falsifiable’ and ‘verifiable’.

This reminds us of Needham’s point mentioned in the previous section, that ‘belief’ can *descriptively* only be understood as a family-resemblance concept, and, as a social *as well as* a psychological concept. Our move, then, is to hold any belief which can be true or false and doubted *in any way* as propositional, but at the same time leave open the question of different senses of ‘true’ and ‘false’ for different kinds of beliefs in their corresponding language-games. This need not leave us in conceptual confusion, or without an appropriate term for what Moyal-Sharrock calls ‘propositional beliefs’. As we have seen early on in this chapter, Wittgenstein did in fact have a ready adjective for this latter group of beliefs: not ‘propositional’ but ‘*scientific*’, in the very broad sense of *Wissenschaftlich*²⁴. Scientific beliefs in the Wittgensteinian sense are those beliefs which ‘we can test or find means of testing’ (LC 60), in other words, which can be, at least in principle, empirically falsified and/or verified on the basis of publicly shareable evidence.

And, since we are already engaged in a prescriptive enterprise of suggesting our own conceptual scheme, here is one final suggestion. While ‘propositional beliefs’ for us mean ‘dubitable and bipolar’, and ‘scientific beliefs’ for us mean, broadly, ‘empirically verifiable and falsifiable beliefs’, ‘*empirical* beliefs’ will for us from now on relate, not to a belief-attitude as does ‘scientific-beliefs’, but to the *content* of beliefs: If a belief is about *inworldly* objects, processes, or state of affairs ‘in space and time’, then it is empirical. So, empirical beliefs are, in Heideggerian language, candidates for ‘*ontic* knowledge’ (Mulhall 2005: 4) as they are beliefs about *existencies* in the world. This also means that when we talk of ‘scientific empirical’ beliefs, this is a sub-category of ‘propositional’ beliefs which is *about* existencies in the world *and* is held with a scientific belief-attitude. While it may be plausible to hold that all *scientific* beliefs should be *empirical* beliefs (and vice versa) in the senses of ‘scientific’ and ‘empirical’ we have just outlined, we want to retain a sense of a distinction between *belief-attitude* and the *content* of belief which will be useful for us in the next chapter.

²⁴ See the footnote no. 4 in this Chapter.

It is worth noting that we do find such distinction indicated by Wittgenstein (LC 58)²⁵, and, as it has had for Wittgenstein, this distinction will also have some clarificatory value for us when we come to consider the nature of religious beliefs.

3.7 Conclusions and a look ahead

There are a number of further interesting questions about hinge-beliefs which may be less directly related to our primarily overall concern of this thesis, namely the interrelations between religious experiencing, God-talk, and beliefs about God. For example: are hinge-beliefs *intentional* or *non-intentional*, or rather, does the idea of intentionality or non-intentionality of hinge-beliefs even make sense? This question, while not directly related to our research, may nevertheless be important in relation to the broader understanding of the varieties of experiencing and believing with which we operate and which is related to the ways how we combine the later Wittgensteinian philosophy and phenomenology. For this reason, we devoted Appendix I to a separate discussion of this question. But, speaking as generally as possible and given the categorical difference between ‘feeling’ and ‘belief’ with which we operate here, we hold that it is something quite different to attribute intentionality (or non-intentionality) to feelings than it is to attribute intentionality (or non-intentionality) to beliefs. And (as clarified in Appendix I), since what we take to be the primary kind of *intentionality* is a *phenomenological* directedness, it makes little or no sense to talk of intentionality of *hinge*-beliefs in particular.

The decisions and suggestions we’ve arrived at in this chapter and which we are carrying over into the following chapters, are the following: hinge-certainty is a recognizable belief-attitude which is very different from scientific belief-attitude and hinge-beliefs should be considered a philosophically important category of

²⁵ Lecturing on the nature of religious beliefs, Wittgenstein asks his students to imagine they ‘some to an island’ to a very much foreign culture, and ‘we find beliefs there, and certain beliefs we are inclined to call religious. ... *These statements would not just differ in respect to what they are about.* Entirely different connections would make them into religious beliefs, and there can easily be imagined transitions where we wouldn’t know for our life whether to call them religious beliefs or scientific beliefs’ (LC 58; italics mine). Wittgenstein’s point here is that the *content* of the belief (‘what they are about’), expressible in language, may not differ in the case of a religious and a scientific belief, respectively, but ‘entirely different connections’ show that we are talking about different *kind* of belief-attitude.

beliefs; the contrast between propositional beliefs and hinge-beliefs should not be construed as an exclusive contrast between *scientific empirical* beliefs and hinge-beliefs; propositionality is (or, should remain to be) conceptually linked with dubitability and bi-polarity; normative use of philosophical language cannot be entirely divorced from descriptive philosophy and, therefore, shouldn't be banned from (Wittgensteinian) philosophical reflection.²⁶ We are now ready to take on the discussion of the nature of *religious* belief within Wittgensteinian philosophy and beyond.

²⁶ For additional discussion of hinge-beliefs and their relation to existential feelings understood as varieties of the 'sense of reality' (Ratcliffe 2008: 39) see Appendix I. That discussion can best serve as a further, more in-depth preparatory work on top of Chapters One and Three, i.e. as a 'general philosophy' that helps the reader to understand the Chapters focused on religious believing and religious language, esp. Chapters Four and Six.

CHAPTER FOUR

Beyond the Wittgensteinian Grammaticalist View of Religious Belief

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we treated at some length the two ways of believing on which Wittgenstein concentrates in *On Certainty*: the scientific belief-attitude, and the belief-attitude we called ‘hinge-certainty’ (following Wittgenstein’s ‘hinge’ remark in OC 341). The beliefs of the former kind are dubitable, bipolar (can be true or false), knowledge-apt, and subject to public (in principle), evidential procedures i.e. verification and falsification. The beliefs of the latter kind are quite different: unshakable, utterly certain and indubitable, cannot be true or false, they are not on the scale of reasonability or probability, they are not knowledge-apt.

Probably the predominant interpretation today of the later Wittgenstein on religious belief we shall call the *grammaticalist* interpretation, represented here by Michael Kober (2007), Genia Shoenbaumsfeld (2007), and, to the small extent to which she addresses (Wittgenstein on) religious beliefs at all, Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (2007). This interpretation emphasises that central religious sentences of one’s faith – like ‘There is the Creator, God’ or ‘There will be the Last Judgement’ – function as *rules of grammar* and not as scientific sentences. The religious belief-attitude is understood as either extremely similar to, or a sub-set of, hinge-certainty. I will argue in this section that the picture is more complicated than that and that the predominant view stands in a need of correction, both in an exegetical sense, i.e. in relation to reading of Wittgenstein on religious belief, and more importantly, in a philosophical (and theological) sense. Exegetically, for example, the grammaticalist view marginalizes the more descriptive strand of Wittgenstein’s philosophy of religion which acknowledges the ‘logical messiness’ of the reality of religious believing (Citron 2012a), in favour of the *normative* or prescriptive strand of Wittgenstein’s philosophy of religion according to which a scientific belief-attitude *is not religious*. Even more importantly – and this is both an exegetical and philosophical point we will argue

here – the religious belief-attitude should not be understood as the same as, or even as a sub-species of, hinge-certainty: the former is in important respects *dubitable* while the latter is utterly indubitable. In accordance with this critique, I will introduce my own (still in many ways Wittgensteinian) understanding of religious belief-attitude and combine it with Paul Tillich's understanding of faith as 'dynamic' (as opposed to 'static'), involving the possibility of existential doubt as its integral part.

We can also talk of another, currently somewhat less popular interpretation of Wittgenstein's understanding of religion, namely the *expressivist* interpretation which claims that Wittgenstein understands religious language to be *no more than* expressive of feelings, 'attitudes' (especially *emotional*), desires, or intentions to act. We will be able to properly address and critique this interpretation, and the expressivist view of religious language more generally (e.g. Braithwaite), only after we dedicate a chapter (Chapter Five) to an examination of different functions of language, with a special attention to its expressive function. Before looking at the *grammaticalist* interpretation, however, it needs to be said that these two interpretations of Wittgenstein on religious belief, the grammaticalist and the expressivist, can also co-exist to some extent in the work of a single philosopher, with varying degrees of grammaticalist or expressivist emphases. In fact, we shall see in Chapter Six that the *grammaticalist* Kober's position also involves expressivist ideas, just as Braithwaite's expressivist view of religion involves some grammaticalist suggestions. Indeed, our own view developed in this and the Sixth Chapters also combines some features of these two views and readings of Wittgenstein, but also goes beyond both. However, the relevant question is 'how to combine grammaticalist and expressivist insights into religious language and believing most fruitfully, i.e. in order to elucidate and not to distort the nature of religious language and beliefs?' The reason for regarding some philosophers/interpreters as grammaticalists and other as expressivists is that either one or the other aspect tends to *dominate* their respective interpretations and views.

4.2 The grammaticalist interpretation of the later Wittgenstein's view on religious belief

The grammaticalist reading can be seen as an elucidation and explanation of Wittgenstein's contrast between religious beliefs and scientific empirical beliefs. It is claimed that, while scientific empirical propositions are descriptive and can be true or false, 'for Wittgenstein, a religious belief is neither true nor false, for he conceives it as expressing a particular *stance* of a person toward the world, to other humans or human life in general' (Kober 2007: 234; italics added) . Indeed, such a reading offers itself, seemingly quite unproblematically, on the basis of several texts from the compilations of Wittgenstein's lectures or remarks where the topic of religion is addressed at all: Predominantly, *Lectures on Religious Belief (LC)* and *Culture and Value*.

In *LC*, Wittgenstein distinguishes between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' meanings of 'belief' and 'believe', in order to draw the distinction between scientific empirical beliefs and religious beliefs, respectively (*LC* 59). He insists in these lectures that religious belief is something altogether different than opinion, description or hypothesis (*LC* 57), which all correspond to the 'ordinary' meaning of 'believe'. To regard religious beliefs as falling into the category of 'ordinary beliefs' would be to confuse religion with 'superstition', and regard religion as a 'false science', which is to miss the nature of religion altogether.

Some of the passages in the later Wittgenstein which have often been taken as central descriptions of religious belief-attitude are:

[One] would be reluctant to say: 'These people rigorously hold the opinion (or view) that there is a Last Judgement'. 'Opinion' sounds queer. It is for this reason that different words are used: 'dogma', 'faith'. We don't talk about hypothesis, or about high probability. Nor about knowing. In a religious discourse we use such expressions as 'I believe that so and so will happen', and use them differently to the way in which we use them in science. ...

Those people who had faith didn't apply the doubt which would ordinarily apply to *any* historical propositions. ... It has been said a thousand times

by intelligent people that indubitability [epistemically speaking, i.e. knowledge] is not enough in this case. Even if there is as much evidence as for Napoleon. Because indubitability [i.e. knowledge] wouldn't be enough to make me change my whole life. ... It doesn't rest on a historical basis in the sense that the ordinary belief in historic facts could serve as a foundation. (LC 57)

I wouldn't call [religious believers] unreasonable. ... I would say, they are certainly not *reasonable*, that's obvious. I want to say: they don't treat this as a matter of reasonability. (LC 59)

Whatever believing in God may be, it can't be believing in something we can test, or find means of testing. (60)

The man who stated ['You'll see your dead friend again'] categorically was more intelligent than the man who was apologetic about it. (62-63)

Martin Kusch (2012) suggests that we can discern from these passages and the rest of the *LC* the following five central features of extraordinary beliefs which distinguish them from ordinary beliefs: First, we tend to use distinct words – in English, and many other languages – to describe the extraordinary beliefs, words like 'faith' and 'dogma' instead of 'opinion' or 'hypothesis' which are used for ordinary beliefs. Second, extraordinary beliefs are neither reasonable nor unreasonable, by which Wittgenstein means they are not subject to empirical evidential criteria as 'ordinary', i.e. scientific, beliefs are. Third, even the high epistemic probability/justification needed for knowledge can never be enough to yield the certainty needed for the extraordinary belief attitude, which, for Wittgenstein, in turn makes religious certainty something which is categorially different than knowledge. Fourth, religious beliefs are deeply related to 'pictures'¹ (LC 71-72). And fifth, unlike the ordinary beliefs, religious beliefs are

¹ In the next chapter, we will address the question whether we could understand Wittgensteinian 'pictures' as *metaphors* or not. Wittgenstein himself did not consider 'pictures' to be metaphors, for he understood *metaphor* to be in principle cashable out in literal terms. And since he held that religious 'pictures' are irreducible, i.e. that in the case of religious beliefs, the 'whole weight can be in the picture' – as in the case of 'God's eye sees everything', for example (LC 71) – he rejected the designation of religious pictures as metaphors (Waismann et al. 1979: 117; see also Clack 1999: 36). However, if we allow that there are also irreducible metaphors (c.f. Soskice 1985), we need not consider Wittgensteinian pictures as something altogether else than metaphors. See Chapter Six (6.2.1).

manifest in ways of *acting*, and their ‘pictures’ tend to guide people’s lives; they can even be a ‘culmination’ of one’s life (LC 58).

Such an understanding of religious believing can be found also in several other of Wittgenstein’s remarks on religion of the post-*Philosophical Investigations* material, especially those compiled in *Culture and Value*. For example:

Christianity is not based on a historical truth, but presents us with a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not believe this report with the belief that is appropriate to a historical report – but rather: believe through thick and thin and you can do this only as the outcome of a life. *Here you have a message! – don’t treat it as you would another historical message! Make a quite different place for it in your life. – There is not paradox in that! (CV 37)*

Queer as it sounds: the historical account of the Gospels might, in the historical sense, be demonstrably false, and yet belief would lose nothing through this: but *not* because it has to do with ‘universal truths of reason’! Rather, because historical proof (the historic proof-game) is irrelevant to belief. ... The believer’s relation to these message is neither a relation to historical truth (probability) *nor yet* that to a doctrine consisting of ‘truths of reason’. (37-8)

Go on, believe! It does no harm. ‘Believing’ means submitting to an authority. Having once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it in question and then once again find it convincing. (52)

[If] I am to be *really* redeemed, - I need certainty – not wisdom, dreams, speculation – and this certainty is faith. And faith is faith in what my *heart*, my *soul*, needs, not my speculative intellect. For my soul, with its passions, as it were with its flesh and blood, must be redeemed, not my abstract mind. (38)

The prevailing impression one gets from these texts is that, for the later Wittgenstein, religious utterances function as *rules of grammar* which govern thinking and action; the corresponding beliefs are unshakable – indeed, as *religious* beliefs, they *have to be* certain in a sense of completely indubitable

(CV 34, 38-9, 52). Scientific empirical beliefs are the opposite of all this: they are not unshakeable or indubitable; they are a matter of opinion, falsifiable, and can be more or less probable; and therefore, they can't govern thought and life.

4.2.1 Michael Kober's interpretation

It is not difficult, therefore, to see why Michael Kober aligns Wittgenstein's dichotomy between 'extraordinary' and 'ordinary' beliefs from *LC* closely with the dichotomy found in *On Certainty* between hinge-beliefs and (scientific) empirical beliefs (Kober 2007: 246) – i.e. Kober reads Wittgenstein's position on religious beliefs and language in the light of the *OC*. Noting that Wittgenstein held that "knowledge" and "certainty" belong to different *categories*' (*OC* 308), Kober reminds us that it is scientific empirical beliefs which can, if properly justified, be knowledge, whereas *properly* religious beliefs, just like hinge-certainties from *OC*, are utterly certain but not knowledge-apt (Kober 2007: 242-243). Both, the religious belief-attitude or 'religious stance' (*ibid.*: 249), and the hinge-certainty or 'epistemic stance', are manifested in the way one acts, 'that is, by being confident and taking things for granted, or by being undecided, unsure, and so on' (*ibid.* 248). Both, expressing religious stances and epistemic stances in language can often sound odd 'in normal circumstances'. And, both religious and epistemic stances are at the end of explanations – neither are explanations, and epistemic stances themselves (such as 'Every effect has a cause', for example) can gain 'a religious tone' (*ibid.*). Kober concludes that the similarities between the two kinds of stance are substantial and philosophically most significant (for Wittgenstein).

He does note, however, that there are also some dissimilarities between religious belief-attitude and hinge-certainty. He cites three such dissimilarities: while religious stance, just like a 'mood', 'does not define truth, ... a [hinge-]certainty does'; while religious stances usually just happen to be there, the hinge-certainties 'need to be acquired'; and, while a 'religious stance becomes manifest by prayers and similes ..., exclamations and confessions, ... an epistemic stance is expressed by propositions (e.g. 'This is a hand')' (*ibid.* 249). This list of differences seems somewhat ad hoc and a bit 'too neat to be true', but we will leave the critique of this list for now – a critical view will be taken up later in this chapter – and rather underline the fact that, despite seeing these

differences, Kober seems to see religious and epistemic stances as having much more in common than not – which is why he devotes the bulk of his essay on this topic to interpreting and elucidating the religious stance with the help of Wittgenstein’s descriptions of the epistemic stance (our ‘hinge-certainty’) in *On Certainty* (ibid.: 242, 246-248).

In fact, Kober goes so far – and, by this, clearly going beyond Wittgenstein’s descriptions of religious belief – as to suggest that ‘the kind of religious belief that Wittgenstein is mainly interested in *is not a genuine belief at all*’, which is the reason Kober prioritizes the expression ‘*religious stance*’ (ibid.: 241-242; italics mine). In harmony with this, Wittgenstein’s position is brought to what seems to be a thinly disguised atheistic – and expressivist-sounding – conclusion: a religious stance is *nothing more than* an attitude towards life. When Kober quotes H.-J. Glock’s claim that Wittgenstein’s philosophy of religion is a non-cognitive ‘theology for atheists, an understanding of religion from the outside (as an anthropological phenomenon)’ (Glock 1996a: 321, quoted in Kober 2007: 245), he seems to be doing more than just affirming the anti-fideistic reading of the later Wittgenstein on religion which says that non-believers, too, can understand the meaning of religious statements by paying attention to their use (grammar). Rather, here clearly we have a reading of Wittgenstein as offering us a way to explain *away* religious beliefs by reducing them to ‘mere attitudes’. We are told that the religious belief in God’s sovereign will, for example, and the corresponding utterance ‘It is God’s will’ ... ‘*may amount to trying to cope with one’s own uncontrollable fate*’ (ibid.:243; italics added). With this line of thought, as well as with the claim that both the religious and the epistemic stance are in many respects similar to ‘a mood’ (ibid. 246-249), Kober involves aspects of the *expressivist* explanation of religion and expressivist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion (see Chapter Six (6.3)).

4.2.2 Genia Shoenbaumsfeld’s interpretation

Another recent example of (predominantly) grammaticalist understanding of the later Wittgenstein on religion is Genia Shoenbaumsfeld’s (2007) interpretation. We may note that she does not, like Kober, suggest that religious beliefs are not (genuine) beliefs; neither does she, as we shall see, see the later Wittgenstein as doing ‘theology of atheists’, but reads him rather as a Kierkegaardian

Christian philosopher, at least so far as his philosophy of religion is concerned. However, both interpretations have the central points in common: points which I see as characteristic of the *grammaticalist* interpretation.

Schoenbaumsfeld goes to some length to contrast Wittgenstein's (and Kierkegaard's) view of religious language and belief to that of Richard Swinburne, whose position she takes as her 'target view' (Schoenbaumsfeld 2007: 157) and as a paradigmatic example of a misunderstanding of religious belief: Swinburne treats the Christian belief in God as a 'scientific theory or hypothesis, which differs only in scope and not in kind from the question, say, of whether elementary particles exist or not' (ibid.: 158). Since the only true criteria for acceptability of any theory or hypothesis, according to Swinburne, are 'modern scientific criteria', it is the procedures of establishing probabilities on the basis of evidence, prescribed by some version of such criteria, that we can and *should* use in investigating the believability of the existence of God, and the process of finding out whether God exists or not (Swinburne 2001: 8-9).

Schoenbaumsfeld sums up Swinburne's understanding in three theses:

- '1) God is the name of a super-empirical entity or being.
- 2) There is one correct way of describing the world and this description either contains an object (entity, item) such as God or it doesn't.
- 3) The proposition 'God exists' is a hypothesis to be investigated empirically and/or by a priori argument.' (Schoenbaumsfeld 2007: 158-159)

She also argues (correctly) that Wittgenstein rejects all three. Against the first thesis, Wittgenstein claims that the word 'God' plays a radically different role to that of a *name* of any particular person or object (LC 59). In theism, unlike pagan or polytheistic religions, God is not 'on a par with other empirical objects, only vastly more powerful' (Schoenbaumsfeld 2007: 165). More precisely: it is not the case, as the second thesis of the 'target view' would have it, that, in addition to other objects in the world, there is also another, the most powerful of all objects in the world (God) that brought all these other objects about. '[The] "phenomena" in the world remain the same whether there is a God or not. To become aware of God's presence is therefore nothing like becoming aware of

the existence of some esoteric object whose presence had hitherto escaped one's notice'. (ibid.)

According to Schoenbaumsfeld, when Wittgenstein likens the concept 'God' to the formal concept 'object' (CV 97), he is saying that, instead of 'God' referring to a particular thing or person in the world, 'it would make as little sense...to assert (or to deny) that objects exist as it does to assert (or to deny) that God exists' (Schoenbaumsfeld 2007: 166). We can probably guess where this analysis is going: Schoenbaumsfeld goes on to elucidate Wittgenstein's analogy between 'God' and 'object' by drawing heavily on *On Certainty*. As in Kober's interpretation, outlining the difference between scientific empirical beliefs and 'empirical-sounding' hinge-beliefs, as this difference is described in *OC* (Schoenbaumsfeld 2007: 165-170), is used in order to describe another contrast in Wittgenstein, that between scientific-empirical beliefs and *religious* beliefs.

As the main Wittgensteinian argument against the third thesis of the target view – that the 'proposition "God exists" is a hypothesis to be investigated empirically and/or by a priori argument' – Schoenbaumsfeld cites a further parallel between 'God exists' and 'Objects exist'. It is the very same categorial mistake that is behind thinking that we can argue to the conclusion 'Objects exist' from 'Here is a hand', as is behind any attempt to prove 'God exists' from, either, the bare existence of the world or *any* statement about the objects in the world (ibid.: 168). She concludes:

[If] Kierkegaard's and Wittgenstein's conception of religious belief is correct, it is not even remotely analogous to a form of correct (or false) science and neither is faith the result of scientific or philosophical speculation. Rather, both philosophers agree, Christianity is an existence-communication that demands not an intellectual, but an existential response, as truth 'in the sense in which Christ is the truth is not a sum of statements, not a definition etc., but a life' (ibid. 173).

We see, then, a very similar emphasis in Kober's and Schoenbaumsfeld's interpretations: it consists in explicating a stark contrast in the later Wittgenstein's understanding between religious beliefs and scientific empirical beliefs, as well as in using the categories and the insight of *On Certainty* -

especially the description of what we have called hinge-certainty (Kober's 'epistemic stance') and contrasting this belief-attitude to dubitable, evidentially sensitive scientific belief-attitude – in order to elucidate the contrast between religious beliefs and scientific empirical beliefs. We have called this strand of interpretation 'grammaticalist' because the emphasis is on seeing religious utterances as *rules* of grammar, and because religious beliefs are presented as indubitable certainties which govern 'thought and life' – the understanding which is best captured, perhaps, in Wittgenstein's remark:

Go on, believe! It does no harm. 'Believing' means submitting to an authority. Having once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it in question and then once again find it convincing.
(CV 52)

On the basis of Wittgenstein's own lectures and remarks considered above (from *Lectures on Religious Belief and Culture and Value*), we can indeed conclude that the grammaticalist interpretation captures a predominant strand of Wittgenstein's later thought on religion. It is also not hard to agree - and to this we shall return below – that this view enables an insight or proper understanding of some important aspects of Christian religious belief in God. Nevertheless, we will now suggest that this is an incomplete picture, both in terms of Wittgenstein exegesis and in terms of an appropriate understanding of religious believing, especially Christian belief in God. Neither Schoenbaumsfeld nor Kober venture much beyond the outlining of the contrast between religious beliefs and scientific empirical beliefs. We will argue that both see this contrast as *too closely* related to the contrast in *On Certainty* between hinge-certainties and scientific empirical beliefs. I will try show that this latter parallel is not at all as close as the predominant view has it. Consequently, we shall argue that, if we don't position the former contrast into a broader understanding of and realities of religious belief-attitudes and their manifestations, the grammaticalist Wittgensteinian view can equally well obstruct our understanding of religion as it can enhance it.

4.3 Descriptive vs. prescriptive philosophy of religion

We can prepare the terrain for our critical discussion of the grammaticalist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion by revisiting a point made in the previous chapter, applied here to the question of the nature of religious belief: While, on the one hand, Wittgenstein taught that ‘Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it. ... It leaves everything as it is’ (*PI* 124), on the other hand, as we have seen, he did not always stick to a descriptive mode in his philosophy. It is exactly in relation to his later remarks on religious language and belief in particular – especially to those from the *Lectures* – that Wittgenstein is recognizably *prescriptive* in his philosophising. As noted by Clack (1999: 122-123) and Mulhall (2001: 110-111), Wittgenstein’s distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘superstition’, where the former denotes what Wittgenstein regards as *genuinely religious* believing (and opposite to scientific belief-attitude) and the later as *quasi-religious* believing (mistaking religious beliefs for scientific beliefs), is far from ‘merely descriptive’. Such a discursive regime carries a considerable normative force and aims at legislating what kind of belief attitude is really religious and what not;² this is shown also by Wittgenstein’s explicit claims that he considered superstition as involving ‘cheating oneself’ and as something to be ridiculed (*LC* 59).

Of course, Wittgenstein was well aware that many religious people, Christian or otherwise, hold their religious beliefs with a (quasi-)scientific belief-attitude, and this has been revealed much more clearly than before only recently, since the entire set of notes by G.E. Moore from Wittgenstein’s lectures have been uncovered and their significance re-discovered.³ Before we have a brief look at

² Clack criticizes D.Z. Phillips’s use of the religion/superstition distinction in the same sort of way as he does Wittgenstein’s. After noting that ‘to call something a “superstition” is not dispassionately to describe a phenomenon but purely to label it as worthless’, Clack remarks that ‘Phillips is best seen as making propaganda for what he sees as “true religion”, and employing the religion/superstition distinction so to do’ (Clack 1995: 113-114). While labelling D.Z. Phillips’s view as ‘propaganda’ is itself a piece of pejorative rhetoric on Clack’s part, his verdict that Phillips is not engaged in ‘descriptive philosophy’ here but in prescriptive discourse is on the mark.

³ A complete edition of Moore’s notes (*MWL*) is yet to be published by Cambridge University Press, under the title *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930-1933, from the Notes of GE*

Wittgenstein's ideas expressed there (as written down by Moore), however, a reminder is due. In accordance with the distinction introduced in the previous chapter, we may distinguish at least two different kinds of what Wittgenstein would consider *quasi*-religious beliefs: scientific 'religious' beliefs, and empirical 'religious' beliefs – the former related to the belief-*attitude*, and the latter related to the *content* of belief. This distinction may not be very consequential in some discussions, but we will note it, not least because Wittgenstein himself thought it was somewhat relevant, as is apparent from the following remark:

We come to an island and we find beliefs there, and certain beliefs we are inclined to call religious They have sentences, and there are also religious statements. *These statements would not just differ in what they are about.* Entirely different connections would make them into religious beliefs. (LC 58)

In other words, the way we could recognize that beliefs of an alien culture to ours are religious or not would be, not by looking (only, or even predominantly) at the *content* of their statements, but at the 'connections'. Attending to the ways in which the religious utterances work in life reveals the grammar of these religious utterances, and consequently the *kind* of belief that is expressed by it. And it could be that the same content is held in completely different ways – Wittgenstein thought that the case of 'There is (going to be) the Last Judgement' can be either a religious belief/'picture', or a scientific hypothesis, tentatively believed prediction, and 'The difference may not show up at all in any explanation of the meaning' (LC 53). In fact, it could be that somebody who *religiously* believes in the Last Judgement and someone who scientifically doesn't believe in the Last Judgement wouldn't even contradict each other (LC 55-56; c.f. Kusch 2012).

Since we are delimiting ourselves to central Christian beliefs (with an occasional glance towards other traditions, especially Jewish),⁴ we can, if we use 'religious'

Moore. At the time of this writing, it is being edited by G. Citron, B. Rogers and D. Stern (see Citron (2012b: 23) for more details).

⁴ See the discussion of Abraham Heschel's phenomenology of religious experience in Chapter Six (6.4.3).

in very broad and descriptive sense (and not in Wittgenstein's prescriptive sense), describe these two categories thus:

- 1.) 'Scientific religious beliefs' would be beliefs about God, Jesus, other spiritual beings, historical-miraculous stories of the Bible, etc., which are held in a way that the truth of these beliefs is thought to be capable of being empirically investigated according to scientific procedures of justification, and either verified or falsified by evidence (which is not the same as believing that these *should* be empirically investigated and verified).

- 2.) '*Empirical* religious beliefs' in Christianity, however, are 'empirical' in relation to *content*. The most brute (quasi-) 'empirical religious beliefs' would be beliefs, say, that God lives literally up above the clouds in Heaven, or that he has a physical body just similar to ours, only very far away, and such that is 'without blemish', etc.⁵ Or, consider the beliefs that God, angels and Saints live in 'the other world' where this supernatural or spiritual or invisible (to us) *world* is thought to be accurately *describable* in more or less empirical-descriptive language, despite the fact that the supernatural world is very different from (perhaps also 'parallel to') the natural world.

This means that the first two theses of the Swinburnian 'target view' as outlined by Schoenbaumsfeld correspond to the above category of 'empirical religious beliefs', and the third thesis corresponds to the 'scientific religious believing'. Now, it may very well be that, in Christianity, our made-up categories of 'scientific religious beliefs' and 'empirical religious beliefs' usually overlap and, therefore, Schoenbaumsfeld is entirely justified in treating these together as belonging to the same package of 'the target view'; but this doesn't seem to be necessarily so. I've personally met Christians who are convinced that either a version of cosmological argument ('The Universe had to have a cause'), or a

⁵ For example, the pioneers of Seventh-Day Adventism, as well as some older-generation, or very traditionally-minded Seventh-Day Adventists still today, have believed that 'the city of God and his throne exist on a planet somewhere within [the] system [of] the Great Orion Nebula' (Haerich 2009). In terms of God's physical body, most Mormons seem to believe that God 'has a body that looks like ours, but God's body is immortal, perfected, and has a glory that words can't describe' ('What' 2012). Needless to say, such super-empirical beliefs about God and heaven have not originated with these 19th Century fundamentalist groups, but have been present in Christianity from very early on (how widely such beliefs were held is of course impossible to say), and are still present also in more 'folk' versions of mainstream Christianities, perhaps more easily found in the cultural contexts where science has not permeated the mainstream culture so extensively as it has in 'the West'.

version of the teleological argument ('Since the Universe is so intricate and intelligently designed, some supremely intelligent and purposive Ultimate reality has to have designed it') – whether they name these arguments with their 'philosophical proper names' or not – is basically sound, or both. Yet, some such believers are *not* convinced that this Ultimate Cause, or Ultimate Source, whom they consider to be God, lives in a super-empirical world or can be appropriately described in human language at all, let alone by way of empirical description; at most, such Christians believe, we can perhaps *hint at* this Ultimate Cause by way of metaphors and stories, and have some kind of relationship to It. Such believers, then, believe in God with a scientific belief-attitude – they believe cosmological and/or teleological arguments are open to falsification, i.e. they may be shown to be wrong – but do not believe in a describable, super-empirical heavenly world, or that it makes sense to say that God has a body, or similar. On the other hand, I also know Christians who believe that there is a supernatural world which is perfectly describable (can be described correctly or incorrectly), inhabited by God, Saints and angels, and indeed, that this supernatural world is accurately described in the Bible (the prophetic visions, some of Jesus's sayings, etc.). Some of them even believe that 'heaven' has an actual location *in space*.⁶ However, some of these Christians are not convinced that this belief can be in anyway empirically tested or verified: either God has revealed its truth about his heavenly dwelling and reality to one or He didn't (i.e., either God has given one the gift of faith or He didn't; there's nothing you can do about it with 'mere human reasoning' or in any other way). These Christians believe in the super-empirical world where God, angels and Saints dwell and go about their business, but don't believe this with a *scientific* belief-attitude. In the continuation of our investigation here, we will remain concerned mostly with belief-*attitudes*, and therefore with 'scientific religious believing', and less so, or only occasionally, on what we've called 'empirical religious beliefs' above.

Now, back to the observation that Wittgenstein recognized that some religious believers, in our culture or in others, *do* hold their religious beliefs as scientific beliefs, and/or as (quasi-)empirical beliefs in terms of content: In Moore's notes from Wittgenstein's lectures (Wittgenstein, forthcoming), Wittgenstein clearly

⁶ See the previous footnote.

considers quasi-empirical beliefs in religious contexts. He suggests the examples of the belief that God is ‘something very like a human being – a physical body’, and the belief that ‘God is a gaseous vertebrate’, which is how the evolutionary biologist Ernst Haeckel is said to have characterized Christian belief in God in general (*MWL* May 1; see also Citron 2012b: 22-23). Both of these two ‘empirical-religious’ examples may also be held with a scientific belief-attitude, of course. Wittgenstein notes that, in religious contexts, ‘*sometimes* people so use this word, but sometimes not at all. /.../ ... there are many controversies about the meaning of “God”, which could be settled by saying “I’m not using the word in such a sense as that you can say ----”’ (*MWL* May 1). So, Wittgenstein is here explicitly pressing home the point that belief in God *can be* a quasi-empirical (and, probably, at the same time scientific) belief, or it may not be. In other words, he is talking here in a *descriptive* mode and, in accordance with this, he is not insisting that such beliefs ‘are not religious’.

We find a rather different move in a similar language-game in his *Lectures on Religious Belief*, however. There, Wittgenstein accuses Father O’Hara of mistaking religious beliefs to be scientific beliefs, subject to evidence and falsification (and empirical-historical beliefs in terms of content). He refuses to consider Father O’Hara’s belief in Christ’s Resurrection to be ‘religious belief’, but claims it is ‘superstition’ (*LC* 59). O’Hara’s attempts to ‘make [religious belief] a question of science’ (*ibid.* 57), and to make ‘it appear to be *reasonable*’ in a sense of being subject to evidence and probability, amount to ‘cheating himself’ (*ibid.* 59). Here, we find Wittgenstein talking in a *prescriptive* mode, making normative moves in a language-game of religion.

For now, we simply need to note this difference and the corresponding tension (if we try to reconcile these to modes of talking/philosophising), in Wittgenstein’s extant treatment of ‘religious beliefs’: the difference between his *descriptive* and his *normative* uses of ‘religious belief’ and ‘religion’. When, in *LC* (and *CV*) he refused to treat scientific and/or empirical beliefs as ‘religious’, he was suggesting what religious beliefs *should not* be, contrasting it with what kind of beliefs religious beliefs *should* be.⁷ What the grammaticalist interpretation of

⁷ We’ve made a similar observation in Chapter Two (2.2.2) regarding Schleiermacher’s use of ‘religion’, ‘religious’, etc. in the *Speeches*. For an extensive discussion of the different senses of ‘religion’ in the *Speeches*, including the importance to distinguish Schleiermacher’s normative from his descriptive use of ‘religion’, see Dole (2010: 72-89).

Wittgenstein on religion picks up on, is, well, Wittgenstein the *grammaticalist*, Wittgenstein in the prescriptive mode. This does not mean that the grammaticalist interpretation of Wittgenstein needs to ignore Wittgenstein's descriptive mode: Kober, for example, notes the tension between the prescriptive and descriptive mode of Wittgenstein's philosophy in general, and claims that Wittgenstein's descriptive account of philosophy (as expressed in *PI* 109 and 124), for which Kober thinks that it 'lacks a "critical bite"' (Kober 2007: 249), puts Wittgenstein in a position that he 'cannot object' if someone believes in Christ's Resurrection in a scientific way (*ibid.*). But there is a *philosophical*, if not exegetical, choice here nevertheless, whether one prefers the prescriptive or the descriptive Wittgenstein.

4.5 Putting the grammaticalist interpretation in perspective: logical 'messiness' of religious beliefs

This choice comes to the fore even more poignantly if we consider the phenomenon of the 'grammatical messiness' of religious utterances, and the corresponding categorial or 'logical messiness' of religious beliefs (Citron 2012a). This phenomenon has been emphasised as philosophically significant by Bob Plant (2005) and Gabriel Citron (2012a; 2012b). We can consider a belief to be 'logically messy' when that belief seems to be held, either simultaneously or over a period of time, with logically/categorially different belief-attitudes. Citron calls a belief which seems at the same time to be a scientific belief and a hinge-belief, a 'logically mixed belief', and a belief which seems to change its logics or belief-attitude as 'logically fluid belief' (Citron 2012a: 21-22). Accordingly, the sentences that express/structure such beliefs are 'grammatically mixed' and 'grammatically fluid', respectively (*ibid.*).⁸ We will

⁸ In addition to these two, Citron (2012a: 21-22) introduces two other categories of logical messiness: 'logical variety' and 'logical indeterminacy', where the former stands for beliefs where the sentences that express/structure them are grammatically various (meaning, part of the sentence is an empirical statement of fact, and part of it a grammatical remark, for example), and the latter stands for any belief where the sentence that expresses/structures it 'will have a grammar that is *indeterminate* between the grammars of the first two, if it has only grammatical characteristics which are common to the grammars of both, and none which are unique to either – making it possible for it to come to have either grammar' (*ibid.* 22). We will be concerned only with logical (and grammatical) mixedness and fluidity, however, since these two kinds most clearly present a potential challenge to the *normativist* interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion, and the normativist view itself.

start with Bob Plant's example and his challenge against the grammaticalist view, and then proceed with Citron's additional and more pronounced example and challenge to the grammaticalist.

Plant (2005) considers Christian believers who adhere to strictly literalist readings of the Bible, believing in a literal six-day creation which happened a few thousand years ago, in the global Flood which has produced most of the fossil record, and expecting a literal, historical end of the world to happen relatively soon – for example, conservative Seventh-day Adventists or Jehovah's Witnesses. Considering sincere believers among these, Plant notes that their beliefs with the above mentioned contents manifest an interesting blend of 'ordinary' (scientific) and 'extraordinary' (genuine religious, according to Wittgenstein of *LC*) belief-attitude which can be very difficult or even impossible to disentangle, or 'come clean' about. He observes that

'what is pertinent about these examples is the way they complicate the Wittgensteinian picture, for they cannot easily be assigned a position in either category of "genuine" or "superstitious" belief. On the one hand, such groups favour the sort of literalist interpretation of scripture For the most part, they are also highly selective (and frequently mistrustful) regarding the findings of modern science, opting instead for a cosmology and natural history largely derived from Genesis. ... On the other hand, members of such faiths can rarely be described anything other than defiantly categorial in their commitments, despite both their repeated predictive failures and the increasing prominence of secular world-pictures.' (Plant 2005: 57-58)

The idea is that the mixedness of belief-attitudes which is widespread with these religious believers poses a challenge to the predominant Wittgensteinian view. For example, the belief that the world was created literally in six days only a few thousand years ago is for such Christians non-negotiable, indubitable, as well as quite central and meaning-giving in life. At the same time, or so it seems, this belief is considered by them to be an empirical belief about the natural history of our planet, subject to evidence and investigation (hence 'creation-science'). It would seem that the beliefs which according to

Wittgenstein are ‘superstition’ or ‘false science’ can, after all, also be indubitable life-governing rules at the same time.

The grammaticalist Wittgensteinian can, however, reply to this challenge quite easily.⁹ She can respond by pointing out that things are often not what they seem on the surface, and ‘[in] the use of words, one might distinguish “surface grammar” from the “depth grammar”’ (*PI* 664). If we pay attention to the depth grammar in our case – to the actual use of the words which express the belief in the six-day creation, in their different contexts and patterns of behaviour, etc. – the following might be observed: If a literal six-day creation is for someone a rule for life and thought which is believed with an unquestioning trust, then it simply cannot *at the same time* be held also as a scientific historical belief which may be true or false. It is helpful to remember the distinction here between the *content* of the belief and the belief-*attitude*. A belief can have a (seemingly, at least) historical-empirical *content*: ‘God created the Earth and all life on it in six literal days a few thousand years ago’; but this does not mean that it is held with a scientific belief-attitude, despite the fact that the same believer *professes* that ‘creation science’ provides strong evidence for what is believed here, and that he is open to question it if the evidence would show otherwise, etc.

The grammaticalist, then, can still insist that, if one holds on to any belief as a non-negotiable rule of life and thought, one cannot at the same time *genuinely* question it and regard it as a hypothesis. This is also consistent with a widespread (but not universal) conviction in the educated world that ‘creation science’ is not *really* science – not because it includes the metaphysical claim that the world is created by God, but because the quasi-empirical belief in the literal six-day creation a few thousand years ago is not really open to refutation, not really questioned, as this belief is in fact part of the ‘rock-bottom’ for literalist

⁹ In fact, Plant himself also gives an elaborate, and in many ways still ‘Wittgensteinian’, answer to this challenge to the Wittgensteinian normativist view of religious belief. He develops his own view in the context of a wider discussion into which we can’t enter here, namely the discussion about the political relevance of ‘incommensurability thesis’ – the view that ‘conceptual-linguistic-practical space between theist and atheist [or, between the followers of different faith traditions, or cultural traditions] is ... unfathomable ... [and] ... radically incommensurable’ (Plant 2005: 106) – which, according to several interpreters, Wittgenstein endorses. See Plant’s argument that this is a misguided reading and that Wittgenstein was far from a *radical* incommensurabilist (ibid. 105-113). See also Martin Kusch’s (2012) objection to different versions of incommensurability thesis prevalent among interpreters of the later Wittgenstein’s thought on religious belief, including G. Schoenbaumsfeld’s (2005).

Christians, an indubitable trust, a hinge on which so much else in their life and thinking turns. Grammaticalists can meaningfully quote Wittgenstein's remark from *Culture and Value* here: "Believing" means, submitting to an authority. Having once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it in question & then once again find it convincing, (CV 53). If they have a point, then the central insight here is an old one: 'scientific creationists', like Father O'Hara, are 'cheating themselves' (c.f. LC 59).¹⁰

In his recent challenge to the grammaticalist exegesis of Wittgenstein on religious belief (as well as to the Wittgensteinian-grammaticalist view itself), Gabriel Citron brings up different examples of 'logically messy' religious beliefs. First is a philosophically very similar example to Plant's believers in literal six-day creation, but related to the belief in the efficacy of prayer (Citron 2012a: 36-37). He asks us to imagine (a realistic) example of a believer who believes in the efficacy of petitionary prayer in a logically-mixed way: He believes that both in a scientific way ('God does bring about a change in the world if you pray, and if He allows/wills it'), and in a rule-like way ('Whether it can be "measured that it works" or not, praying for other people does work since God expects us to pray for others regardless of evidence').¹¹ We have seen above that the

¹⁰ However, not to cheat oneself as a (literal six-day) creationist Christian is probably not an easy task at all – not so much because of a supposed lack of intellectual capabilities, of which some atheists accuse creationists, or perhaps a lack of 'spiritual discernment', but more likely because of the notable social pressures within the religious community which can be largely internalized. The entrenched ways of 'belief-policing in the service of God' and other thought-constituting communal processes in literal-creationist Christian communities, when internalized, bring about believers who are completely convinced that upholding the belief and the message of literal six-days creation, and sometimes even supporting the whole enterprise of 'creation science' of 'Intelligent Design' movement, is a profound way of serving God in contemporary secular society and their duty as Christians.

¹¹ I have substantially simplified Citron's example. The way he describes the believer with a logically-mixed belief in the efficacy of petitionary prayer is more realistic and 'thicker':

As a child, this believer was brought up to pray – but he gave it up in adolescence, as he gradually came to realise that he didn't really believe most of the things that were said at church, and his interest dwindled. Later, however, in a period of great difficulty and distress, he found himself praying again. He found that not only did the praying itself bring him much comfort, but that some of the things for which he had been praying, came about. He started to pray again, regularly, asking God for guidance, help, strength, and for his various needs and desires. When he prays for a certain thing, he feels more optimistic of obtaining it than he would if he had not prayed for it. He was taken aback when he heard about a double-blind experiment being conducted across a number of hospitals, in which one group of heart-bypass patients were prayed for, and one group were not – but he found himself suspecting that those patients who were (unbeknown to them) prayed for, would probably have a better recovery rate. When it turned out that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, he was a little surprised, but not too perturbed. When things for which he prays do not

grammaticalist Wittgensteinian can interpret such believers as either confused or as 'cheating themselves', since to believe something in a scientific way and believe it in a hinge-certain way is simply exclusive: it is doxastically, or logically, impossible to genuinely believe both that we can test whether God answers our prayers for others, *and* to trust on in this in an indubitable and unquestioning way, at the same time.¹² We need to note, however, that Wittgensteinian grammaticalist's insistence here is itself a prescriptive move in the language-game: people do in fact hold grammatically mixed beliefs, but they really shouldn't; the grammaticalist standpoint not only *describes* or grammatically investigate what people mean by 'believe', but also *legislates* the mixed belief-attitude as undesirable, i.e. 'confused'.

But Citron offers another example: what about the phenomenon of *fluid* belief where the logical/categorical nature of one and the same belief changes *through time*? Here is how he describes such an example:

Consider a person who believes in the efficacy of petitionary prayer in a scientific manner: he has not given much thought to his beliefs about prayer, but he considers prayer to be one of the means by which to achieve the things he would like to achieve, and when he prays he tends to expect what he has prayed for. At some point he is confronted by the apparent failure of a number of his prayers – prayers which he had thought worthy, and for things which are very important to him. This profoundly shakes his confidence in his beliefs about prayer, and he finds himself doubting the power of prayer, and even doubting many of

come about he is disappointed, but if he were asked why he still continues to pray, he would say things like: 'Perhaps I did not pray in the right spirit'; 'Perhaps God *has* answered my prayer, but in a way than I do not understand'; or, 'Perhaps God knew that what I was praying for was not good for me, so He denied my prayer for my own good'. Nonetheless, praying for something still tends to make him expect it to happen. He often prays for other people – for their health, and for their material and spiritual wellbeing – and whether or not they know that he has done so, he feels that he has thereby done something to help them. (Citron 2012a: 36-37)

¹² Very similar responses from the Wittgensteinian normativist perspective can be given to Citron's example of logically *indeterminate* religious belief, where the believer 'strongly believes in the efficacy of [petitionary] prayers – but he has never given much thought to the nature of this efficacy, or to what exactly he expects when he prays for something' (Citron 2012a: 39). Had this believer given enough thought to what he is doing, it may be suggested, he would see that he should either believe in the efficacy of petitionary prayer scientifically and be genuinely open to verification and falsification of this belief, or he should hold on to the rule of petitionary prayer in an utter trust and hold it as a hinge-belief (which, in a Wittgensteinian normativist picture, means genuinely religious belief), but not both.

his other religious beliefs. In his confusion and doubt he decides to turn to God in a desperate last-ditch effort, and he prays for God's light and for His guidance through these doubts. During this prayer and his ensuing contemplation, he comes to believe that it was rather immature of him to think of prayer simply as a way of getting whatever one wants. He comes to think that rather than giving up his belief in the efficacy of prayer, he should deepen his understanding of what it is for a prayer to be answered: perhaps a prayer should be considered answered if it brings about a change in the petitioner; or perhaps a prayer should be considered answered even if that answer was a refusal of the granting of the petition. The crisis brought about by the apparent falsification of his belief prompts the believer to develop a form of his original belief which seems no longer to be falsifiable at all. (Citron 2012a: 39)

Citron interprets this development as involving a chronological change in terms of belief-attitude *of one and the same belief*: 'It begins with more points of similarity to the simple example of the scientific belief, and it comes to have more points of similarity to the simple example of the non-scientific belief' (ibid.). Since this believer – let's call him *Believer B* – considers that his belief in the efficacy of prayer has evolved in its nature, it may be said that his belief was logically fluid.

The phenomenon of logical (and grammatical) fluidity that this example manifests can be understood, again, as going against a Wittgensteinian grammaticalist's choice of drawing a radical and unbridgeable break between 'superstitious' and 'genuinely religious' beliefs – or, more broadly, between scientific beliefs and hinge-beliefs. It also seems to be harder for the grammaticalist to accuse believer B of being 'confused' or 'cheating himself', since he has not attempted to believe in the efficacy of prayer in both a scientific and hinge-like way at the same time. Rather, the nature of his belief seems to have 'naturally' evolved, and this evolution involved also deep soul-searching and critical reflection.

However, the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist could argue that the evolution of *one and the same belief* from scientific to hinge-certainty (or, from 'superstition' to 'genuine religious belief') is not an apt description of what happens with

believer B, or indeed any believer who describes some such process. We've seen in the previous Chapter that Daniele Moyal-Sharrock went to considerable length to argue that 'Man cannot walk on the moon' has not *evolved* from one kind of belief to another, but that one kind of belief (hinge-certainty) has dissipated or been removed from the foundations, and another kind of belief (scientific), a hypothesis, expressible with the same words – or a sentence with the opposite meaning, 'Man *can* walk on the moon' – has been formed over about the same period of time (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 143-5). Given the endorsement and the use of the categories of belief from *On Certainty* by both Schoenbaumsfeld and Kober in order to elucidate the difference between genuine religious belief and quasi-religious belief (scientific belief falsely considered as religious), we can try to bring Moyal-Sharrock's re-description and re-interpretation of what seems to be a process of logical fluidity of a belief.

Not surprisingly, Moyal-Sharrock interprets the opposite process – where seemingly one and the same belief undergoes a change in which a scientific belief *hardens into* an unquestioned rule and becomes an element of the background – also as a cessation of the first belief and a coming-to-existence of the hinge-belief, both expressible by the same sentence. Her insistence on the unbridgeability between these two kinds of beliefs forces Moyal-Sharrock to object even to Wittgenstein's own transformational metaphor in *On Certainty* by which he describes this process – namely, the '*hardening*' of a sentence into the river-bed on which the water of empirical, falsifiable propositions can flow (OC 96). She thinks that the use of 'hardening' may be misleading (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 142), since it is not 'that *something*, a noncontextualized proposition, goes from being a norm ... to being a hypothesis and vice versa' ... '[The] transformation, *the hardening*, is not of the proposition, but that of our attitude to a sentence' (ibid.). If we apply this approach to Citron's example of believer B, the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist could suggest something like this: we need not and should not suggest that it is one and the same belief in the efficacy of prayer which undergoes the 'hardening' from scientific belief to an indubitable, hinge-certain belief; rather, we should understand it as a removal of a scientific belief in the efficacy of prayer altogether and an emergence of the unquestioning trust in the efficacy of prayer in its stead – something altogether different, but expressible with the same words.

Who is right? Or perhaps we should ask: whose language-game with 'belief' is more clarifying, or enables better understanding? First, we should say that Citron is surely right that, if a philosopher remains in a purely descriptive mode and simply investigates the grammar of language, then all she can do in the face of grammatical messiness of real-life utterances is to point to this phenomenon when she notices it, and elucidate it by the method of describing grammatically 'simple objects of comparison', i.e. by describing two *imagined* grammatically pure utterances (one scientific, and one grammatical, say), where characteristics of both of these seem to be manifested in the *real*, grammatically messy utterance (Citron 2012a: 33-34). The Wittgensteinian grammaticalist can also, of course, recognize the reality of grammatical messiness and even elucidate it by comparing it with *imagined* grammatically pure utterances, but then go on to insist that this is not all that a philosopher can and should do. According to Moyal-Sharrock, for example, a philosopher should not remain a 'spectator' but a user (i.e. promoter) of the *corrected* language-game – corrected on the basis of what she noticed via descriptive-grammatical investigation (Moyal Sharrock 2007: 50).

But second, and more interestingly: It seems that, on a certain level, both Citron's and Moyal-Sharrock's interpretations of the 'hardening' of a (scientific) belief into a hinge-belief are prescriptive. Both are saying, in effect, 'This is how we *should* understand the apparent logical fluidity of beliefs!' Moyal-Sharrock is clear about her prescriptive ambitions, if only in philosophical and not in ordinary language (ibid. 49). Citron, on the other hand, is not so explicit. He admits in a footnote that 'there may be a hazy line between cases in which there is a single logically fluid belief, and cases in which there are two distinct beliefs one of which replaces the other' (Citron 2012a: 23, ftn). More relevantly, he decides to take the self-description of the believer in the efficacy of petitionary prayer, who 'himself considers this to be one belief which deepened' (ibid. 40), as authoritative. To such a decision, a Wittgensteinian grammaticalist could point to Wittgenstein's cautionary remark about the grammatical method of establishing the nature of religious beliefs: 'Asking [the believer] is not enough' (LC 53). As argued by D.Z. Phillips and Stephen Mulhall (who otherwise disagree on some closely related issues), Wittgensteinian descriptive method in philosophy of religion does not demand from us that 'we should accept the

believer's gloss as the last word on the issue' (Phillips, quoted in Mulhall 2001: 108) since a Wittgensteinian philosopher of religion is not committed 'to the defence of common sense, but to the clarification of the grammar of the words' (Mulhall 2001: 108). So, perhaps the believer's perception that it is the same belief which changed from a scientific to an unfalsifiable one should not be taken as a reason enough to say that this 'really is what is happening'.

It seems then, that the grammaticalist can still insist that the believer with a seemingly fluid belief (on the surface grammar) is confused in their judgements about the nature of this process which started with a scientific belief and ended with an indubitable trust. It is also important to keep the wider, social realities in view here. Citron's decision to take the believer B's own way of attributing the word 'belief', not as an example of 'surface grammar' which needs to be corrected but as a reliable guide to our understanding of what religious beliefs are, shows a respect for a particular religious language-game involving the concept of prayer. Let's call this understanding, according to which we are talking about *the same belief* in the efficacy of prayer which underwent a radical transformation, 'a liberal understanding of prayer', and the associated language-game with 'prayer' a 'liberal' one. This language-game (like most others) is a deeply communal affair with its cultural history, it is guided by various norms and socio-religious identity-politics. The very reasons why believer B, who has undergone a change of belief-attitude in the efficacy of prayer, *still calls it 'the same belief'*, are intertwined with such norms and identities, and the related 'prayer' language-games.

To make this point clearer, consider a different religious community – let's call it 'fundamentalist' –members of which believe in the efficacy of prayer scientifically. They also believe that any failures of prayers are always explainable by being due, either to people not praying in the right way (having too little faith, praying selfishly, etc.), or to God deciding that he will not answer it since that is better for them. For this community, believer B's change to a liberal understanding of what it means for prayer to be answered ('prayer is answered if it brings about a change in a petitioner', or 'the answer is in the message of the very fact that the prayer was not answered in an empirically testable way', etc.) simply amounts to a *loss of belief in prayer*, period. It will be possible, or 'allowed', only in some religious communities and their

corresponding language-games that believer B could still regard himself to be a believer in the efficacy of prayer, but not in others – for example, not in the ‘fundamentalist’ community. Moreover, the liberal meanings of ‘prayer’ have normally been in some (communal) relation to the fundamentalist meanings to which the liberal ones may have been a reaction (or vice versa).

The point is that the dynamics of communal, institutional and intersubjective relations are mechanisms which importantly co-constitute Citron’s believer B’s language-game with ‘believe’, and ‘prayer’, and his very description of the process of the change from his scientific belief in the efficacy of prayer to his indubitable trust in it. How believer B self-describes his process of changed believing in prayer are also choices of religious *identities*, and are moves in different existing language-games or from one to another (if he is not a very creative pioneer of a new language-game with ‘prayer’ and ‘believe’). To take his understanding of the meaning of ‘prayer’ and his understanding that his former (scientific) belief in the efficacy of prayer and the later (unfalsifiable one) are one and the same belief, cannot come from a descriptive-grammatical investigation only, but from elsewhere – for example, from our religious preferences and commitments; in the case of believer B’s situation, whether we sympathise with a ‘liberal’ or ‘fundamentalist’ understanding of prayer.¹³

To conclude this discussion and ‘put the grammaticalist interpretation into perspective’, as the title of this section of the chapter promises, let us make the following two points:

First, it seems clear that, exegetically, the later Wittgenstein has often acknowledged *only* beliefs which are not scientific (cannot be falsified, are not subject to evidential procedures) as genuinely religious and regarded scientific believing of religious content as not genuinely religious, but as ‘superstition’ (*LC* 59). It is also clear that, sometimes, Wittgenstein didn’t adopt such a prescriptive mode and, in his more descriptive mode, noted that religious people do believe their religious content also in a scientific way (*MWL* May 1; see also

¹³ Now, it may be suggested that, in the case of logically fluid religious beliefs, the change from [quasi-]scientific belief to a life-governing, unshakable belief should be understood as personal or even communal *growth* in religious terms, a growth in devoutness, or as a deepening of religious understanding – but this would mean a prescriptive suggestion from a particular religious point of view, it seems.

Citron 2012b: 22-23), and that religious utterances can be grammatically messy (e.g. mixed) (LC 58). We have, then, at least these two strands, one more prescriptive and one more descriptive, of the later Wittgenstein's thoughts on religious belief (c.f. Citron 2012a: 36), and the grammaticalist interpretation of Wittgenstein either ignores or marginalizes (Kober) the more descriptive strand. These two different interpretations – Citron's on the one hand, and Schoenbaumsfeld's/Kober's (backed by Moyal-Sharrock's considerations) on the other – can be seen as outworkings of the tension intrinsic in the broader philosophy of the later Wittgenstein between the 'principle of non-interference' according to which philosophy 'must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, ... [but] can ... only *describe* it' (PI 124), and the method of distinguishing "'surface grammar" from "depth grammar"' (PI 664), respectively.¹⁴

Second, given the 'grammatical messiness' of much of actual religious believing (in Christianity at least, and surely also in Judaism and Islam, and probably in other traditions as well), the awareness of the difference between, and the presence of, both the prescriptive and descriptive mode of either Wittgenstein's or our own philosophising about religion is crucial. In order for any philosophy of religion to be clarifying and not obscuring of the matters it investigates, the prescriptive aspect especially needs to be explicitly acknowledged and not masked under 'descriptive grammatical investigation'. A Wittgensteinian grammaticalist view (both exegetically, and philosophically in its own right) may draw its normative direction from either religious commitment, or from atheist commitment (as can be plausibly suggested for Schoenbaumsfeld and Kober, respectively), or from some other kinds of personal or communal commitment; none of this is illegitimate as such, but it helps the religio-philosophical enterprise if it is made explicit, otherwise it can cause confusion. Furthermore: as we have seen, even a highly disciplined, self-consciously *descriptive* grammatical investigation (such as Citron's, for example) must make *normative* decisions whether, for example, to regard the meanings of 'belief' and 'prayer' with which any 'logically-fluid believer' describes the change of his belief in the

¹⁴ Both Citron and Kober recognize the tension between, roughly speaking, the austere descriptive and the more normative method of grammatical elucidation in Wittgenstein, but each privileges different one (Citron 2012a: 28-29; Kober 2007: 249-250).

efficacy of prayer from a scientific belief to an unfalsifiable trust, as involving either a change of one and the same belief, or a cessation of one kind of belief and an emergence of a radically different kind of belief. We can conclude, then, that the point of Stephen Mulhall that 'all engaging in philosophical reflection is not something one does outside or apart from one's life' (Mulhall 2007: 21) is particularly salient in relation to the persistence of the *prescriptive* aspect in philosophy of religion,¹⁵ the aspect which seems to penetrate even the most disciplined descriptive mode of grammatical investigation.

4.6 Objecting the grammaticalist Interpretation: the place of doubt in religious faith

According to the Wittgensteinian grammaticalists G. Schoenbaumsfeld and M. Kober, Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief-attitude as described in *Lectures in Religious Belief* and *Culture and Value* is extremely similar to the belief-attitude of hinge-certainty described in *On Certainty* – so much so that characterizations of the latter from *OC* can and should be used to clarify the nature of the religious believing. Especially when having the contrast between scientific and religious believing in view, this contrast is, in a philosophical relevant way, practically the same as scientific believing vs. hinge-certainty. I will now argue, however, that these two ways in which Wittgenstein cuts-up the notion of 'belief' are not so similar after all, and that we can only compare Wittgenstein's understandings of religious believing with his view of hinge-certainty with extreme caution and necessary caveats, in order to avoid further confusion instead of enabling clarification. Beyond Wittgenstein exegesis, I will argue that even a casual grammatical investigation of 'genuine' religious belief-attitude in Christianity suggests that religious beliefs are *not indubitable* in the strong sense in which hinge-certainties are for Wittgenstein.

¹⁵ As noted in Chapter Three (3.5), Mulhall (2001: 110-117), countering D.Z. Phillips' insistence that Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion 'leaves everything as it is', points to the presence of the prescriptive element in Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion. But, while the source of this prescriptiveness can indeed come from a Christian religious understanding of human sinfulness and desire to be God, as Mulhall claims (*ibid.* 116-117), it seems that it can equally naturally come from atheistic understanding – as it does in Kober's work – which can feed in at least to most of Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion just as naturally as can Christian, or any other religious, understanding.

4.6.1 Exegetical investigation: Wittgenstein's view of religious certainty and doubt

In our investigation of Wittgenstein's understanding of these different kinds of beliefs, I will assume that the category of 'scientific believing' indeed is the same in both contrasts: for example, the very close parallel between categories of 'ordinary' or 'scientific' belief of *LC* and the 'scientific' belief of *OC* is not problematic: both stand for dubitable, at least potentially verifiable and falsifiable (i.e. subject to empirical evidential procedures), truth-apt, knowledge-apt beliefs (c.f. *LC* 56-59; *OC* 14-18, 164, 170, 175, 504, 600, etc.; see also *MWL* May 1). We will assume that Wittgenstein was in both cases talking about the same *kind* of belief-attitude.

It is also clear that there are, of course, significant parallels between hinge-certainty (esp. the 'epistemic stance') and religious belief-attitude if one compares the relevant Wittgenstein texts which describe one and the other belief-attitude respectively. These parallels have been noted in the first section of this chapter where we have outlined the grammaticalist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religious belief, represented here by Schoenbaumsfeld and Kober: according to *On Certainty*, hinge-certainties are indubitable not in the sense of being extremely probable on the basis of evidence, but in a sense of impossibility for such certainties of being subject to doubt at all (*OC* 494), just like religious or 'extraordinary' beliefs in *LC* (*LC* 57); like hinge-beliefs, religious beliefs are in Wittgenstein's view not held in a way that would be subject to epistemological justification, 'grounds' or 'testing' (*OC* 166; *LC* 57, 60); both kinds of belief are said to be beyond the question of reasonability (*OC* 559, 472; *LC* 60); neither hinge-beliefs or religious beliefs could be called 'hypotheses' or 'opinions', and both religious and hinge-certainties are categorically different from knowledge (*OC* 6, 151; *LC* 57); neither religious language-games nor epistemic language-games are grounded in intellectual argument or 'consideration' (*Z* 391), but are (eventually) 'drilled' or 'hardened' into the *background* of our 'ordinary' believing and thinking, so they are rooted in either instinctive or learned ways of acting (*LC* 56, 59; *OC* 96); both are, or at least

can be, non-theoretical and non-epistemological bases which underpin our language-games (LC 58-59; OC 204, 358, 359). All these parallels are not problematic and they do lend notable support for much of the grammaticalist reading.

But there are also aspects in the description of hinge-certainty in *On Certainty* which do not correspond to Wittgenstein's characterization of religious belief-attitude at all. In fact, they describe something exactly opposite from how the corresponding aspects of religious beliefs are described. To show this, we will consider two quite clear remarks on religious belief from *Culture and Value* and then compare their content with the characterizations of hinge-certainty from OC.

First, Wittgenstein clearly recognized the important element in religious believing of *volition*, or conscious determination, persistence, firmly holding on to religious beliefs. He writes:

Christianity is not based on a historical truth, but presents us with a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not believe this report with the belief that is appropriate to a historical report – but rather: *believe through thick and thin* and you can do this only as the outcome of a life. (CV 37; italics added)

While it is clear that Wittgenstein presents the Christian message as 'a (historical) narrative' which is to be believed in an un-scientific way – as a response to the invitation: 'now believe!' – it is also clear that Wittgenstein understood this belief-attitude as demanding also the believer's *persistence* in his belief, 'through thick and thin'! That Wittgenstein thought an element of volition needs to be involved in religious believing is obvious, although sometimes overlooked, from this often quoted passage:

Amongst other things Christianity says, I believe, that sound doctrines are all useless. That you have to change your *life*. (Or the *direction* of your life.) ... For a sound doctrine need not *seize* you; you can follow it, like a doctor's prescription. – But here you have to be seized & turned around by something. – (I.e. this is how I understand it.) Once turned round, you must *stay* turned round. Wisdom [i.e. intellectual

understanding] is passionless. By contrast, Kierkegaard calls faith a *passion*. (CV 61; italics original)

There are several interesting things noticeable here. First, when Wittgenstein contrasts the 'cold' doctrine and 'passionate' faith, he characterizes the following of the doctrine *without faith* – that is, without a genuine religious belief-attitude – as following a doctor's prescription: a kind of automatic, passionless, 'blind' doing-what-you're-told. Religious believing is not like that, since 'here you have to be seized & turned around by something'. Wittgenstein is showing his preference here for what we may call experiential Christianity, the being completely seized by faith, or perhaps the Gospel, or – from faith's perspective – by God. Notably, for Wittgenstein, it is possible to follow a religious doctrine as a rule of grammar in a rather shallow, irreligious sense: 'like a doctor's prescription'.

But what is especially significant for us here is Wittgenstein's statement 'Once turned round, you must *stay* turned round', with Wittgenstein's own emphasis on 'stay'. It is impossible to read this in any other way than by concluding that Wittgenstein acknowledged a very real possibility of *not* staying 'turned round', i.e. of losing faith, and that for remaining in faith one 'must' consciously persist in believing. While there are undoubtedly some 'deep springs' of faith in which one is 'seized & turned round', there are also stages or periods of the life of faith, according to Wittgenstein,¹⁶ where volition and *conscious determination* are necessary for religious belief to continue to guide the direction of one's life.

We need to appreciate how *unlike* this element of religious belief, according to Wittgenstein's understanding, is to a corresponding element in hinge-certainty. In fact, it is almost the opposite: hinge-beliefs are *completely taken-for-granted*. Hinge-sentences are believed with 'ur-confidence' or 'unself-conscious trust' (Baier 1994: 100; quoted in Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 192), they 'go without saying'. It is impossible to be tempted not to believe hinge-beliefs, which is related to the fact that it is utterly impossible to *doubt* them and that any doubt-behaviour in relation to them cannot be genuine (OC 255). In short: the hinge-beliefs like 'Physical objects exist' or 'My name is Gorazd Andrejč' are such that

¹⁶ The two passages quoted here, CV 37 and CV 61, are from Wittgenstein's manuscript notes from 1937 and 1946, respectively.

any 'test of faith' in them is unimaginable, so that any kind of a call to persist in them 'through thick and thin' (CV 37), or to 'stay turned round' (CV 61), makes no sense at all. They are 'in deed not doubted' (OC 342).

This means that, *according to Wittgenstein, religious beliefs are not indubitable as are hinge-beliefs*. In other words: religious doubt can very well be a *genuine* doubt – hence a persistence to 'stay turned around' is needed' – whereas any doubt-behaviour in relation to hinges is not genuine. However, one may object that, in extreme cases, hinges, such as 'Physical objects exist', 'Here is a hand' or 'My name is so-and-so' can be doubted. For example, by people who have genuinely lost the sense of reality, like the individuals who suffer from strong versions of schizophrenia, Capgras or Cotard delusion (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 139-211). And, it may be suggested, that, in addition to already noted parallels in the later Wittgenstein between 'religious beliefs' and 'hinge-certainties' categories, he also wrote that it is 'quite correct' to 'admonish' someone who wants to genuinely object to hinge-certainties, rather than to reply to him with arguments and reasons (OC 495, 498). This may be seen as relevantly similar to his remarks that, when he learned the meaning of the word God, 'if one did not believe [in God], this was regarded as something bad' (LC 59); or that 'Religion says: *Do this! – Think like that!* but it cannot justify this and it only need try to do so to become repugnant' (CV 34); and again, that, in the context where Wittgenstein compares a person who says 'Now, I'm going to add' and then he says '2 and 21 is 13' with a person who believes in the Last Judgement on the basis of a dream he had, Wittgenstein says 'There are cases where I'd say he's mad' (LC 62) – presumably meaning both a person who adds so oddly and the person who says he believes in the Last Judgement. These parallels seem to show that, for the later Wittgenstein, *admonishing* doubters rather than reasonable argumentation is more apt for both those who express (serious) doubt in hinges and those who doubt in God (from the believer's perspective, of course), or those who *believe* in Last Judgement (presumably, from Wittgenstein's perspective in LC). Doesn't it follow from this that the belief-attitude as well as the extreme radicalness or 'craziness' of both ways of doubting, doubting in hinges and doubting in one's own 'religious pictures', is really the *same* kind of believing and doubting, respectively?

A closer look and a bit more context show that this is not Wittgenstein's view. For example, the words with which Wittgenstein is content to describe people who don't share our (his) most basic hinge-beliefs are 'mentally disturbed' (OC 71), or, 'crazy' (OC 217). For the certainty 'My name is Ludwig Wittgenstein', for example, 'there is no judgement I could be certain of if I started doubting about that' (OC 490). This is, of course, the very reason for Wittgenstein's choice of the 'hinge' metaphor to talk about such certainties. On the other hand, we have no indication that Wittgenstein would regard a person who does not share our religious (or, nonreligious) belief-attitude as 'mentally disturbed' or 'crazy'. 'Reasonably' arguing for or against this or that religious belief is not a sign of mental disturbance or craziness, but, at worst, a consequence of a misunderstanding of the nature of religious belief. It is futile 'since for every reason it gives, there is a cogent counter-reason' (CV 34). For hinge-certainties, Wittgenstein says something very different: 'everything speaks in its favour, nothing against it' (OC 4)!

The broader context of LC 62 also shows that Wittgenstein would not, in fact, *normally* consider a religious believer in the Last Judgement (as a result of a dream) as 'mad' – especially, we may presume, if he believes not in a scientific, but a (genuinely) religious way. For Wittgenstein explains:

'There are cases where I'd say he's mad, or he's making fun. *Then there might be cases where I look for an entirely different interpretation altogether.* In order to see what the explanation is I should have to see the sum, to see in what way it is done, what he makes follow from it, what are the different circumstances under which he does it, etc.' (LC 62; italics added)

So, while it is wrong from a nonbeliever's perspective to regard the religious believer in the Last Judgement as someone who has merely made a 'mistake' or a 'blunder' (LC 61, 62), this does *not* mean that such a person, in most cases at least, should be considered 'mad' (or 'mentally disturbed', or 'crazy') from the same (nonbeliever's) perspective, in a sense in which Wittgenstein would regard a person who disbelieves in the existence of physical objects to be mad or crazy. Instead, the whole tone of the discussion in *Lectures on Religious Belief* in relation to the divide between a (Christian) believer and a nonbeliever

gives a message that a respectful and attentive “relativism of distance” is a permissible response to the lack of common standards between the believer and the non-believer’ (Kusch 2012: 36). There would probably have been very few contexts, if any, in which Wittgenstein would see *admonishing* a Christian believer *because of him having religious beliefs at all* by a nonbeliever, or vice versa, as an appropriate or sensible course of interaction, although ‘Do this! Think like that!’ may often be an appropriate way to admonish a fellow believer in contexts *within* a religious or atheist community (internally socially connected, with a common identity, binding commitments, etc.).

These differences lead to the conclusion that Wittgenstein did *not* hold that religious beliefs are utterly indubitable, as hinge-certainties are. Or rather: for Wittgenstein, religious beliefs like ‘God loves sinners’ or even ‘There is a God’ are *not really* indubitable, as are ‘Here is a hand’ or ‘There are physical objects’. Although a kind of ‘meta-reasonable’ certainty *is* normally associated with the religious belief-attitude by Wittgenstein, a closer look at his characteristic remarks about one and the other kind of certainty shows that religious certainty is *not* of the same kind as that of hinge-certainty. While there are important parallels between both belief-attitudes, in order to *stay* thought- and life-guiding genuine religious beliefs need a dose of active, conscious determination, at least at times – and, in the lives of some believers, this may be needed quite often in order for them to ‘stay turned around’ (CV 61). This need to persist in religious belief is internal to the very nature of religious belief-attitude. However, Wittgenstein was not talking about some completely arbitrary, artificial maintenance, or mere wishful thinking, since genuine religious beliefs have ‘springs’ beyond one’s will or wishes – one has to be ‘seized & turned round by something’ (ibid.). (In order to investigate this ‘something’, we will employ additional philosophical and theological resources in the next section.)

What remains for us to do in the present, exegetical section, is to distinguish our reading of Wittgenstein in this section from two others who also try to elucidate the comparison between hinge-certainty and religious belief-attitude as we find these described in the later Wittgenstein. We already mentioned Michael Kober’s suggestion (Kober 2007: 249) as to how the ‘religious stance’ and the ‘epistemic stance’ – his terms for what we have been calling ‘religious belief-attitude’ and ‘hinge-certainty’, respectively – are to be differentiated in

Wittgenstein: 1.) while religious stance ‘does not define truth, ... a [hinge-]certainty does’; 2.) while a ‘religious stance becomes manifest by prayers and similes ..., exclamations and confessions, ... an epistemic stance is expressed by propositions (e.g. “This is a hand”)’; and, 3.) while religious stances usually ‘turn up and happen to be there’, the hinge-certainties ‘need to be acquired’(ibid.). Now, it is, I believe, appropriate to read Wittgenstein as suggesting 1.): that epistemic stances work as ‘hinges’ without which the truth and falsity games cannot even be played, while religious stances do not, for Wittgenstein, have this very basic function to enable truth-and-falsity games with ordinary, i.e. scientific believing and asserting. This does not, however, entail 2.): that only an epistemic stance, but not a religious one, is ‘expressed by propositions (e.g. “This is a hand”)’. Religious beliefs (or stances, in plural, for Kober) are also expressed by propositions *as well as* manifested by prayers, similes, exclamations and confessions; in fact, it is epistemic stances which are manifested *purely* in unhesitating ways of acting, and *not* expressed in (genuine) propositions, according to Moyal-Sharrock’s reading at least – this is, however, going somewhat beyond Wittgenstein exegesis. But it is equally beyond exegesis to claim that Wittgenstein considered epistemic stances to be propositional while not considering religious stances to be so.¹⁷

Kober’s third point, that religious stances usually ‘turn up and happen to be there’, while epistemic stances ‘need to be acquired’ (Kober 2007: 249) is not supported by reading Wittgenstein either. In fact, both epistemic stances *and* religious stances can be considered both as instinctive *and* acquired, and very often *at the same time*. Wittgenstein was clear that very basic religious language and believing, as is Christian God-talk and believing in God, respectively, is acquired and socialized into, usually – but not necessarily – in childhood (LC 59-60). “Convincing someone in God’s existence” is something you might do by means of a certain upbringing, shaping his life in such & such a way’ (CV 97). A very similar thing can be said for epistemic or hinge-certainties. While it is not intellectual learning that brings these about, it is learning

¹⁷ CV 34 which Kober cites for support here does not say anything on the matter. A general, exegetical suggestion here would be that Wittgenstein’s ambiguity over the use of ‘proposition’ or *Satz* seems to leave the question whether he would regard religious beliefs as propositional or not, or as ‘expressed by propositions’ or not, undecided. See the discussion of interpreting Wittgenstein on the meaning of ‘proposition’ in the previous chapter of this thesis.

nevertheless: 'People do not *learn that* books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., - they learn *to fetch* books, *sit in* armchairs, etc. etc.' (OC 476; emphasis added). While it makes sense to distinguish between 'instinctive' and 'acquired' hinges, as do Norman Malcolm (1995: 81) and Moyal-Sharrock (2007: 106-107), it is better to speak about a continuity here than about a radical break, as even hinges like 'I have a body' are, at least in some minimal sense, acquired (although in very early childhood, say), and even the hinges like 'It is possible to travel to the moon' have become for the most of us, in an important sense, instinctive. Our point is, however, that it makes no sense to use the distinction between simply 'being there' and 'being acquired' to distinguish between religious beliefs and hinge-certainties, as does Kober.

A more interesting suggestion, perhaps, or at least one that is somewhat closer to our reading of Wittgenstein on this question, may be the one by Moyal-Sharrock who suggests that the distinction between hinge-certainties and religious beliefs is in the latter being simply a special case of *local* hinges. While her position is not presented as strictly a reading of Wittgenstein, we could take it as such, especially since she picks up exactly the point which we have emphasised as textual evidence for Wittgenstein's different understanding of religious beliefs and hinge-certainties. She suggests that, in the case of hinge-certainty, '[to] be certain,..., means to *be unwaveringly and yet thoughtlessly hinged* on something which enables us to think, speak or act meaningfully' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 174). Because of this, the doubt-behaviour by a sceptic-philosopher in 'I exist' or 'The world exists' cannot be genuine, 'not only because rejecting it has no *practical* resonance in our life, but because its rejection is *logically* impossible' (ibid. 175). Moyal-Sharrock echoes Wittgenstein when claiming that *genuinely* doubting such *universal* hinges, at least, is 'demented', 'mad' or 'pathological' (ibid.), since such hinges are universal bounds of sense for human beings.

However, she also recognizes that some religious beliefs 'appear to transgress *universal* bounds of sense, and yet such belief would not rightly be viewed as pathological' (ibid.); the examples she gives are beliefs in ghosts, the belief in the resurrection from the dead, and belief 'in some individual being inhabited by spirits'. Noting that, in Wittgensteinian perspective and, indeed, in the actual language-games of many societies, including our own, some 'extraordinary'

beliefs such as the belief in resurrection ‘would not rightly be viewed as pathological’ is in harmony with our reading of Wittgenstein on this matter as presented above. However, Moyal-Sharrock then explains this discrepancy which such religious beliefs seem to introduce into her picture of hinges by the following explanation:

[We] must be aware that beliefs *seem* to imply genuine transgression of *universal hinges*, they transgress nothing at all. Here, *apparently* transgressive hinges are in fact only the expression of *local hinges* and do not express the *bona fide* rejection of a universal hinge. Where they seem to challenge *universal hinges*, *local hinges* do not override, but always *accommodate* universal hinges. (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 175)

In this view, religious beliefs are presented as *local hinges* which are, although genuine hinge-beliefs, held in an accommodating way together with apparently contradictory universal hinges – for example, the hinge-belief ‘People don’t come back to life after they die’ and the religious belief ‘There will be resurrection from the dead’. There are ways to explain away or accommodate the discrepancy between such two by religious believers, in a way that *both* of these can be held *as hinges*.

However, if our interpretation is correct, the religious belief ‘There will be resurrection from the dead’ is not a hinge-belief for Wittgenstein at all, not even a *local hinge-belief*. The way in which both the universal hinge that ‘People don’t come back to life after they die’ and the belief ‘There will be resurrection from the dead’ can be held at the same time is by the latter belief being held in an ‘extraordinary’, specifically *religious way*, and not in an ‘unwavering’, ‘thoughtless’ and ‘unconscious’ way, so that its rejection would be *logically* impossible. *Conscious* determination to persist ‘through thick and thin’ (CV 37), the determination to ‘*stay turned round*’ (CV 61) which is manifested exactly in actions such as prayers, singing religious hymns, exclaiming religious beliefs in a community, and the like, show that, for Wittgenstein, such beliefs are not hinge-beliefs, either universal or local, but rather a special kind of beliefs which are *not* indubitable in the way hinge-beliefs, universal or local, are.

Our conclusion, then, is that the grammaticalists – i.e. either Shoenbaumbfeld, Kober or Moyal-Sharrock – don’t really succeed in clarifying the similarity-cum-

dissimilarity of religious beliefs to hinge-certainties. To my knowledge, Schoenbaumsfeld doesn't really address this issue; Kober notes some minor differences, but his comparison between these two belief-attitudes is unconvincing and not in keeping with Wittgenstein's remarks (Kober 2007: 249), and Moyal-Sharrock's (2007: 175-6) subsuming religious beliefs as a subclass of hinge-certainties also involves ignoring some important aspects of Wittgenstein's characterization of religious beliefs. A similar critique of Moyal-Sharrock's interpretation of Wittgenstein on this matter, and indeed, a similar interpretation of Wittgenstein on religious beliefs in relation to hinge-beliefs to that we have suggested here, is defended by Christopher Hoyt (2007) who claims that 'Moyal-Sharrock's reading does not go far enough to explain Wittgenstein's view of religion, for she leaves out the peculiarity of religious beliefs that Wittgenstein repeatedly emphasizes, [and] ... has not taken the depth of Wittgenstein's pluralism to heart' (Hoyt 2007: 45). Hoyt's recognition of Wittgenstein's 'appreciation of the unique and profound role faith plays in our lives' (ibid. 45-46) comes very close to our more general point that 'really religious' beliefs are, for Wittgenstein, a special, 'extraordinary' class of beliefs which cannot be appropriately elucidated only through the prism of the dichotomy 'hinge-beliefs vs. scientific beliefs'. This is in accordance also with the broader Wittgensteinian family-resemblance view of belief, argued for by Needham (1972), according to which it can be said that hinge-certainty and the religious belief-attitude have features which are very similar or even overlapping, but one belief-attitude is not a sub-set of another, and the features of the latter which are not shared with the former can be philosophically (and theologically) as important as those which are shared between these ways of believing.

4.6.2 Grammatical investigation: the reality of religious believing and doubting

Wittgenstein's remarks which imply that a religious belief-attitude is not the same kind of belief-attitude as a hinge-certainty are corroborated by attending to actual religious language-games and practices, at least in modern times in the Western World (and much beyond, and before, I presume). If we take a typical, mainstream Western Christian Church (either Catholic or Protestant), we can find religious language embedded in at least some of the following practices: praying and thanking God, in ritual and communal exclaiming or

confessing the Creed, preaching, teaching, devotional reading, singing to God, praising God in other ways of artistic expression, and alike. All of these linguistic practices which include well-known Christian religious utterances, manifest that the *grammar* of 'I believe in one God', or 'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name' (and the beliefs 'behind' it, such as 'God is in some sense our Father', for example), or 'Jesus Christ is our Lord and Saviour', 'All Creation bears witness to the glory of God', are notably different from the grammar of hinge-certainties like 'Here is a hand', 'I have a brain', or 'There are physical objects'.

Imagine if such hinge-certainties were embedded in practices remotely similar to those in which the above-mentioned religious utterances are embedded. Passionately *exclaiming* or *confessing* that 'There are physical objects', *preaching* that 'Earth has existed before I was born', *singing* 'I have a body', or *repeating in a ritual* 'My name is Gorazd Andrejč', simply *cannot* be expressions of hinge-certainties. If, for example, the sentence 'My name is Gorazd Andrejč' gets even a remotely similar use to that of a religious creed, it becomes something else, not a voicing of a hinge-belief anymore. It may perhaps become something like a ritual of affirmation of one's identity, or a reminder of a feature of one's identity which can get eclipsed by the stress of everyday life, or, a way of helping my international friend to pronounce my Slovenian name properly. But then, none of this is a voicing of a hinge-belief! Remember that, for Wittgenstein, hinge-beliefs cannot be said as ('first-order') assertions or expressions in a non-heuristic language-game; they are, strictly speaking, nonsensical:

Someone says irrelevantly 'That's a tree'. He might say this sentence because he remembers having heard it in a similar situation; or he was suddenly struck by the tree's beauty and the sentence was an exclamation; or he was pronouncing the sentence to himself as a grammatical example; etc., etc. And now I ask him 'How did you mean that?' and he replies 'It was a piece of information directed at you'. Shouldn't I be at liberty to assume that he doesn't know what he is saying, if he is insane enough to want to give me this information? (OC 468)

A *hinge-certainty* 'That's a tree' can only be voiced *heuristically*, that is, 'in situations where [rules of grammar] are transmitted (through drill or training) to a child, a disturbed adult, a foreign speaker or an alien; or in a philosophical discussion,... [but] they do not bear saying *within the stream of the language-game*' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 94-95), i.e. as a part of a non-heuristic language-game (there is no reason why explicating the meanings of words, or teaching a very young child that the Earth is round, would not be language-games: they are *metalingual* discourses in relation to those for which they voice the rules).¹⁸

So, when the sentence 'My name is Gorazd Andrejč' is uttered within a non-heuristic language-game – for example, as a 'ritual of reminder of my identity' – this is something else completely than voicing this remark as a hinge-sentence. Similarly, while uttering 'There are physical objects' as an attempt to convey information or express scientific opinion is nonsensical, and while it can, as a hinge-certainty, only be voiced heuristically, it can also be something like an exclamation, an expression of wonder at the existence of the world (of objects). But in that case, we are not talking about an expression of an utterly indubitable, taken-for-granted, non-remarkable and unconscious hinge-belief either (c.f. Appendix I.4)! Our point is that even a casual observation and a due comparison of the typical language-practices and contexts in which religious speech-acts (Christian, as well as many others) have their place, and those in which the speech-acts by which we voice hinge-certainties have theirs, makes it clear enough that a religious belief like 'Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour' is quite dissimilar to the hinge-certainty 'I have a body'.

4.6.2.1 *Genuine religious doubts*

A further investigation of this difference in grammars can be pursued in several directions. One line is to examine how religious *doubt* is manifested in the lives of believers (we will continue to limit our focus to a loosely defined group of 'mainstream Christians'). At this point we need to adopt a critical distance also towards Wittgenstein's claims that religious believing 'means submitting to an authority', and that having 'once submitted to it, you cannot then, without rebelling against it, first call it into question and then once again find it

¹⁸ See the discussion of metalingual function of language according to Roman Jakobson in Chapter Five (5.3.1).

convincing' (CV 52). While this may *often* be so, this grammaticalist point does not give us a full or appropriate picture of religious believing. It is acknowledged that Christian believing in God very *often* excludes calling God's existence, God's mercy and love etc. into question. And, *in such periods* of the life of faith, the corresponding religious utterances have a grammatical role – we might say they have something like a 'hinge-like *phase*', or 'religiously stable' phase in which these utterances and corresponding beliefs frame the religious language-game and delimit the bounds of sense to the claims made within that game. However, many believers find that there are times of genuine *questioning* even these very central beliefs. And the fact that Christians also have periods of deep and genuine questioning 'whether God is' at all doesn't necessarily mean that one is therefore atheist or agnostic. The latter two characterizations would make sense if genuine doubting 'whether God is' were to be a *prevailing* or predominant stance, but not if it occurs at certain times or contexts within a broadly believing (theistic) attitude. In the believer-or-agnostic-or-atheist 'identity politics', this should be noted as an important difference.

To take a slightly unusual example, let's consider a Christian paramedic¹⁹ who at her work sees terrible injuries suffered by people apparently at random, on a regular basis. In the face of such experiences she sometimes questions God's righteousness, goodness, and sometimes even God's existence. Such days of deep questioning of the central tenets of her faith can happen more than once per month, and she often experiences such doubts as disturbing, coupled with thoughts whether there is any point to human life at all: given the apparently senseless ways people get injured and killed, all just seems utterly pointless and godless at times. However, she also sometimes experiences very different, remarkable moments which infuse her with deep religious belief in God and awe, and which can sometimes 'carry' her in faith also through those meaningless and godless periods. Such faith-reviving experiences do not only happen to her during her walks in the hills or at a rare event when she attends church services (although it has happened in such settings too), but – paradoxically – even in the midst of great suffering which she witnesses at work. There are glimpses of some deep connectedness between people, or

¹⁹ This example is constructed on the basis of a story of an actual Christian paramedic, but has a few fictional (but hopefully realistic) elements.

'between everything', some experiences in suffering where she finds a strange assurance of the 'ultimate goodness' of it all, a meaningfulness of human lives and the world despite the suffering. So, despite her occasional genuine doubts in God that can sometimes determine her state of mind for days, her belief in God is on other occasions refreshed and deeply strengthened, something that often 'carries' her faith in less remarkable but religiously stable periods. She also feels she should 'stay turned round' when feeling meaninglessness and exhaustion from the suffering she witnesses, but her openness to experiencing life and the world fully and honestly sometimes makes this impossible. Overall, she clearly considers herself a Christian, however, and sees her moral decisions as deeply interrelated with her Christian beliefs in God, Christ's ultimate love, and the 'createdness' of the World.

There is no reason such a person should be regarded as irreligious *because* her belief in God is at times in a dynamic interplay with doubt, and, on rare occasions, even eclipsed. Importantly, the fact that certain experiences at times make her deeply question her deep-seated religious beliefs does not mean that she holds these beliefs with a scientific belief-attitude. Her belief in God is certainly *dubitable*, but not also verifiable or falsifiable in any remotely scientific way. While there are occasions when she feels that the misery of suffering she witnesses appears to 'show' that there is no God, there are also times when *the same kinds of suffering* don't have this doubt-effect on her. On the contrary, she sometimes finds that 'God can be found' amidst and despite exactly such horrendous suffering. If this example of a Christian believer is realistic - and I am suggesting that it is, despite not being 'typical' in all respects - then genuinely religious believing does not exclude *genuine* doubt as a possibility, or even as a relatively normal (if occasional) part of the life of faith.

4.6.2.2 *Religious disagreements*

Another phenomenon to concentrate on is the way in which religious disagreements are manifested, and to compare religious disagreements with 'hinge-disagreements' (if the latter could be called 'disagreements' at all). Speaking purely descriptively, we can first note, of course, that people have disagreed about religious matters in more or less polite conversations and publically debated such matters, mutually confronting their most deeply-held

religious beliefs; whereas, on the other hand, there are no debates about whether 'There is a hand' (with the usual caveats, e.g. all participants plainly see the interlocutor's hand, etc.).²⁰ Although Wittgenstein is right to observe that religious controversies 'look quite different from any normal controversies', and that the reasons in such controversies 'look entirely different from normal reasons' (LC 56), such controversies *do happen*.

But this descriptive remark need not satisfy the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist, since she can still insist that religious controversies or disagreements *shouldn't* take place since – according to the grammaticalist view – it is appropriate to voice a believed religious utterance categorically, while apologetically arguing it isn't (CV 34). Moreover, in Moore's notes we find Wittgenstein saying the following:

Disagreement of two answers [to the same prayer to God] can quite properly produce a religious conflict; but this need not be religion of that kind which takes religious statements scientifically. ... It seems at first sight as if there were two ways of using such words as 'God', either the real or the metaphorical. But *different religions treat something as making sense, which others treat as nonsense: they don't merely deny a proposition which other affirms.* (MWL May 1; italics added)

From this, it seems that Wittgenstein understood genuine religious disagreements between believers (who *don't* take their religious statements scientifically) as *purely grammatical* disagreements. They are disagreements about 'the bounds of sense', about whether a chosen religious utterance makes sense at all or not, and not whether it is true or false. In other words: they treat religious disagreements as 'disagreements' regarding rules of grammar which, presumably, underpin their respective (religious) language-games. This is, of course, exactly in accordance with the grammaticalist interpretation and view.

However, according to our picture of religious belief and doubt this way of interpreting religious disagreement – 'Either it is quasi-scientific ("Is it true or false?") and hence not religious, or purely grammatical ("Does it make sense or

²⁰ Remember that, according to Wittgenstein, the 'debates' about 'whether I know that there is a hand in front of me' in a context of an exchange of epistemological views between philosophers are *not* genuine debates about what we *really* know or what we can *really* doubt (OC 467).

is it nonsense?") and genuinely religious' – is not satisfying. It doesn't take into account all the nuances of religious believing, doubting and disagreeing. Could it be that the controversies over religious matters *can be* meaningful disagreements in appropriate contexts and in their particular (non-scientific) way, while not being 'purely grammatical' disagreements (as are 'disagreements' over hinges such as '2 + 2 = 4' or 'Earth has existed yesterday')?

Let's again consider a particular example. Instead of a theist-atheist disagreement or one from within a religious tradition, we will take an *interfaith* discussion which may happen between Christians and Muslims: discussion about whether Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour (the Christian view) or merely a prophet of God (the Muslim view). Our suggestion is that the binary either-or lens used by the Wittgensteinian grammaticalists with the only two exclusive options being a pretence of a 'scientific' disagreement and a prescriptive disagreement over rules of grammar – fails to provide understanding for a very interesting *variant* of this particular disagreement.²¹

For a start, we can acknowledge that the conceptual and practical-ethical contexts of one and the other belief, the belief that Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour, and the belief that Jesus is God's major prophet, *can be* quite different, having arisen from different but interrelated cultural-linguistic traditions (Adams 2006a: 386). So we should say that, normally, this disagreement would on some level involve an encounter of different grammars of faith, somewhat different language-games. But this is neither necessary, nor is it always *radically* so (Plant 2005: 106). At times, Christian-Muslim controversy over the nature and significance of Jesus involves even some '*religious common ground*', often taken for granted: for example, a very similar or even the same belief that God calls us all to become better people, or a belief that there have been divine prophets. Not to mention, of course, that Muslims and Christians normally share many non-religious *hinge*-beliefs (for example, 'The world existed yesterday'). So, we should note that the differences between their systems of thought and practices do not mean an utter incommensurability or

²¹ See Adams (2006a: 397-398). Adams suggests that several different *types* of disagreement are possible between Christian, Muslims and Jews in the context of the interfaith 'Scriptural reasoning' practice.

that nothing is shared by Christians and Muslims that is relevant for the discussion over the nature of Jesus.

On rare occasions, this interfaith disagreement can happen between open minds and with genuine interest in the beliefs and reasonings of each other.²² Granted: there may be very few public or semi-private contexts where such ‘controversy’ can proceed in a way that is not threatening or even insulting to any of the participants. And even if a non-threatening context is achieved, it is normal and entirely appropriate that Christians and Muslims would not *discuss* the nature of Jesus but only express their different beliefs (grammatically) about Jesus in mutual respect, but in ‘non-engagement’. Believers may also be tempted to present their own beliefs and reasons against that of others as (quasi-)scientific. But all this doesn’t mean that such an interfaith disagreement *cannot* involve a genuine *religious* discussion about whether Jesus is a Son of God/Saviour or a prophet of God. Now, if the participants are genuinely discussing the matter they are at least in some sense, or at some point, open to questioning their own understanding (and not only ‘sticking to their guns’); in other words, their deeply-held religious beliefs can, in such a time of mutual openness, sharing and questioning, be allowed to be reconsidered. If this is so – admittedly, this may very *rarely* happen, but we suggest it is possible – such religious controversies neither pretend to be scientific controversies (*LC* 56) nor are they ‘hinge-grammatical’, i.e. involving incompatible hinges (*MWL* May 1). Of course, some understanding and explication of what the *other* means by ‘Saviour’ or ‘prophet’ is necessary. But the explications of meanings and understanding these are not the *only* thing that is at stake in such a discussion. To deliberately disrupt Wittgensteinian-grammaticalist binary use of ‘sense’ and ‘nonsense’ here: Participants of the one side of the disagreement may feel during the discussion that the religious ‘picture’ of the other side ‘makes some sense’, or even ‘a lot of sense’, but not quite as much sense as the religious picture in which they happen to believe – or, they may start questioning, in the

²² In contemporary Britain, while the majority stance among people of different faiths is probably a ‘culture of polite disagreement’ and of a non-engagement over such ‘divisive’ questions between Christians and Muslims either in public or in private, there are contexts and venues where such disagreements over central doctrines do occur in non-threatening ways. For example, consider the context of Scriptural Reasoning groups where appreciative and respectful disagreement and even ‘argument’ between friends of different Abrahamic faiths is consciously cultivated (c.f. Adams 2006a).

face of the reasonings of the other side, whether their own religious picture makes all that perfect sense after all. Or, to disrupt the grammaticalist picture even further: A Christian in a group, for example, who shares a few other beliefs with Muslims, may begin to be convinced that it is *true* that Jesus is a prophet and that 'God's Son' is a misguided or *false* description of Jesus, after all; or, a Muslim in a group may, connecting the claim that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners with his own existential feelings of 'wretchedness' and reflecting on his own life more broadly, begin to doubt the claim that Jesus is (merely) a prophet, and begin to believe that Jesus is Christ and Saviour after all.

This may very rarely happen. Nevertheless, the *possibility* of such religious re-consideration of one's basic religious beliefs importantly distinguishes this interfaith disagreement from any 'disagreement' over hinge-beliefs. The latter kind, it seems, could hardly be called 'controversies' or 'disagreements': with someone who doubts in what are for you utterly relied-on certainties like 'The Earth existed yesterday', 'This is a tree', or ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ', one cannot have any meaningful controversy or disagreement. If these could be doubted at all, then 'all our calculations [would be] uncertain' (OC 71, 217), our most basic thinking and inference would be unreliable, and even doubting itself becomes impossible (OC 450), which is exactly why such indubitable sentences are compared to 'hinges' by Wittgenstein (OC 341). One could, perhaps, 'admonish' such a person who doubts your hinges or simply say 'O, Rubbish!' (OC 495), or treat him as 'mentally disturbed', or check whether he understands the meanings of the words he uses; but one cannot meaningfully *disagree* or *discuss* the matter.

'Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour' of course does have a hinge-like role for most Christians in 'religiously stable' periods of faith-life. There are also Christians who believe in Jesus' Divine Sonship *utterly* and never question it. Similarly, 'Jesus is God's prophet' can be hinge-like for Muslims, and there are great many Muslims who never question this. But there is no reason to take the 'hingeness' of these respective beliefs in the lives of many believers on both sides as necessary in order to appreciate such beliefs as 'properly religious'. For many Christians, while there may be long periods of life when the belief in 'Jesus is the Son of God' is not questioned, there come periods and situations when this deeply-held belief is genuinely questioned. And similarly, there are Muslims who happen to question the belief 'Jesus is a prophet'. Very

occasionally, interfaith discussions of this matter may even result in *conversions* which would then normally be later *followed* by a change of broader (religious) language-games (c.f. OC 65).

If the possibility of such questioning is real as we suggest it is, then the Christian and Muslim beliefs considered are both *religious and* (in an important sense) *dubitable*.²³ Compare the processes of ‘removal from the unconscious bedrock’ of the hinge ‘Man cannot walk on the moon’, or a ‘hardening into our foundations’ of an acquired hinge ‘Man walked on the moon’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 144). If believed *at all*, such *hinges* are utterly indubitable. Also, compare the discussions of grammar of much less existentially important linguistic hinges, like a discussion whether some new, small, three-wheeled electric vehicles are to be considered ‘cars’ or not. The ways in which believing and questioning is involved in the Muslim-Christian discussion over the nature of Jesus are again markedly different than this latter kind of ‘grammatical disagreement’ which could be described as a largely non-existential decision/negotiation over the meaning of ‘car’.

Crucially, our way of interpreting both the ‘Christian paramedic case’ and the Christian-Muslim disagreement over the nature of Jesus doesn’t posit *a radical and categorial difference* between *believing* ‘doctrinal statements’ – like ‘God is love’, ‘Jesus is God’s Son and Saviour’, or even ‘God *is*’ (for Christians) – on the one hand, and believing whether ‘a particular application of this concept’ is true or not on the other (Phillips 1988:216). According to the grammaticalist, the central ‘doctrinal statements’ are ‘giving rules for the use of the word “God”’ (ibid.), while the religious statements which are particular applications of those rules can be true or false within the language-game delimited by the doctrinal

²³ This discussion of the nature of religious disagreements is very brief and doesn’t come near to doing justice to the complexity of such phenomena. There is a lot written on this topic, from both philosophical and theological perspectives – see, for example, Adams (2006a) which lays out philosophical-theological principles of interfaith disagreements in the context of the ‘Scriptural Reasoning’ project. Adams partly draws on the Postliberal interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion (Lindbeck 2009), arguing for a version of the incommensurability thesis between the language-games of different religious traditions. On the other hand, see Plant (2005) and Kusch (2012) for philosophical and exegetical arguments against any stronger variant of the incommensurability thesis in relation to interfaith or religious-nonreligious disagreements, as well as a reading of Wittgenstein as incommensurabilist. The older discussion over whether Wittgenstein was a ‘fideist’ or not and in what sense (between Kai Nielsen and D.Z. Phillips initially) can be seen as a predecessor of this discussion, although it addressed only the religious-nonreligious disagreement (see Nielsen 1967; Phillips 1986; Mulhall 2001: 103-108).

statements. We must not confuse ‘the two senses of criteria...: criteria which operate within a form of life [whether some applications of rules are true and false] and criteria which show us the character of the form of life in question [considering whether to convert or not, for example]’ (Phillips 2000: 108).

In the religious-doxastic ‘real world’, even ‘God is’ *can be* doubted and genuinely questioned by Christians; while on the other hand, even very particular beliefs like ‘God chose America for a special evangelistic role in the world’ can be held beyond doubt, i.e. trusted with an unconscious, utter, hinge-like certainty. No religious belief is hinge-like, let alone a hinge-belief *proper*, simply by virtue of being a ‘doctrinal statement’ (Phillips 1988:216). ‘Whether a sentence is a rule or [a dubitable] proposition ... [depends] on *how it is used on the occasion of its utterance*’ (Glock 1996b: 209; emphasis added), not on whether it is a ‘central doctrinal statement’ of a tradition or not. The grammaticalist regime of thinking about religious beliefs in terms of hinge-beliefs, on its own, fails to provide an adequate picture because to ask only the logical either-or question – ‘Is the utterance grammatical and hence nonsensical (strictly speaking) and delimiting the bounds of sense, or is it scientific and hence a legitimate move within the language-game?’ – falls short of being a reliable guide for understanding *religious* believing as a category.

Among other things, this means (for us) that extra-Wittgensteinian philosophical and theological resources are needed to shed more light and, combined with Wittgensteinian insights, provide a clearer and a fuller picture.

4.6.3 Theological meaning of doubt

One may still question, however, just how ‘normal’ the faith of the paramedic believer, and the faith of the Christians and Muslims involved in the unusually open interfaith discussion about the nature of Jesus, really are. Isn’t it very unusual that serious and genuine doubts in her deep-seated religious beliefs would trouble the Christian paramedic on a regular basis (‘more than once per month’), as we have suggested? It may be that such believers are rare, although this is hard to judge.²⁴ But even if our paramedic may be a somewhat

²⁴ Culturally, in today’s Europe, for example, where social pressures of main-stream Churches on their believers are at an all-time low (Europeans today are typically far less socially punished if they lose their faith, if at all) and when an honesty and authenticity in whether-faith-or-doubt seems often to be socially rewarded, doubting as a part of one’s faith journey is often praised as

unusual case, periods of genuine doubt in Christian religious life of faith are not abnormal, even if much rarer than in the case of our paramedic. The point is that genuine doubt in one's central religious beliefs is possible, even if only at the rare occasions of crisis – for some believers, maybe only at a single, but critical and existentially decisive point in life, a point after which a more *conscious* faith and a will to 'stay turned round' have their surer place. Contra the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist understanding, *genuinely* religious believing is not indubitable and unconscious trusting as is hinge-certainty.

Still, at this point a question may be asked whether this *should* be so or not: is a Christian life of faith within which there are also times of genuine doubt in any sense preferable to a life of faith where religious doubts do not happen? It is obvious that such a question invites normative/prescriptive judgements and suggestions. We will introduce a theological tradition which doesn't only recognize occurrences of genuine doubt in religious life but indeed claims that doubt has a religiously important role in the life of faith – the tradition associated with Paul Tillich. Tillich regards a certain openness to doubt as a *virtue* of the 'dynamic faith', which he contrasts with the dogmatism of the 'static faith'. The doubt which Tillich values in religion is not the 'methodological doubt' which is a permanent methodological feature of scientific investigation (a 'non-dogmatism' even about one's favourite, 'believed' scientific theories), nor is it what he calls the 'sceptical doubt' which is 'an attitude of actually rejecting any certainty', but an '*existential* doubt' which is 'aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth' (Tillich 2009: 23). About such doubt, Tillich says

[Doubt] is not a permanent experience within the act of faith. But it is always present as an element in the structure of faith. This is the difference between faith and immediate evidence either of perceptual or of logical character. There is no faith without an intrinsic 'in spite of' and

a sign of open-mindedness. Christianity in the West has also had more than its fair share of criticism, and a good dose of this criticism has been absorbed into many aspects or variants of modern Christian self-understanding in Europe. Think of how the Freudian, Darwinian, Nietzschean, Marxist, Foucauldian, and lately Žižekian criticisms of the Christian or Judeo-Christian systems of thought have been taken into account and have influenced modern Christian theologies and (more 'post-modern') philosophies of religion. This cultural situation allows a life of faith which is in a dynamic relationship with genuine doubt regarding one's religious 'dogmas', a situation very different than in former times (e.g. the Middle Ages) when the central religious doctrines of Christianity were not allowed to be questioned in the society at large, and the punishment for expressing – and by implication, *entertaining* – such doubts was a very real threat to one's well-being.

the courageous affirmation of oneself in the state of ultimate concern. This intrinsic element of doubt breaks into the open under special individual and social conditions. If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith. (ibid.: 24-25)

Tillich argues that in the Church, both the methodological doubt among theologians about doctrinal statements (as 'concrete elements of faith', doctrinal statements are for Tillich established guides and frames of thinking for a religious tradition which can enjoy trust, but even so they should not be seen as unrevisable or a subject of 'utter trust'), and the deeper, existential doubt about the very message of the church 'that Jesus can be called the Christ' (ibid.: 25), are necessarily a part of the communal life of faith. So, the kind of faith which he deems to be religiously most valuable is a dynamic faith that is aware of the risk which is intrinsic to a genuinely religious attitude to life. Tillich contrasts this 'healthy', dynamic faith with the static faith which he describes as

a nonquestioning surrender not only to the ultimate, which is affirmed of faith, but also to its concrete elements as formulated by the religious authorities. In this way something preliminary and conditional – the human interpretation of the content of faith from the Biblical writers to the present – receives ultimacy and is elevated above the risk of doubt. (Tillich 2009: 32)

This is remarkably close to Wittgenstein's descriptions of hinge-certainty, as well as Moyal-Sharrock's additional elucidations of it. Culturally, this elevation of a dogma above the risk of doubt in religion is manifested, Tillich says, by 'suppression of autonomous mind, culturally and religiously, in the name of the doctrinal formulations of a special faith' (ibid.: 26), and leads to detrimental moral, cultural and religious consequences.²⁵ For him, this doesn't mean that

²⁵ Examples of 'static' faith which cannot afford doubt, of course, abound, both in contemporary times and from history. As I am writing this [30.9.2012], the discussions are still very much alive about the recent riots in the Muslim World over the low-budget film 'Innocence of Muslims' which has offended many Muslims with its demeaning portrayal of the prophet Muhammad, or simply by virtue of the motion-pictorial portrayals of Muhammad as such (Spillius et al. 2012). The subsequent push at the recent UN General Assembly from the leaders of several Muslim countries to introduce an internationally agreed 'blasphemy law' (DeFraia 2012) which would criminalize such and similar grave offences against religious beliefs (of established religions? According to which criteria?) brings into sharp focus also the question of the nature of religious belief, which is our topic here. If certain religious beliefs are taken-for-granted certainties, i.e. if

dynamic faith and 'creeds' are incompatible, but that a proper awareness of the *nature of faith* – or, we may say, of the nature of the religious belief-attitude – puts the believer into a different and religiously healthier relationship to the creeds which are traditional formulations of faith. While a Christian may *for longer periods* live in a more or less 'default trust' in God, Christ's love for the sinner, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and so on, at least some genuine existential questioning of these central beliefs is also an intrinsic element of an even longer-term, healthy life of faith.

This Tillichian (prescriptive) understanding of faith that sees the possibility of doubt as part-and-parcel of a religious belief-attitude is in this aspect importantly different from the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist view (Moyal-Sharrock, Kober, Schoenbaumsfeld, sometimes D.Z. Phillips), but nevertheless in line with the attentive grammatical (descriptive) investigation of how Christian beliefs are often manifested in everyday life. That is not to say that a Wittgensteinian grammaticalist – or Wittgenstein himself – doesn't have very important and elucidating points to make about the religious belief-attitude: i.e., it is very different from, and in some respects opposite to, the scientific belief-attitude; religious beliefs are often (in 'stable periods' of religious life) not doubted and tend to rule one's thinking and life. But the Tillichian view puts a finger on a feature of religious believing which doesn't fit in the overall picture that the grammaticalist paints. We should also remember that Wittgenstein has himself recognized *volition*, the need to *persist* in faith, and hence implicitly a possibility of genuine doubt, as elements of the religious belief-attitude. Aligning the religious belief-attitude too closely with hinge-certainty or relating these two belief-attitudes in a wrong way can be more distortive than clarifying. Could then Wittgenstein's insights which nod towards a recognition of a *genuine* religious doubt, and Tillich's stronger emphasis on the role of such doubt in religious

these beliefs are believed as hinge-certainties by, say, the majority population of a given country, then expressing doubts in such beliefs in public will 'naturally' be considered sinful, and the idea that expressing open disagreement with such beliefs should be a criminal offence can easily become 'natural' as well. On the other hand, if religious beliefs are not understood or 'held' as hinge-beliefs in a given culture, and doubting such beliefs is not only allowed but understood as a 'natural' ingredient of religion, then doubting even central religious beliefs can be regarded as similarly 'natural' as believing them, and expressing doubts in these matters cannot easily be seen (even potentially) as a criminal offence. Of course, the issue of offending people (believers, or nonbelievers), discriminating against them on the basis of their religious beliefs, or engaging in hate speech against religious (or nonreligious) people can be separate (although related) and complex issues, which we are not intending to resolve here.

faith, be combined to produce an understanding of religious believing which is more fruitful than what the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist view has to offer?

4.7 Conclusions, connections and questions

To answer this question, and to finish the chapter on a constructive but forward-looking note, we need to briefly relate this Wittgensteinian-Tillichian picture of religious belief and doubt – which is, on the other hand, unfaithful to certain aspects of both Wittgenstein's and Tillich's understandings of religion (see also Chapter Six) – with several lines of investigation we've been pursuing throughout this thesis.

For a start, we may point out a few connections of our conclusions here with the 'grammatical decisions' we've offered in Chapter Three. There we connected dubitability with bipolarity, i.e. the ability of the beliefs to be true or false, and bipolarity further with propositionality. Dubitability need not be connected with 'scientific' (including 'common-sense', legal, etc.) methods of verifying and falsifying belief, however. Minimally, it has to do at least with a 'naked' but *genuine* entertaining of a possibility of being otherwise than believed. And, while Moyal-Sharrock for the most part operates with a much more loaded notion of dubitability, linking it with empirical falsifiability and verifiability (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 39), she also at one point acknowledges a possibility of trusting/believing which is neither scientific nor that of a hinge-certainty (ibid. 191-198). Any trust that is not the unhesitating, utter *ur-trust*, is for Moyal-Sharrock a '...secondary form of trust ...[which] still has distrust as its flip-side'. Instead of talking about empirical procedures for establishing truth or falsity as a minimal condition for this 'distrust' (the other side of the 'secondary' trust), she talks of a mere 'possibility of hesitation or doubt...', about the '...evaluative moment prefacing or accompanying the trust', and about '...the moment I ... give the object of my trust a thought' (ibid. 194). The possibility of any such minimal distrust is enough for a trust not to be a *hinge*-belief.

Something similar could be said for religious faith: it also has distrust or doubt as its flip-side, at least occasionally (however rarely) – and, according to Tillich, this is *religiously* healthier than a complete absence of a possibility of doubt in

religion (the case of 'static' faith). If we accept this picture and the claim that religious beliefs are genuinely dubitable, we should also say – according to the conceptual connections outlined in Chapter Three – that religious beliefs are *bipolar* and therefore *propositional*. This, of course, can be seen as controversial. What does it mean for a religious belief – or, more specifically, belief that there is a God, or various Christian beliefs *about* God – to be true or false, if there are no ways of empirical verification, or science-like falsification procedures that could establish whether it is true or false? It should be noted that, regarding this issue, we have sided with G. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker who call attention to different senses of 'true' and 'false' when these are attributed to different *kinds* of sentences or beliefs (Baker and Hacker 1985: 280), as well as with D.Z. Phillips, who, in his investigation of religious beliefs, insisted that '[issues] of sense are logically prior to issues of truth and falsity. It is only when we appreciate the sense of religious beliefs that we can see what calling them true or false amounts to' (Phillips 2000: xi). In line with such an understanding, we resisted Moyal-Sharrock's legislating move of linking the adjective 'propositional' with 'empirically derived', (empirically-scientifically) 'falsifiable' and 'verifiable'. However, we also resisted the stark categorial distinction between grammatical religious believing in central doctrines of a religion (even the Christian belief in God's existence) and dubitable believing about 'particular applications' of those doctrines (Phillips 1988:216). For this reason, we must build our philosophical-theological picture of the 'religious belief-attitude', not only on Wittgensteinian discourse and insights, but more broadly: following Tillich's picture, we will regard religious beliefs as a sub-category of a broader category of *existential* beliefs (which may or may not be 'religious' in a sociological, historical or anthropological sense, for example).²⁶ In the Christian context, despite some important differences between the belief that *there is* a God and the beliefs *about* God, these fall under the same broader category of *existential beliefs*. Still, one of the natural further steps on the basis of our picture would be to develop an idea of what it means for religious beliefs as *existential* beliefs to be 'true' or 'false' in this or that context or situation.

This question comes up also if we bring to the picture the understanding we have been developing in Chapters One and Two. The claims were, in short, that

²⁶ More discussion of religious believing as *existential* believing follows in Chapter Six.

certain kinds of existential feelings should be considered central to Christian religious experiencing, and that this felt dimension of religion is ontologically prior to religious believing. But what is, then, the relation between religious/existential feelings and religious beliefs? Indeed, what exactly is the relation between the broader philosophical pictures that we have been painting in the Chapters One and Two, and those from the Chapters Three and Four? Can the 'remarkable' existential feelings like 'awe', 'wonder of existence', the 'feeling of being one-in-all', or the feeling of 'infinite guilt', be easily related to religious beliefs?²⁷ We mentioned briefly in the introduction to this chapter that one tradition in philosophy of religion and a once influential way of reading Wittgenstein (on religion) considers religious utterances to be *nothing but* expressions of feelings, emotions, desires, and the like – nothing cognitive, that is, but merely something either conative or 'affective'. According to this expressivist view, religious *beliefs* are seen as unimportant but useful imaginings at best, or epistemically *illegitimate* and harmful at worst. So, doesn't our emphasis of the role of (existential) feelings in religion (Chapters One and Two) commit us to an *expressivist* view? Doesn't it introduce a notable tension with our philosophical and theological affirmation of the important and legitimate place of *beliefs* (and doubts) in religion (Chapter Four)? And if feelings and the expressive aspect of religion are indeed so central to religious experience and language, respectively, as we have suggested in Chapters One and Two, shouldn't this completely curb any ambition for affirming religious beliefs as *propositional and bipolar*?

These are important questions for our project to address or at least indicate a way of addressing them. It will be largely in Chapter Six that we will come to some answers and bring together more fully our two strands of investigation, the phenomenological and the grammatical. Before this synthesis, however, we will take one final step back from attention to religious phenomena and focus on more general questions about the language, with a special focus on the 'expressive function of language' (Jakobson 1990: 73-74). This will prepare the terrain for us to then finally turn our attention to Christian God-talk, as well as to

²⁷ For a somewhat parallel but different problem of relating the most 'ordinary' existential feelings (like the normal background feeling of the 'realness of the world', for example) and the very basic, 'universal hinges' (like 'The world exists'; Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 103), see Appendix I (especially sections 4 and 5).

related questions about the relationships between religious felt experiencing, religious beliefs about God, and God-talk.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Expressive among the Functions of Language

5.1 Introduction

After addressing the question of the relevance of the phenomenology of feelings for the understanding of religious experience with the help of F. Schleiermacher, M. Ratcliffe, and others in chapters One and Two, and then the question of the nature of religious beliefs as understood by Wittgenstein, Tillich and others in Chapters Three and Four, this chapter focuses on language – in particular, on the nature of expressive language and its relation to the other aspects of language, such as the representational and regulative. This is also the final section of more *general*-philosophical reflection before the final, integrative chapter (Chapter Six) which will focus on the interrelatedness between religious language (God-talk), religious experience (existential feelings), and religious beliefs (beliefs about God).

The present chapter begins by examining Wittgenstein's understanding of psychological concepts and expressive utterances. Wittgenstein's strong emphasis on the embeddedness of language in its expressive, gestural and interactive contexts will be complemented and further elucidated by the approach to understanding language through its *functions* (Karl Bühler, Roman Jakobson) – the expressive, regulative (appellative), representational, metalingual, phatic and poetic functions. Because of our overall focus in this thesis on 'existential feelings' and their religious relevancy we include a special focus here on the *expressive* function of language. Building on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of language, we will try to elucidate the ways in which the expressive function of language works in linguistic innovation, i.e. in the creation of new meanings.

One aim of this chapter is also to show that the later Wittgenstein's view of psychological concepts and on 'states of consciousness' is not eliminativist in relation to conscious experience, i.e. 'anti-phenomenological'. To argue this, we

will engage somewhat closely with Wittgenstein's critique of the 'science of introspection' as well as with the contemporary discussion of it.

5.2 Wittgenstein, expressive utterances and phenomenology of feelings

A significant aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy can be understood as an ongoing attempt to elucidate the difference between distinct grammatical categories of utterance. As we have seen in Chapters Three and Four, a particular concern of his philosophy was the contrast between grammatical utterances ('hinge-sentences'), and 'scientific' utterances (in the broadest sense¹): i.e. the difference between the utterances which delimit the bounds of sense (linguistic rules and other 'rules of thought'), and the utterances which express falsifiable propositions about the world. For Wittgenstein, understanding this *categorical* difference is of crucial importance for philosophy since, in his view, most philosophical problems *dissolve* when we see how this difference is manifested in real-life language-games. As we've noted, the later Wittgenstein also pressed the point that the grammatical status of an utterance is not dependant on, or necessarily manifested in, its outward or 'surface grammar', i.e. its syntactical structure – in fact, the syntax is often that 'resource of our language' which can cause 'a bewitchment of our understanding' (*PI* 109). Rather, it is the *use* of an expression in its particular context in a particular way that determines the grammatical status of the utterance: 'Whether a sentence is a rule or an empirical proposition does not depend on its form but on how it is used on the occasion of its utterance' (Glock 1996b: 209).

Despite this strong focus on the dichotomy between 'grammatical vs. scientific' utterances which at times gives an impression of being not only exclusive but also exhaustive of all possibilities of utterance, in the later Wittgenstein we can also find a consistent philosophical attention to what seems to be yet another category: *expressive* utterances. These can, roughly and provisionally, be described as utterances which directly express bodily sensations, feelings, emotions, and other 'states of consciousness' (*RRP II* 45, 63, 148). The picture, however, is slightly more complicated, and these complications are partly the

¹ See Chapter Three, fn. 4.

theme of the present chapter. What seems to be fairly unproblematic is that, in their most basic or 'primitive' form, expressive utterances seem to be distinct from both hinges and scientific utterances. For example, by spontaneously expressing our emotions by uttering 'Wow!' or 'Ah!' we don't espouse a hypothesis or a belief, or attempt to give information, nor do we aim at delimiting the bounds of sense. Rather, we simply and spontaneously 'emanate' ourselves, i.e. our affects or, more broadly, our personality.

In terms of our own use of the concept 'expression', 'expressive', etc. in this chapter, we need to note both the distinction as well as the connection between the broader sense of 'expression' and its cognates, in which beliefs, ideas, guesses, intentions, rules, etc. as well as affects, are all *expressible* and often *expressed*, and the narrower sense in which only *expressive utterances* are expressive. As Charles Taylor puts it, the commonality between these two senses of expression is in the fact that any (linguistic or non-linguistic) 'expression makes something manifest in embodying it,' (Taylor 1985: 219), whether that is conceptually-structured ideas, or beliefs, or less- to non-conceptual feelings, sensations, or desires. For the most part, we will use 'expressive' in this chapter in the narrower sense, i.e. for the expression of feelings, bodily sensations, and other affects. If both senses will be used, we will note this explicitly in order to avoid confusion.

It would be misleading to think that, for Wittgenstein, these three categories of utterance are exhaustive, let alone 'once and for all' – he famously argued in *Philosophical Investigations* that there are 'countless kinds' of sentences, and that 'this diversity is not something fixed' (*PI* 23)². However, the 'grammatical',

² The examples Wittgenstein lists are

Giving orders, and acting on them; Describing and object by its appearance, or by its measurements; Constructing an object from a description (a drawing); Reporting an event; Speculating about the event; Forming and testing a hypothesis; Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams; Making up a story, and reading one; Acting in a play; Singing rounds; Guessing riddles; Cracking a joke, telling one; Solving a problem in applied arithmetic; Translating from one language to another; Requesting, thanking, greeting, praying. (*PI* 23)

His goal was to contrast this variety of utterances (note that the list includes religious utterances, like praying) with the idea of a definite and exhaustive number of possibilities of utterances that are, at least ideally, clearly manifested in syntactical structure – and that is what, Wittgenstein says, 'logicians have said about the structure of language' (*ibid.*). We can include, not only many philosophers of his day (like Russell), but also many post-Wittgensteinian philosophers of language in this target group: John Searle, for example, who explicitly

‘scientific’ and ‘expressive’ are probably the broadest and most important categories of utterance for which Wittgenstein does draw ‘auxiliary lines’ of demarcation, and they do appear to suggest a significantly wide-spanning ‘systematic grouping, or even a classification’ (Shulte 1993: 35) of utterances. We will return briefly to this broader question of classification of language later in this chapter. But, since we have devoted enough attention for our purposes to ‘grammatical’ and ‘scientific’ utterances in Chapters Three and Four, and because our overall thesis involves a notable emphasis on the role of (existential) *feelings* in religion, it is time to examine here Wittgenstein’s category of expressive utterances more closely.

5.2.1 Wittgenstein on expressive utterances

It has been noted that the concept “‘expression” ... plays a decisive role ... in Wittgenstein’s considerations’ (Schulte 1993: 37). When used in the narrower (affective) sense, expressive utterances are closely related to the non-linguistic expressivity, i.e. to what Wittgenstein calls ‘natural expressions of emotion’ (*BB* 103) like weeping, laughing, a sigh of relief, a spontaneous facial expression of anger, or spontaneously gesturing a victorious bodily pose (e.g. hands up in a V shape, fists closed). Another kind of non-linguistic expression which may be related with expressive utterances is aesthetic expression, like in music, painting or film (c.f. *Z* 157-165). It is deep into this broad context of ‘expressivity’ that Wittgenstein places expressive linguistic utterances (sometimes translated as ‘avowals’; c.f. Glock 1996a: 50-54). It is simply impossible to understand

attempted to show that there ‘are not, as Wittgenstein ... and many others have claimed, an infinite or indefinite number of language games or uses of language ... [but] ... limited number of basic things we do with language’ (Searle 1979: 29). Searle’s theory of speech acts is supposed to *explain all* these. Wittgenstein’s rejection of philosophy as science here means (also) a care in regarding the things we can do with language as an ultimately open list in principle, ‘for our linguistic activities or practices are living things that are always changing. The use of language is as unpredictable as human action, for indeed *an utterance is itself an act.*’ (Medina 2005: 13). Rather than assimilating philosophy to science, building a theory which attempts to systematize and categorize language once and for all – and, even strictly distinguishing semantics (locution) from pragmatics (illocution and perlocution) (c.f. Searle 1979) – a more ‘auxiliary’, temporary, and often only localized, yet still systematic and rigorous, grammatical elucidation of language remains crucially aware of its own limitations. Of course, the ways in which this can be combined and mutually illuminating with scientific research of language practices (sociological, psychological, historical, linguistic, etc.), is another question. See Medina (2005: 12-38) for a contemporary Wittgensteinian critique of both Austin’s and Searle’s (and, by implication, Vanderveken’s as well; c.f. Vanderveken 1990) theory of speech acts.

these kind of utterances if the broader context of expressivity is not kept in mind.

Wittgenstein set out his principle for establishing whether an utterance is either scientific or grammatical also in situations where it is not clear whether an utterance is either *expressive* or scientific. For example, he notes on several occasions that the same string of words 'I am in pain' can be either a direct, spontaneous expression of pain (akin to shouting 'Ow!'), or a 'scientific' description (e.g., answering the doctor's question whether we are in pain, in which case we are in fact *representing* ourselves as an object of description). Whether it is one or the other is dependent on the context of use. Another of Wittgenstein's examples (Z 150-152) which makes a similar point talks of someone who doesn't know English but observes the English speakers exclaiming "What marvellous light!" in typical situations where this is uttered, with the characteristic facial expressions etc.. This non-English person can learn to use this exclamation as a direct 'expression to his sensation' (Z 151) *competently*, in which case it makes no sense to say that he doesn't understand the meaning of the expression (even while not understanding the individual words in this sentence nor its syntactical form). This is possible because the original utterance is *expressive* and simple, not scientific and complex, since the same is not possible for complex scientific utterances (Z 152). Again, one of the points here is that the syntactical form of an utterance is not a reliable guide to its grammatical status, i.e. to whether it is a hinge, or an expressive utterance, or a scientific one (although it is one of the things which *can* often be a useful guide, of course).

However, complications begin when we consider the difference between a spontaneous, direct expression of emotion, and the non-spontaneous, indirect use of language as a mere 'artificial device to let others know that we have it' (BB 103). While philosophers are tempted to wrongly treat spontaneous expressive utterances as if they were 'artificial devices', the difference between one and the other is often easy to note. But also often, it is not. Wittgenstein aptly notes that

there is no sharp line between such 'artificial devices' and what one might call the natural expression of emotion. Cf. in this respect: a)

weeping, b) raising one's voice when one is angry, c) writing an angry letter, d) ringing the bell for a servant you wish to scold. (ibid.)

Partly, what Wittgenstein notes here are different *degrees* of 'grammatical mixedness' (Citron 2012a) between expressive and scientific utterance (in these cases, mostly 'reflective self-descriptions', we might say). But here, the picture is more complicated, since we are also crossing the border between 'doing' and 'saying', 'action' and 'language'. While weeping is on the most 'natural' or spontaneous end of the spectrum and outside 'language' altogether, the ambiguous example of ringing the bell for a servant – not verbal, but still a 'sign', i.e. a premeditated, deliberate, reflective communicative act – seems, for Wittgenstein, to be on the most artificial end of the spectrum. Less ambiguously, the 'raising one's voice when one is angry' (presumably, in *describing* the relevant events which make one angry, or self-describing how one felt and still feels) is an intricate mixture of expressive and scientific utterance, and so is 'writing an angry letter' (although a bit further removed, perhaps, from the spontaneous angry 'Grrr' than is the raising of voice).

A critical reflection on the phenomenon of this kind of grammatical mixedness can go in different directions. One is to reflect on whether, for example, a spontaneous 'Hahaha' can be mixed with a linguistic representation of 'Hahaha' – for example, when one is uttering 'Hahaha' ironically. Or, to use Wittgenstein's example (*RPP I 727*), does an actor who expresses 'longing' (with gestures, facial expressions, but also accompanying utterances) in a play really experience longing, or does the very fact that he is *acting* it even preclude him to experience it? We can imagine all kinds of cases, but there doesn't seem to be a clear either-or situation here.³ And a similar thing could be said if we take

³ Linguist John Haiman calls the non-linguistic (or, pre-linguistic) expressions like laughter, groans of pain, or screams of fear, 'involuntary symptoms'. Such symptoms '...are not the sign of anything in the world other than the speaker's state' (Haiman 1998: 116). Haiman's main thesis is that, despite the seeming 'yawning chasm between *symptoms* such as screaming with pain, bellowing with rage, and howling with laughter on the one hand and *signs* (even nonindirect quotable ... signs such as "Ouch", "Damn" or "God!") on the other' (ibid. 117), the picture which emerges from a close attention to intermediary stages between action and language is a picture of continuity, some mixedness, and a 'hierarchy of possibilities' (ibid.). The evidence shows that

we do not just have a polar opposition between spontaneous symptomatic expressions (sincere actions) on the one hand, and thoroughly conventionalized symbolic systems (sublimated speech) on the other. Rather than an orderly bundle of mutually reinforcing 'isoglosses' which demarcate 'the land of saying' from 'the land of doing', we find that

our reflection in another direction, namely the situations that involve *believing*. Wittgenstein wrote that '[thoughts] may be fearful, hopeful, joyful, angry, etc. Emotions are expressed in thoughts. A man talks angrily, timidly, sadly, joyfully, etc., not lumbagoishly' (Z 493-494). Since any expression of a scientific belief presumably involves conscious, verbally structured thoughts, this also means that there is no logical problem in the idea of expressing a scientific belief *feelingly*, or in the idea of expressing (predominantly) a feeling by expressing (also) belief with one and the same utterance. Very often there is no sharp, disjunctive either-or here.

If this reading of Wittgenstein is correct, we should say that he saw this kind of mixedness, the grammatical mixedness between the expressive and the scientific in an utterance, *differently* than the mixedness we treated in Chapter Four, between the grammatical and the scientific. There we noted some reasons, offered by Wittgensteinian grammaticalists in relation to philosophy of religious language (e.g. Moyal-Sharrock, Kober, Glock), for treating any grammatical-scientific mixedness as a consequence of 'confusion', and for normatively insisting on a disjunctive either-or treatment, since

The fact that there may be a fluctuation between normative and descriptive uses, and even an indeterminacy of status, does not obliterate the difference between these two roles. To deny this would be to deny that one can distinguish, with respect to a particular measurement, between the *role* of the ruler and the role of the object measured. (Glock 1996b: 214)

what we may think of as the denizens of the No-Man's land between them (expletives, performatives, and lexicalized expressions of paralinguistic acts) are each themselves heterogeneous collections of objects. Some of those objects are more sincere (action-like), and others are more conventionalized (or language-like). (Haiman 1999: 192)

For example, expletives which are based on involuntary expressions of feeling or sensation (like 'yuk', 'brrr', 'aw', 'wow', 'uuuu' and alike) can be 'both language and non-language' (ibid.: 194). Their status is ambiguous and context/use dependant; the line between the (usually involuntary) vocal gesture and its linguistic representation can be blurred. One way of demarcating symptoms from language is to say that expletives 'cross the border from doing to saying when they shed the accompanying non-linguistic act of which they are a sublimation' (ibid. 196). When they become more recognizably language-like, expletives are often said in irony, sarcasm, or other kind of distance (compare the spontaneous 'aw' with 'ouch', or laughter with the ironic 'ha ha', or crying with 'boo hoo', for example). But, despite the fact that we can easily think of such gesture-representation pairs here, a clear distinction between action and speech is hard to note in reality, and even theoretically, it is rather 'arbitrary' (ibid. 194).

Or, in Wittgenstein's words: 'In one case we make a move in an existent game, in the other we establish a rule of the game. Moving a piece could be conceived in these two ways: as a paradigm for future moves, or as a move in an actual game' (Z 294). Wittgenstein doesn't claim that such a disjunctive either-or would apply to the relation between the *expressive* and the scientific (in one and the same utterance).

And, while Wittgenstein is not, to my knowledge, investigating the remaining possibility of mixedness in this tripartite categorization of utterances, namely the grammatical mixedness of the expressive and the grammatical in the same utterance, it is possible to imagine, or even remember or notice, examples of that. Think of a young bachelor who is a teacher of EFL (English as a foreign language), teaching the meaning of 'bachelor' to the class by exclaiming the grammatical utterance 'All bachelors are unmarried'. With this utterance in such a heuristic situation, the bachelor-teacher is clearly delimiting the bounds of sense of 'bachelor'. At the same time, however, he also happens to feel really lonely and sad because he is still single, and soon after he utters 'All bachelors are unmarried', it became clear to him (not least from the reactions on students faces) that he has just (also) spontaneously expressed sadness by this very utterance (a similar scenario can be imagined with the same sentence, but instead of expressing sadness, expressing happiness for being free from marital yoke!). Grammatical utterances can, just like scientific ones, be expressive at the same time, in different degrees. None of this, however, bans the possibility of quite purely expressive utterances, which, although seemingly 'scientific' or grammatical – for example, 'This world is a happy place!' – are actually direct, spontaneous expressions of emotion.

5.2.2 Wittgenstein's phenomenology of feelings

Wittgenstein recognized that, when we use language in the expressive mode, we often but not always use 'special' psychological concepts like 'feel', 'pain', 'sad', 'thinking', 'lucid', 'boredom', etc. On the other hand, we can use these words also in a non-expressive mode, but usually in the third person – say, when giving information (*RPP II* 63). In his latest remarks on this issue, we can find Wittgenstein's attempts at classification and elucidation of psychological concepts (e.g. Z 464-522; *RPP II* 45-88). In one particular systematic

categorization of some such concepts (which comes in two seemingly related remarks; c.f. *RPP II* 63, 148; or *Z* 472, 488-492), Wittgenstein engages in nothing less than a *phenomenology* of states of consciousness, according to which psychological concepts related to states of consciousness can be divided in three categories: sensations, images, and emotions (*RPP II* 63, 148; c.f. Schulte 1993: 30-34).⁴ The concepts that fall under these broad categories are importantly different for Wittgenstein than some other psychological concepts in that they are expressive of experiences; i.e. they are *phenomenological* concepts. For example, he went to some length to point out that

‘thinking’ is used in a certain way very differently from, for example, ‘to be in pain’, ‘to be sad’, etc.: we don’t say ‘I think’ as the expression of a mental state ...; the concept ‘thinking’ is not a concept of experience. For we don’t compare thoughts in the same way as we compare experiences. (*RPP II* 12, 257)

Thinking doesn’t have ‘duration’, whereas the states of consciousness – emotions, images and sensations – do (*RPP II* 63, 148). Furthermore, concepts like ‘intending’, ‘believing’, ‘understanding’, and ‘knowing’ are again different from both the concepts expressive of states of consciousness, as well as from the concept of ‘thinking’: You cannot, for example, be ‘interrupted in intending’ whereas you can be interrupted in thinking, and it would hardly make sense to say that ‘one believed or understood something “uninterruptedly” since yesterday ... (the difference between “knowing” and “being aware of”)’ (*RPP II* 45, 258).

⁴ Shulte (1993: 34-35) notes that such an attempt to classify psychological concepts is somewhat uncharacteristic for the later Wittgenstein, given his ‘anti-theoretical stance’ in philosophy. However, he explains the nature of this Wittgenstein’s classification in the context of philosophy as non-theory/non-explanatory thus:

Wittgenstein had no illusions about the fact that this deliberate renunciation of a theory proper would render his investigations extremely complicated: ‘The difficulty of renouncing all theory: One has to regard what appears so obviously incomplete as something complete’ (*RPP I* 723). The decision to make do without a theory does not mean that one must put up with something incomplete; what it means is that one grasps and does not forget that what seems to be incomplete is everything there is and that more is not to be had. However, in order to grasp that what seems incomplete is all you can get you will need criteria to help your decisions, and in order to discover the right criteria you will need a systematic grouping, perhaps even a classification, of the phenomena populating the terrain you wish to examine. Thus renouncing all theory does not amount to renouncing all analysis and systematic procedures; what it means is that one has resolved to get by without ‘ornamental copings’ and that instead one will, for example, quite deliberately draw ‘auxiliary lines’. (Shulte 1993: 35)

When Wittgenstein concentrates on concepts which express 'states of consciousness' – i.e. 'sensations', 'emotions' or 'images' (e.g. Z 464-522; *RPP II* 45-88) – he takes it that *sensations* comprise two classes: first, of what would more customarily be called 'sense-perceptions' of the 'external world', and second, of 'bodily sensations', e.g. pain or itching (in Chapter One we called the latter sub-category 'bodily feelings', following Ratcliffe's reading of Merleau-Ponty (2008: 36)). What is meant by Wittgenstein by '*images*' is not sense-perceptions but mental pictures, or, images in the mind (not, however, hallucinations, or 'fancies', but normal pictures of imagination/memory which can occur in our consciousness more or less vividly) (*RPP II* 63-102; c.f. Schulte 1993: 32-33). And what is meant by '*emotions*' stands for a broad category of what in this thesis we've called 'affects', i.e. broader than our use of 'emotional' in Chapter One and Two. However, for Wittgenstein there are, again, *two* broad categories of emotions: *intentional* emotions which can be either simple (joy *about*..., fear *of*...) or more complex (love, remorse; Z 518-520), and *nonintentional* emotions or 'moods' (e.g. anxiety, or joy without an object; *RPP II* 148).

If we adopt the vocabulary which we have been using throughout this thesis, we can read Wittgenstein as clearly differentiating between the *phenomenological* categories of intentional feelings (e.g. anger, fear) and non-intentional feelings or 'moods' (e.g. joy, anxiety). Despite the fact that Wittgenstein does not engage in an elaborate phenomenology of feelings, this distinction is very similar to the one found in Ratcliffe (2008: 36-40; see also Heidegger 1996: 174-177 and Strasser 1977: 182-184). Wittgenstein is clear that, whereas intentional feelings are directed at an object, non-intentional feelings aren't (Z 489; *RPP II* 148); importantly, the *object* of intentional feeling needs to be distinguished both from a *cause* of the feeling, as well as from its *content* (*ibid.*).⁵ Both intentional and non-intentional feelings have content for

⁵ Wittgenstein takes the idea that feelings 'do not give us any information about the external world' to be a 'grammatical remark' (Z 491). As we have seen in Chapter One, this rule of grammar regarding the meaning of 'feelings' has been challenged in recent decades. In modern philosophy and psychology of feeling, Goldie, Deigh, Wynn and others argue that at least some feelings (usually intentional, *emotional* feelings) do also give us *information* about the external world which is not available to one in discursive, propositional ways (c.f. Goldie 2004, Deigh 2004, Wynn 2005). It is worth noting that Wittgenstein does not pretend to do science or psychology here: he is describing the established meanings of psychological concepts in everyday language in order to then try to illuminate their grammar further and deeper (and battle philosophical/psychological theories which fail to do justice to the actual use of those words).

Wittgenstein, and it is his understanding of the *content* of feelings which brings Wittgenstein in a close and compatible relationship with the phenomenologists of feeling. He claims that the content of feelings can be associated with, and expressed via, 'pictures':⁶ '[Here] one imagines something like a *picture*, or something of which a picture can be made. (The *darkness* of depression which descends on a man, the *flames* of anger)' (Z 489; italics added).

On the point of the expressibility and communicability of feelings, Wittgenstein remarks that a 'characteristic mark of all "feelings" is that there is expression of them, i.e. facial expressions, gestures, of feeling' (Z 513; Z 508). Both intentional and non-intentional feelings are expressible: on the most basic level, this is 'by facial expressions' and 'gestures', but on the more complex levels, this is done in variety of ways: for example, by drawing or painting pictures, by the choice of dress, by music, architecture, and, of course, in a variety of verbal expressions which can be highly structured. Feelings can be 'expressed in thoughts', and, to the extent to which we are inculturated in certain language-games, language can also *arouse* or evoke feelings in us (Z 494) – the aspect of the expressive language which features importantly in Schleiermacher's account of religious language, and his views on the communicability of religious feelings and doctrines (CF 6.2).

Wittgenstein's remarks on the phenomenology of feelings – admittedly rudimentary, but careful – do not appear to be set up as a picture which is then to be 'knocked down' or rejected. His endorsement of the talk of 'directedness' or 'undirectedness' of emotions/feelings, his distinction between the object and the content of feelings, and his elucidation of the content of feelings as 'something like a picture' constitute nothing less than a certain vindication of the phenomenology of feelings. While we can and should, of course, recognize the important differences between the direction where, for example, Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty develop their respective reflections on 'moods', emotions and/or feelings, and the direction where Wittgenstein develops it (or, rather, redirects it

While Goldie, Deigh and Wynn may use new scientific evidence and insights, they also, however, clearly argue for notable shifts in the meanings of words like 'feelings' and 'emotions' (perhaps also 'cognition'), and by this, they are engaged in a specifically *constructive*, normative language-use.

⁶ See Chapter Six (6.2.1) for the explanation why we can take Wittgenstein's 'pictures' in this context as *metaphors*, contrary to his own use of 'metaphors'.

to the philosophy of language), it is important to realize that Wittgenstein's remarks on the expressive concepts and on 'states of consciousness' do open up the possibility of further, more elaborate phenomenological elucidation of the ways we humans feel, as well as further exploration into what we do when we express and, indeed, *communicate* feelings. It is not insignificant for our project that Wittgenstein's examples by which he illustrates what the *content* of a feeling might be, include feelings that can be categorized as *existential* according to Ratcliffe's (and our) terminology: anxiety, and depression, for example (Z 489). It is at this point that our phenomenological investigation of the ways people feel, in chapters One and Two and with a special focus on religiously relevant existential feelings, complements Wittgenstein's investigation into psychological concepts and utterances (or vice versa).⁷ The final explication of this complementarity will be developed in the next chapter.

5.2.3 Wittgenstein's critique of introspection

It has to be recognized, however, that many a Wittgensteinian would object to the claims of the previous section above. A widespread perception has it that Wittgenstein has done precisely the opposite to the supposed vindication of a phenomenological investigation of feelings, or of 'states of consciousness' more generally. It is sometimes argued that Wittgenstein in fact *invalidated* any attempts at such phenomenology as a philosophical (let alone scientific) enterprise. Didn't Wittgenstein forcefully and successfully attack the very idea of

⁷ Another, less obvious example of nonintentional feeling Wittgenstein gives is 'care' or '*Sorge*' in German (*RPP I* 731-732). Schulte comments on this example, and makes a similar point as we are making here – that Wittgenstein vindicates phenomenology of feelings through recognizing that feelings have content which is expressible and communicable (even *describable*):

The original German word translated as care is '*Sorge*'. And Wittgenstein continues by asking himself what sort of description is given by words like '*Ewiges Düstere steigt herunter*', translated as '*Perpetual cloud Descends*'. These words are spoken by the figure of *Sorge* in the last act of Goethe's *Faust*. *Sorge*, or care, represents an emotion which is typically causeless and objectless. It is a state you can be in in spite of material and physical well-being; it is directed at nothing. It does not typically go with very strong accompanying muscular or other physical feelings. And still you can describe it. That is the point of Wittgenstein's quotation of Goethe. *He wants to bring out that you can describe an emotion or, if you like, the content of an emotion by using words in a certain way, even though you cannot refer to any causes or objects or accompaniments of that emotion.* (Schulte 1993: 128; italics added)

For a similar interpretation of the later Wittgenstein on the *content* of feelings, but with slightly different emphases, see Johnston (1993: 146-147).

'private experience' and the 'traditional conception of the inner' (Gefwert 2000: 140) with his 'private language argument' (*PI* 244-271)? Isn't it true that in Wittgenstein's occasional references to William James – more exactly, James' emphasis on direct experience and his reliance on *introspection* as a scientific method of psychology (*PI* 408-420)– Wittgenstein 'criticizes the whole project of introspection, of "directing one's attention" inward', and rejects '... James'... belief that *experience* is a sufficient fundamental category' (Goodman 2002: 100, 64)? This reading of Wittgenstein and of what is centrally important in his philosophy has also importantly influenced contemporary theology as well, especially so called post-liberal theology. Stanley Hauerwas, for example, explains Wittgenstein's influence on his method in theology in the following terms: 'Wittgenstein ended forever any attempt on my part to try to anchor theology in some general account of "human experience", for his writings taught me that the object of the theologians' work was best located in terms of the grammar of the language used by believers' (Hauerwas 1984: xii; c.f. Lindbeck 2009). Clearly, Wittgenstein's 'linguistic turn', according to which '[we] are not analysing a phenomenon (e.g. thought) but a concept (e.g. that of thinking) and therefore the use of a word' (*PI* 383), is often interpreted as consisting in turning away from *any* philosophical examination of phenomena or *experiences* to the investigation of language.

According to one interpretation of the Wittgensteinian linguistic turn, namely Daniel Dennett's project to 'demystify consciousness', any so-called descriptions of supposed states of consciousness are actually painting merely *fictional* worlds: consciousness has 'the same metaphysical status as, say, Sherlock Holmes's London or the world according to Garp' (Dennett 1991: 81). For Dennett, consciousness is 'largely a product of cultural evolution that gets imparted [as a fiction, an imaginary way of talking] to brains in early training' (ibid. 218-219). Such eliminativism about consciousness wouldn't be of great interest for us here, were it not for Dennett's self-interpretation as 'doing ... a kind of redoing of Wittgenstein's attack on the "objects" of conscious experience', and that he aims to 'put [Wittgenstein's insights into the nature of consciousness from *PI*] to work' (ibid. 462-463).

Obviously, our reading of Wittgenstein on psychological concepts, consciousness and on phenomenology of feelings is markedly different, as

explained above. Therefore, we need to address the ‘Wittgensteinian anti-phenomenological’ challenge here more directly. Let’s start with a relevant *aspect* of the ‘private language argument’. When Wittgenstein famously rejected the possibility of a private language ‘in which a person could write down or give voice to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and so on’ (*PI* 243), he did not mean to say that that we can’t *express* our moods, bodily sensations, or emotional feelings, or that we can’t express them *well*. In relation to our topic, the two most relevant features of the private language argument (c.f. *PI* 244-271) are: firstly, feelings, sensations, and so on, are not ‘objects of experience’ or ‘things’ to which we could ostensibly refer to, i.e. which we could ‘perceive’ in any (relevantly) similar way as we perceive the objects/things *in the world*. And secondly: expressive language is essentially ‘bound up’ with natural (non-verbal) expressions of feelings and sensations which we ‘read’ in one another directly, i.e. in a non-ratiocinated way (cf. Goodman 2002: 106-107). What do these two claims mean?

Both points are related. A crucial feature of the very idea of private language is that it *cannot be understood by anybody else* except the speaker:

‘Now, what about the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand? *How* do I use words to signify my sensations? – As we ordinarily do? Then are my words for sensations tied up with my natural expressions of sensation? In that case my language is not a “private” one. Someone else might understand it as well as I.’ (*PI* 256)

Verbal expressions of feelings and bodily sensations cannot be a part of a ‘private language’, not because ‘feelings’ or ‘consciousness’ are fictive concepts, or because these are ‘largely a product of cultural evolution’ (although they are, of course, a ‘product’ of both natural and cultural evolution), but because they are inextricably entangled together with the pre-linguistic, facial and bodily expressions of feelings. This is the *only* way humans learn expressive language, according to Wittgenstein. Consider the following remarks:

One thing that is immensely important in teaching [language] is exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. The word is taught as a substitute for a facial expression or a gesture. (LC 2)

The origin & the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can the more complicated forms grow. Language – I want to say – is a refinement, ‘in the beginning was the deed’ (CV 36)

I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination. (OC 475)

Believing that someone else is in pain, doubting whether he is, are so many natural kinds of behaviour towards other human beings; and our language is but an auxiliary to and extension of this behaviour. I mean: our language is an extension of the more primitive behaviour (For our *language-game* is a piece of behaviour). (RPP I 151)

But what is the word ‘primitive’ meant to say here?⁸ Presumably that this sort of behaviour is *pre-linguistic*: that a language-game is based *on* it, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought. (Z 541)

So you are saying that the word ‘pain’ really means crying? – On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying, it does not describe it. (PI 244)

The idea of the private language which would ‘describe my experiences’ is disregarding this basic grammar of expressive language. It assumes that human beings ‘find out’ that they have this or that feeling or bodily sensation (say, feeling of joy or sensation of pain), by internally ‘perceiving’ or ‘observing’ it, and privately ‘naming’ it. Such a language is an impossibility, and at the heart

⁸ Since the remarks RPP I 151 and Z 41 address the same topic, namely the nature of expressive utterances, and since they come from the same period (mid to late 1940s), I am taking Z 41 as clarifying RPP I 151 (The *Zettel* version of this remark, Z 545, is a slightly less clear translation).

of the idea of its possibility is the picture of consciousness which Wittgenstein called a 'paradigm of atomic sensation' (*LPP* 281-282). This paradigm builds on the empiricist tradition of a 'physics-colour model' of consciousness, related to the so-called 'James-Lange theory of emotions' to which Wittgenstein objects.⁹ One of the faults of this theory is that it attempts to treat feelings, like joy or depression, as a sum of localized bodily sensations (like itching, the feeling an upset stomach, or similar), or a 'diffused' sensation consisting in many such sensations. Wittgenstein objects:

People want to make depression, joy, hope, into 'sensations': the paradigm was the atomic sensation; this physics-colour model dominated them. So hope, e.g. was 'a sum of feelings'. That is odd. When depressed do I get depressed feelings in parts of my body? My concept 'bodily feeling' and my concept 'grief' are totally different. (ibid.)

Wittgenstein's point, however, goes further and deeper than noting that concepts for (localized) bodily feelings are totally different from the concepts for feelings/emotions or moods (they are 'incommensurable', we might say). The main point is that the basic 'paradigm of atomic sensation' is a deeply flawed and confused picture of our consciousness and psychological concepts. It creates a host of other philosophical confusions and problems which wouldn't have arisen otherwise, as well as wrong-headed attempts at solutions to these, since 'it misconstrues the grammar of psychological terms by assimilating it too much to the grammar of names of perceptible occurrences in the physical world' (Schroeder 2012: 1).

On the basis of this, Russell Goodman argues that what Wittgenstein directly attacks in William James (and in the 'paradigm of atomic sensation' more generally) is 'the whole project of introspection, "directing one's attention" inward' (Goodman 2002: 100). However: since we've seen that the later Wittgenstein suggested nothing less than a classification of psychological concepts, and, furthermore, had no problem accepting that certain concepts –

⁹ It is not our concern here whether Wittgenstein has interpreted William James properly when he attacks his position, or not. What is relevant to us is Wittgenstein's objection to a certain construals of consciousness and of introspection which he sees (and critiques) in William James's work. An excellent study of Wittgenstein's reading (and some misreading) of James and of the differences and the commonalities between their philosophies of psychology/mind can be found in Goodman (2002).

namely those standing for varieties of ‘sensations’, ‘emotions’, and ‘images’ – ‘*express states of consciousness*’ (emphasis added) whereas others don’t (such as ‘believing’, ‘knowing’, ‘understanding’, ‘intending’ and also ‘thinking’) (*RPP II* 12, 63, 148, 257), it is hard to accept that Wittgenstein would reject *any* kind of introspection in a broader sense, meaning any kind of attentive awareness of our conscious experiencing, as well as any kind of reflection on the latter. Remarking that ‘...we don’t say “I think” as the expression of a mental state ...; [for] we don’t compare thoughts in the same way as we compare experiences’ (*RPP II* 12, 257), and that thinking doesn’t have ‘duration’ whereas the states of consciousness – emotions, images and sensations – do (*RPP II* 63, 148), are clear examples of the later Wittgenstein’s phenomenological reflection on experience, which cannot but include introspection *in some sense* of the word. So, either Wittgenstein was seriously inconsistent; or he engaged in classification and phenomenology of expressive concepts only in order to invalidate any such practice; or he changed his position between the time of *Philosophical Investigations* and the *Remarks on Philosophy of Psychology*; or – as we are suggesting – none of the above is the case, and Wittgenstein’s critique of introspection needs some unpacking in order that we understand exactly to what kind of introspection Wittgenstein objected, and to what kind of introspection he didn’t.

To give a bit fuller textual context, we will quote the most relevant remarks from *PI* in their entirety (the remarks that are most critical towards *introspection*, or, towards the claims that we have consciousness, are put in italics):

411. Consider how the following questions can be applied, and how settled:

- (1) ‘Are these books my books?’
- (2) ‘Is this foot my foot?’
- (3) ‘Is this body my body?’
- (4) ‘*Is this sensation my sensation?*’

Each of these questions has practical (non-philosophical) applications.

(2) Think of cases in which my foot is anaesthetized or paralysed. Under certain circumstances the question could be settled by determining whether I can feel pain in this foot.

(3) Here one might be pointing to a mirror-image. Under certain circumstances, however, one might touch a body and ask the question. In others it means the same as: 'Does my body look like that?'

(4) Which sensation does one mean by 'this' one? That is: how is one using the demonstrative pronoun here? Certainly otherwise than in, say, the first example! *Here confusion occurs because one imagines that by directing one's attention to a sensation one is pointing to it.*

412. [A certain feeling of giddiness occurs]... when I, for example, turn my attention in a particular way on to my own consciousness, and, astonished, say to myself: THIS is supposed to be produced by a process in the brain!—as it were clutching my forehead.—*But what can it mean to speak of 'turning my attention on to my own consciousness'? This is surely the queerest thing there could be! It was a particular act of gazing that I called doing this.* I stared fixedly in front of me—but not at any particular point or object. My eyes were wide open, the brows not contracted (as they mostly are when I am interested in a particular object). No such interest preceded this gazing. My glance was vacant; or again like that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky and drinking in the light.

Now bear in mind that the proposition which I uttered as a paradox (THIS is produced by a brain-process!) has nothing paradoxical about it. I could have said it in the course of an experiment whose purpose was to shew that an effect of light which I see is produced by stimulation of a particular part of the brain.—But I did not utter the sentence in the surroundings in which it would have had an everyday and unparadoxical sense. And my attention was not such as would have accorded with making an experiment. (If it had been, my look would have been intent, not vacant.)

413. *Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the 'self' consisted mainly of 'peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat'. And James' introspection shewed, not the meaning of the word 'self' (so far as it means something like 'person', 'human being', 'he himself', 'I myself'), nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word 'self' to himself and tries to analyse its meaning. (And a good deal could be learned from this.)*

416. 'Human beings agree in saying that they see, hear, feel, and so on (even though some are blind and some are deaf). So they are their own witnesses that they have consciousness'—*But how strange this is! Whom do I really inform, if I say 'I have consciousness'?* What is the purpose of saying this to myself, and how can another person understand me?—Now, expressions like 'I see', 'I hear', 'I am conscious' really have their uses. I tell a doctor 'Now I am hearing with this ear again', or I tell someone who believes I am in a faint 'I am conscious again', and so on.

417. *Do I observe myself, then, and perceive that I am seeing or conscious? And why talk about observation at all? Why not simply say 'I perceive I am conscious'?*—But what are the words 'I perceive' for here?—why not say 'I am conscious'?—*But don't the words 'I perceive' here shew that I am attending to my consciousness?*—which is ordinarily not the case.—If so, then the sentence "I perceive I am conscious" does not say that I am conscious, but that my attention is disposed in such-and-such a way. But isn't it a particular experience that occasions my saying 'I am conscious again'?—What experience? In what situations do we say it?

418. *Is my having consciousness a fact of experience?*—But doesn't one say that a man has consciousness, and that a tree or a stone does not?—What would it be like if it were otherwise?—Would human beings all be unconscious?—No; not in the ordinary sense of the word. But I, for instance, should not have consciousness—as I now in fact have it.

Now, one thought which runs through all these remarks is the following:
Introspection, through which I (presumably) find out that I have such and such sensation, or feeling, or that I am conscious, is not, and cannot be, a scientific method like that of empirical observation of the objects and regularities in the world. All these remarks we quoted have this central point: Using the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ cannot be used for ‘internal pointing’ at sensations as it can be used to pointing at objects in the world, and hence cannot be used in the procedure to check or find out ‘whether a sensation is mine or not’, as this can be done for books, and even (in extreme cases) for one’s own foot or body (PI 411); the same is the point of PI 412 – using ‘this’ for ‘objects of consciousness’ and pretending that so-designed introspective exercise is anything like an ‘experiment’, is a confusion, and a misuse of language; William James is guilty, in Wittgenstein’s reading at least, of such a quasi-scientific construal of introspection (PI 413); When human beings ‘agree in saying that they see, hear, feel, and so on [and conclude that:] ... they are their own witnesses that they have consciousness’, this is not a ‘finding out’ through observation of the previously unknown scientific fact that ‘we have consciousness’ – we inform no one when we say ‘we have consciousness’ (PI 415-417), so ‘we have consciousness’ is not knowledge but a *hinge-certainty*; one does not ‘perceive’ this as one perceives the ‘facts of experience’, i.e. the worldly realities – ‘I perceive I am conscious’ can only mean something very different, something like saying ‘that my attention is disposed in such-and-such a way’ and *not* having this or that ‘particular experience’ (ibid.); however, while ‘I am having consciousness’ is not a fact *of experience* which could be found out, checked and produce knowledge, I am, of course, having consciousness (PI 418).

Goodman explains this last remark (PI 418) along the same lines:

Section 418 begins with the question: ‘Is my having consciousness a fact of experience?’ – to which the implied answer seems to be ‘no’. This does not mean that I am *not* conscious, for Wittgenstein certainly doesn’t want to deny that we are conscious. If ‘my having consciousness’ is not a ‘fact of experience’, perhaps that is not because it’s not a fact, but because it’s not ‘of’ experience, not something we could discover through experience. We can’t *discover* that we are conscious because

consciousness is, as it were, already there, part of the background to what we say and do; as Wittgenstein says in another context, 'part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (*PI* 240).

What Wittgenstein was consistently attacking here is an *understanding of introspection as science*, according to which what a philosopher or psychologist is doing when she is engaging in reflective awareness of her states of consciousness is methodologically like empirical observation of the facts of experience. And this, of course, is a descendant of the old, empiricist approach to experience, the approach of which Wittgenstein accuses William James, the one he calls 'physics-colour model' of consciousness, where 'the paradigm was the atomic sensation' (*LPP* 281-282). Indeed, a strong empiricist commitment of James's 'radical empiricism' is seen also in his appropriation of Humean empiricism which extends the method of scientific empirical observation of the world over to attentive introspection, and considers both methods of observation to be in a basic continuity. Goodman points out that James clearly echoes Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* in claiming, for example, that '[a] conception, to prevail, must *terminate* in the world of orderly sensible experience...' (James 2007: 301; c.f. Goodman 2002: 68). Goodman balances all this with an important point that Wittgenstein in fact valued and accepted a lot of James' insights, while seeing James's understanding of his own enterprise as deeply flawed at the same time: 'Wittgenstein sees the distance between James's official doctrine that he is a scientist – a psychologist – and his actual practice. James is not, Wittgenstein insists, practicing science at all, and this is, from Wittgenstein's point of view, *a good thing*' (ibid. 62).

What we have, then, is Wittgenstein's rejection of a specific notion of 'introspection' *as a scientific method*, which is a grave misunderstanding of what introspection in a broad sense, i.e. any kind of attentive awareness and reflection upon our conscious experiencing, *can be* and cannot be. It cannot be 'science', 'observation', 'perception', etc. presumably leading to 'finding out the facts of experience'; it cannot bring 'knowledge of the inner objects of experience' through epistemological (and falsifiable) justification, i.e. evidential procedures. All this is a false and misleading picture of introspection. However, this does not mean that we do *not have consciousness* or that we *don't experience* feelings, sensations, and the like; or that the language expressive of

the states of consciousness is 'fictitious' or flawed in itself; nor does it mean that *any* reflective awareness upon our experiencing and upon the ways we express our states of consciousness (feelings, sensations, etc.) is either pointless, or meaningless, or a philosophical no-go area. In other words: phenomenological reflection and elucidation of our experiencing is not delegitimized or invalidated by Wittgenstein's critique of the quasi-scientific understanding of introspection. Despite Wittgenstein's predominant focus on concepts, language-games and forms of life which determine the grammar and meanings of concepts and utterances, and despite his critique of the misunderstandings of introspection and his relatively little attention to 'phenomena', he did not criticize the attention to our experiencing ('states of consciousness') *per se*, nor every philosophical reflection on it (*RPP II* 63, 148; or *Z* 472, 488-492).

This is, then, the answer to give to the eliminativists such as Dennett who see themselves as continuing the Wittgensteinian project of 'demystifying consciousness' (Dennett 1991: 81). When Wittgenstein says that 'joy' doesn't designate 'an inward thing', and even that "'joy" designates nothing at all... [neither] any inward nor any outward thing' (*Z* 487), the emphasis here is on the 'thing', since 'when you are glad you really are glad... [and] of course joy is not joyful behaviour, nor yet a feeling round the corners of the mouth and the eyes' (*ibid.*). 'Internal scientific observation' of our feelings and observation is an illusion; our feelings and sensations are not 'a Something, but not a Nothing either! ... We've only rejected the grammar which tends to force itself on us here' (*PI* 304). As is well summed up by Dan Hutto (in the context of countering Dennett's view and his interpretation of Wittgenstein), what Wittgenstein objects is to is a false picture of 'reified mind' which interiorizes the outer world and views consciousness, feelings, moods, etc. as 'thing-like' (Hutto 2003: 188, 138). He goes on:

[Wittgenstein is] making it clear that he takes our talk of 'consciousness' [and of feelings] seriously just as it stands. But doing this does not mean we have to accept the idea that we are making reports about objects in a real 'inner' world nor reports about non-objects in some notional world, rather it is *to give expression to our psychological situation*. Unlike Dennett, at least Wittgenstein helps us to understand the role of language in this regard. ... We are not making judgments about 'inner

objects' when we give expression to our 'inner situation'. We cannot treat these as being 'based' on some kind of inner evidence because the very idea of inner evidence is an oxymoron. We simply have no evidence to back up statements about our inner life. Just as the idea of 'inner' evidence is nonsense, it would be equally hopeless to think that we rely on 'outer' evidence when deciding such matters. I do not infer that I am in pain by first noticing a cut on my leg, nor do I decide this by noticing that I am having an 'inner' sensation of pain by some process of introspection. I simply feel pain, and say so. Psychological language is 'expressive' not 'referential'. This is why 'a lie about inner processes is of a different category from one about outer processes' ... (Hutto 2003: 138-139)

Before moving on, however, we need to point out that the carefully aimed critique by Wittgenstein of a quasi-scientific *misunderstanding* of introspection has important parallels in the work of post-Husserlian phenomenology. As noted in Chapter One, Merleau-Ponty tamed and (eventually) effectively rejected Husserl's method of transcendental reduction, the method of bracketing our sense of reality of the world in order to describe and 'scientifically' investigate it, through which Husserl hoped to achieve an accurate description of 'pure consciousness' (Husserl 1977: 37-41). For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenological reflection is nothing like scientific observation of the worldly objects or processes, since the act of phenomenological reflection upon our experiencing always interferes with experience itself, and can only be *post eventum* and in 'real time' (*PP* xi).

Then, in Chapter Two¹⁰ we briefly noted that something very similar was at least partially recognized even by Schleiermacher. Clearly, Schleiermacher invested 'introspection' with great importance for his experiential-theological project. In *The Christian Faith*, one of his phenomenological claims is that 'affective receptivity ... [is] ... a prior moment' to any 'activity' (e.g. conscious determination, or thinking) (*CF* 4.1) in our experience. Of this insight, Schleiermacher optimistically writes that 'to these propositions assent can be unconditionally demanded; and no one will deny them who is capable of a little

¹⁰ Section 2.3.2.

introspection and can find interest in the real subject of our present inquiries' (CF 4.1)! However, this great optimism regarding what he thought is obvious from a 'little introspection' doesn't presuppose an understanding of 'introspection' as relevantly similar to empirical scientific observation in our context. In the *Speeches*, for example, Schleiermacher clearly recognizes that, at least *in practice* if not *in principle*, anything like an 'inner observation' of religiously relevant feelings is impossible. When, in the hope that the readers would recognize that all-important feeling or *ur-affection* of oneness, he attempts to describe/express this *ur-affection* through evocative metaphorical descriptions, he intersperses these metaphors with exclamations which point to the *limitations* of introspection, such as: 'I know how indescribable it is and how quickly it passes away. But I wish that you were able to hold on to it and also to recognize it.... Would that I could and might express it, at least indicate it, without having to desecrate it... It is ... fleeting and transparent...' (OR 31-32), and so on. He also thought that 'receptivity' is a mark of a proper openness to 'being affected' and is therefore the primary mode of experiencing, while 'activity' (including the 'acts of thinking' or even 'acts of knowing' – for Schleiermacher, of course, not for Wittgenstein) is secondary and can be antithetical to receptive experiencing (CF 4.1-2). Now, these proto-phenomenological reflections of Schleiermacher's have only broad resemblances to Merleau-Ponty's criticism of the 'scientific' misunderstanding of introspection. But Schleiermacher's awareness that any reflection on feeling 'in real time' *interferes* with that feeling and his emphasis on receptivity are clear marks of his understanding that introspection is not to be understood as being similar to empirical scientific observation (where, normally, reflection does *not* interrupt, or interfere with, what is being reflected on).

These parallels should not be exaggerated: while we can note a certain compatibility of Wittgenstein's critique of the quasi-scientific notion of introspection with, both, a strand in Schleiermacher's proto-phenomenology of religious feeling, as well as Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological critique of Husserl's quasi-scientific notion of introspection, Wittgenstein is of course not a full-blown phenomenologist in his philosophical style, let alone a phenomenologist of religious experience. Our point is, however, that his critique of introspection is not a of introspection *as such*; it is important to appreciate

that introspection, as an attentive awareness of our states of consciousness and their expressions, when it is *not* misunderstood for an empirical-scientific method, is neither invalidated nor banned by Wittgensteinian ‘grammatical investigation’.

5.3 Wittgensteinian categories of utterance and Jakobsonian functions of language

5.3.1 Wittgenstein, Bühler, and Jakobson: cross-categorial encounters

Wittgenstein’s reflections on the nature of language – both generally, and also more specifically in relation to the expressive utterances and psychological concepts, which we treated in the previous section – provide rich insights and illuminate, or so we will argue, also many aspects of religious language (specifically, Christian God-talk). But, in order to provide as broad and multi-faceted apparatus for thinking about religious language as possible, we will engage also with a somewhat different tradition of the study of language, namely that of scientific linguistics. The reasons for taking both the Wittgensteinian as well as the linguistic approach on board will become clearer towards the end of this Chapter, and especially in the next.

These approaches to understanding language are not, of course, unrelated or completely dissimilar. It has been noted that Wittgenstein’s division of utterances to grammatical, scientific and expressive, is somewhat similar to, or may even be inspired by, a tripartite division of language into its ‘semantic functions’, developed by the Austrian educational psychologist and early linguist, Karl Bühler (Gorlee 2012: 23-27; Glock 1996a: 318; Mulligan 1997; Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 47).¹¹ Bühler named his three functions of language ‘language as *representation*’, ‘language as *expression*’ and ‘language as *appeal*’ (Bühler 1990: 39). We will begin this section by explaining each of these (drawing more on Bühler’s more contemporary interpreters than on Bühler himself), before broadening the whole categorization of the functions of

¹¹ Glock also claims that the conception of a ‘sentence’ adopted by the later Wittgenstein as ‘a minimal unit for making a move in the language-game ... may have been partly inspired by Bühler’ (Glock 1996a: 318).

language (using Roman Jakobson's model) as well as reflecting on how this approach to studying language is different from, and can be used complementarily with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

Regarding the *representational* function of language, we must first note that 'representation' here doesn't indicate an epistemological representational *theory of mind*, but merely the function of language by which – usually absent – objects/persons/processes etc. are represented in verbal communication. Using Wittgensteinian terminology, we might say that a paradigmatic example where representational function of language is most dominant are scientific utterances uttered with the aim of giving information. But this is far from being the only class of utterances which involves representation in Bühler's sense: a poem, for example, also involves *representation* or 'picturing', despite not normally having an aim of giving information about the world. Likewise, a grammatical remark such as 'All mammals are warm-blooded' also involves representation, although it is also not a scientific utterance according to Wittgenstein. The representational function of language stands, then, for something very broad, namely, for an identifiable aspect or feature of symbolic communication: *the fact that linguistic symbols (as signs) stand for something other than themselves*.¹² The representational function of language is sometimes identified as *the* defining feature of language: as we noted above, the boundary between language and non-language is often thought of consisting exactly in the boundary between mere vocal (or gestural) '...symptoms [which] ... are not the sign of anything in the world other than the speaker's state' (Haiman 1998: 116), and the sounds (or gestures, or pictures) that are 'a sign of something else', even though the boundary here may be blurred or even 'arbitrary', encompassing a range of intermediary stages between action and language (Haiman 1999: 192; *BB* 103).

¹² The notion of *representation* is often broken down in accordance with Charles S. Peirce's categorization of signs (e.g. Murphy & Brown 2007:120-21), according to which there are three kinds of signs: icons, indices, and symbols. 'Icons serve as signs in virtue of their resemblance to what they signify; indices serve in virtue of an association such as causal connection or temporal succession; and symbols are purely conventional' (ibid.). This categorization of representation has been widely used both in linguistics, i.e. in empirical study of language (e.g. Jakobson 1990: 407-421), as well as in evolutionary theories about the origins of language (e.g. Deacon 1997).

The *expressive* function of language is related to emanating one's being, or making 'something' manifest by embodying it (Taylor 1985: 219). Paradigmatic examples are what we have already described in the context of Wittgenstein's view of expressive utterances, namely the spontaneous/natural expressions of feelings or sensations, like 'Aw' or 'Amazing'. It is the expressivity which so easily transgresses the border between non-language and language, and it is important to note that the expressive function is prominently at work also in longer utterances like 'The world is full of darkness and void of all meaning', or 'Where did my youth go?', or whole poems or speeches. Most of what we've said of expressive language in the Wittgensteinian section above applies here as well.

The appellative or *regulative* function corresponds to the usage of language with an aim to regulate, influence or 'steer' people's behaviour. Most unambiguous examples are 'Stop!', 'Hand me a slab!', or 'All stand up!', but it can be acted out in very different and less obvious ways, as in 'I wonder whether it is possible to see your work notes?', 'Why would we ask people about their age', or, as in the famous Wittgenstein example of a 'primitive' (and fictitious) language-game used by his two builders (*PI* 2), just 'Slab!' instead of 'Hand me a slab!'. However, often, utterances that are much less obviously regulative also have regulative function; in some sense, the *regulative* function is spread over many different kinds of language-use, including scientific descriptions of the world in Wittgenstein's sense, since, by using words in a stream of communication (i.e. in social situations), we are most often *entrenching* the meanings of words, the usual exemplars of the word-uses, and hence indirectly 'steering' those word-uses in the circles of our influence.¹³

But, despite the fact that both Wittgenstein and Bühler suggest tripartite structures – Bühler much more explicitly and systematically than Wittgenstein – and despite some apparent parallels between the respective categorizations, they are, in fact, quite different. As we noted, Wittgenstein's categories of *utterance* consist of the binary distinction (exhaustive and exclusive, according

¹³ A similar point is argued nicely by Martin Kusch (2002: 66-70) who claims that *communal performative testimony* is typically non-explicit, 'fragmented and widely distributed over other speech-acts' (ibid. 67), including constative testimony which, according to our reading of Wittgenstein, consists (mostly) of scientific utterances.

the dominant, grammaticalist strand of Wittgenstein's thought) between scientific and grammatical utterances (sense vs. nonsense), plus the 'promiscuous' category of expressivity which can permeate and easily mix with either scientific or grammatical utterances. Bühler's *functions* of language, on the other hand, are *all* present simultaneously in practically any particular utterance, or, more importantly, distributed over larger segments of speech or text. One important difference is also that 'Bühler assumes that the primary function of names and sentences is to represent [*darstellen*] things and states of affairs' (Mulligan 1997: 3) – something which sounds like the early Wittgenstein from the *Tractatus* and not like the later Wittgenstein who emphasised that '[the] origin & the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can the more complicated forms grow... [and that] our language is an extension of the more primitive behaviour (For our *language-game* is a piece of behaviour)' (CV 36: *RPP I* 151).

However, Bühler didn't think that pointing and naming are at the origins of language; in fact, he objected to the idea that '[what] is specifically human... begins with the genuine deictic gesture... [i.e.] the primal human finger gesture..., and the rest inexorably emerges from it'; he calls this idea 'the myth of the deictic source of representative language' (Bühler 1990: 101). Like Wittgenstein, Bühler was aware of both the social/cultural and the biological aspect of language. The following summary of Bühler's view of language by Mulligan could even pass as a summary of Wittgenstein's view as well:

[Bühler] provides us with an account of language as a biological and social phenomenon: language is based on blind training (*Dressur*), instinct and two types of behaviour common to human and non-human animals — expression and steering or signalling. Actions, from the most primitive extensions of drives to reading and ordering, are inseparable from dynamic perception. Thus all interpretation is based on and often in accordance with behaviour, in particular expression and steering: 'the function of representation' developed 'from something more primitive'. Language develops by adding new levers or joints. Language is a 'tool for orientation in community life'. But, as a good Austrian, Bühler thinks that biologism and sociologism, and indeed any purely causal theory of

mind and language, fail to take into account the pervasiveness of internal relations (*Strukturgesetze*). (Mulligan 1997: 3)

It can be said, therefore, that Bühler tightly focussed on the representational function of language as 'primary' by presenting it as completely immersed in expressivity and steering. Although we can and should distinguish between these three functions of language, they are, in Bühler's view, in reality always mixed and *never pure*. Even in the case of the most disciplined and dispassionate scientific assertions, he claims, '[the] chalk marks drawn ... on the blackboard [by a scientist] still contain an expressive residue' (Bühler 1990: 39). It is not hard to understand why the 'representational' function of language is of such a great interest in modern science of language – it is the representation in language, together with the endless combinatorial possibilities of language's structure, which are largely responsible for the production and the huge proliferation of *knowledge* and the resulting possibility of highly sophisticated ways of manipulating the world around us. Bühler was aware of that, but emphasised that the relational dynamics between the three functions of language are 'only phenomena of *dominance*, in which one of the three fundamental relationships of language sounds is in the foreground' (ibid. italics added). For this reason, both "expression in language" [expressive function] and "appeal in language" [steering function] are partial object of *all* language research' (ibid.).

Returning to the differences between Bühler's and Wittgenstein's categorizations, it is interesting to note that Moyal-Sharrock (2007: 46-47) relates Wittgenstein's category of 'grammatical utterances' directly to Bühler's *regulative* function of language. But is this connection straightforward? It would seem that grammatical utterances – for example, linguistic hinges (ibid. 102) like '2 + 2 = 4' or 'This colour is called "blue"' – need not have the regulative function of language in the foreground; it is not clear that voicing the rule of language-use needs to be aimed at steering other people any more than a giving of information is, since the regulative function of language can be spread over all kinds of language-use. In this connection, it has been argued by Bühler's successors in linguistics that language has additional, recognizable functions which were not recognized by Bühler but which give a better picture of the multifaceted phenomenon we call language. Roman Jakobson (1990: 69-

79) expanded Bühler's tripartite structure and offered no less than three additional functions of language which, according to him, are as distinct and as widespread as the expressive, the regulative and the representational. He identifies them as *phatic*, *poetic* and *metalingual* functions of language (ibid. 75-77). Again, we will discuss these in conversation with Wittgensteinian categories and views, beginning with Wittgenstein's category of 'grammatical remarks' which, as we shall see, can be related to the metalingual function of language.

In philosophy – more exactly, in modern philosophical logic – the distinction between 'object languages' and 'metalanguages' is well known. The relation between them has been defined thus: 'If a language M contains expressions which denote expressions of a language O, then M is a (potential) metalanguage for O and O is an object language of M' (Kim & Sosa 2009: 457). In such an understanding, the metalingual function of language is associated 'principally in connection with formalized languages' (ibid.) of logic, not with ordinary languages. However, contrary to the (meta)logician's view, Jakobson's understanding is that the metalingual function is not only the domain of philosophical logic but dispersed throughout ordinary language:

Like Molière's Jourdain, who used prose without knowing it, we practice metalanguage without realizing the metalingual character of our operations. Whenever the addresser or the addressee needs to check up whether they use the same code, speech is focused on the code: it performs a metalingual function. (Jakobson 1990: 75-76)

The 'announcements' that this function of language is 'switched on' in an ordinary stream of everyday language are usually questions such as 'I don't follow you – what do you mean?', 'Do you know what I mean?', or 'But what is "phrenology"?', and so on (ibid. 76). In his criticism of Habermas (Habermas relies on the Bühlerian tripartite categorization of language), Jose Medina (2005) argues that one of the most serious shortcomings of Habermas-Bühlerian theory of speech acts is its failure to give space for metalingual function of language as *distinct* from expressive, regulative and representational. Medina points out – in a somewhat Wittgensteinian spirit – that questions such as 'What do you mean?' prompt explications and

negotiations over the meanings of words as ‘our speech acts are scrutinized’ (Medina 2005: 8). According to another Wittgensteinian description, we might say that the manifestation of the metalingual function of language is when a rule of grammar is uttered in a heuristic context, i.e. ‘outside the stream of a [*non-heuristic*] language-game’.¹⁴

The other two functions of language suggested by Jakobson, the *phatic* and the *poetic* (aesthetic), also deserve to be taken as distinct from both the metalingual and the Bühlerian three. However, both the phatic and the poetic function seem to be very deeply intertwined with the expressive in particular – to the point that the edges between these categories may in some contexts be difficult to draw. The phatic function of language is at the foreground in the ‘messages primarily serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works’ (Jakobson 1990: 75). Examples are ‘Do you hear me?’, or the Shakespearean ‘Lend me your ears!’, as well as the ‘silence-fillers’ like ‘Mhm’, ‘Yes, or ‘I know!’ (when these are *not* uttered as affirmative answers to any articulated questions). The phatic function seems to be among the most primary ones:

The endeavour to start and sustain communication is typical of talking birds; thus the phatic function of language is the only one they share with human beings. the first verbal function acquired by infants; they are prone to communicate before being able to send or receive informative communication (Jakobson 1990: 75).

It is worth noting that this point is well argued by the sociologist Barry Barnes (1995) in his battle against the individualistic view of knowledge. Building on the finding of developmental psychologist Colwyn Trevarthen that the new-born infant is already ‘adapted, in the course of evolution, to function intersubjectively’ (Trevarthen, quoted in Barnes 1995: 99), Barnes makes a case for a claim that the social and communicative nature of human beings is importantly *prior to* any linguistic or representational competence:

The child seeks to master the techniques and competencies involved in that action and then to become involved herself in the interaction, in co-

¹⁴ See section 4.6.2.

ordination of co-operation with the other. All this, moreover is done for its own sake, for the pleasure of competence and mastery, as it were, not for extrinsic ends; for what is being observed here is 'only play' and not 'genuine' instrumentally oriented action. (Barnes 1995: 100-101)

In other words, the phatic function of communication (verbal or other) is clearly more basic than the representational and provides the context for it to emerge: human sociality precedes any, however basic, learning of symbols and makes it possible.

And lastly, the *poetic* function of language consists of the 'focus on the message for its own sake' (Jakobson 1990: 76). The rhythm of language, the way certain sequences of words sounds when pronounced, the elegance of certain sentences, the rhyme, and similar phenomena are all manifestations of the poetic function. It is by no means limited to poetry – although in poetry it is often in the foreground (the expressive and also the representational, however, are also often in the foreground in poetry) – but is part and parcel of ordinary speech. Jose Medina argues that the poetic function is 'at the very core of the communicative act' since it is the poetic act that 'arranges and rearranges the linguistic medium in multifarious ways, inexhaustibly creating new linguistic productions from the code and rearranging the code through these productions' (Medina 2005: 10). He suggests that the poetic function 'constitutes *the motor of language*, the primary productive force in communication' (ibid. 11; emphasis added).

This seems to be a somewhat hasty suggestion, however. Surely the expressive and the phatic, and probably the regulative as well, could with equal right be considered 'the motor of language'. In fact, it doesn't seem to be prudent to look for 'the most basic' function of language, or for 'the motor of language' among these categories. The issues are complex, and the relevant scientific studies are still ongoing and often tentative, suggesting now this, now that function as 'the motor of language'. For example, some recent studies of the role of musicality in the evolution of human communication (Merker 2009; Brandt 2009) argue that the setting in which verbal communication arose was characterized by ritual and musicality (both rhythmic and melodic) which are *prior to language*; the setting of the emergence of language, being musical and

ritualistic, was also 'highly social from the very outset' (Merker 2009: 53). If correct, this would point to the *phatic* function of communication (later: language) as 'equally basic' (and why not 'a motor'?) as the expressive and the poetic. Furthermore, it is argued that '[there] is overwhelming evidence of a fundamental, stable and primordial connection between music and feelings' (Brandt 2009: 33), which seems to link the poetic inextricably to the expressive function of communication (below we will note Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the interwovenness of the expressive and the poetic function of language which seems to be compatible with this view). Finally, a strong tradition in philosophy of language (the 'Romantic view') emphasises the fundamental assumption that, with language, 'the expressive can exist without the representative, [but] ... the reverse is not the case' (Taylor 1985: 265), which puts the representational function in a posterior place to (at least) the expressive.

What seems to be common to all these ways of understanding language – Jakobson's, Trevarthen's, Barnes's, Merker's, Brandt's, Medina's, and Taylor's – is an emphasis on the fact that the representational function of language is *posterior to*, and dependent upon, all other functions of language, except the metalingual. In relation to this point, the traditionally understood distinction between non-language and language, i.e. between pre-linguistic modes of communication and linguistic ones, according to which communication does *not* necessarily involve symbolic representation whereas language does, can be further elucidated by the Jakobsonian overarching view of language through its functions. Importantly, Jakobsonian functions are, speaking more broadly, also *functions of communication* (linguistic or non-linguistic). The phatic, the regulative, the poetic (rhythm, etc.), and the expressive functions of *communication*¹⁵ can be seen in some nonhuman animal societies as well as in

¹⁵ It is worth noting here also that the 'directive speech acts' according to Searle's categorization (Searle 1979: 13-14) – commands, requests, and alike – attempt to steer people in what they do even more directly than Wittgensteinian 'grammatical remarks' which may attempt to guide people's linguistic behaviour (and manifest both metalingual as well as regulative function in the foreground). More broadly, it is important to see that directive speech acts are but a sub-class of regulative *communicative* acts which aim at steering other people's behaviour, and these, regulative communicative, acts may or may not involve language (They may be merely gestural, or employ only artistic/pictorial representation like the 'crossed gun' sign which bans carrying weapons). Wittgenstein's wisdom here is to realize how deeply the linguistic/symbolic regulative communication is embedded and contingent upon the non-symbolic regulative communication, where often each can even replace the other; although, as we will see below, the main direction of the process of such replacing, both, in child's development and socialization and human

the communicative acts of pre-linguistic children. They are *conditions* for representational function of communication (meaning here esp. *symbolic* representation which is necessary for language) to emerge.

5.3.2 The boundary between non-language and language

In relation to representation as the boundary between language and non-language, it is instructive to see the difference between the views of Charles Taylor (inspired by Herder and Humboldt), and John Canfield (inspired by Wittgenstein and the scientific studies of communication of hominids and pre-linguistic children). Taylor (1985) sees a strong difference and a radical break between beings who do *represent* objects with symbols, i.e. linguistic beings who 'do not just react to triangles [for example], but recognize them as such', and those beings (non-linguistic animals) that merely react to triangles without the reflective recognition (Taylor 1985: 228). The crucial thing which separates them is a '*reflective awareness*', Taylor maintains, which either is there or it isn't. Importantly for Taylor, such an awareness does not *predate* the spoken language and the ability to represent, but only comes to being through linguistic expression: '[It is] ...through speech, that this reflective awareness comes about. *A being who cannot speak, cannot have it. We only have it, in contrast to animals, in that we talk about things*' (ibid. 229; italics added).

On the other hand, Canfield disputes the sort of break which Taylor suggests between non-language and language, or at least the radicalness of it.

Emphasising also the continuities, he recognizes that it can be said that hominids lack language (for the most part, or in the wild at least) but not communication. However, both hominids and pre-linguistic children 'engage naturally in certain behaviour patterns basic to speech' (Canfield 2007: 37). Crying if hungry or cold, laughing, responding to crying or laughing by parents or others, etc. – where the expressive, the phatic, and probably the poetic aspects of communication are already at work – are natural behaviour patterns and interactions which are necessary, first for simple signification, and subsequently for symbolic representation, to emerge and develop. The main route through which proto-linguistic communication seems to have developed

evolutionary development, is undoubtedly from non-symbolic/non-linguistic to symbolic and linguistic regulative communication.

from such patterns of behaviour is through the pre-linguistic *gestures*, i.e. the emphasised or modified action-patterns, done in a such way that they are brought to the attention of other(s) (ibid: 38). Examples are the gestures of requesting help when reaching for something, or signalling to the parent the intention to do something (by directing the eyes, or turning the head and the rest of the body; in humans as well as hominids this develops very early between the baby and the mother). Important in this development, according to Canfield, is that gestures constitute '*communicative acts*', and that no gesture can be that particular gesture if done outside the interactive context that is distinctive for the corresponding 'proto-behaviour' (ibid.: 39). His emphasis on continuity is striking:

There is a continuum between things we would not call communication and those we would, ... between acts which are plainly not communicative and those which plainly are. ... The distance between [the] gesture and speech per se is small. ... This arbitrary thing, the word, or other symbol, replaces the gesture and takes over its function. In moving spontaneously to a use of one of its culture's words, the child steps into language. This is the magic moment where speech makes its appearance. ... Language is thus an extension of an underlying action pattern. ... *The passage to speech does not cross some great ontological divide; there is no fundamental difference between us and other animals. In fact, captive chimpanzees can learn to express their intentions in symbols* (Canfield 2007: 39- 41; emphasis added).

Canfield sees both the obvious differences, but also evolutionary and *ontological* continuities, between, first, non-communication (spontaneous reactions, symptoms) and communication, and second, between non-language and language.¹⁶ While such a view doesn't invalidate the understanding that

¹⁶ Compare this view that emphasises expressivity, interaction and the continuity between non-communication (through non-linguistic communication) and language, with the view of Murphy & Brown (2007) and Deacon (1997), who focus on the evolution from the lowest level of signification to the highest, i.e. from the iconical, through the indexical, to symbolic representation. These are understood to be in a clearly hierarchical relationship to one another: 'Indices are learned associations between icons, [...and symbols] are built upon the recognition of relationships among indices. A new representational token (a symbol) stands for the *relational pattern* within an assemblage of indices. Thus, indices are built upon relationships among icons, and symbols upon relationships among indices.' (Murphy & Brown 2007: 121). From our perspective, one of the things that lacks from this account of the origins of language is a proper attention to the *expressive* origins of communication and its relation to representation.

the presence of symbolic representation is the boundary between non-language and language, it makes this boundary porous and brings to view the 'grey areas' between them (both conceptually and scientifically) – something which Taylor's unfortunately doesn't.¹⁷

While we can't go deeper into the discussion into the evolution of language here,¹⁸ we can underline this very general view (pregnant with implications): *The phatic, poetic, expressive and normative functions of language are prior to representational and metalingual; the interrelations between the functions of language are complex and can be best elucidated on a case to case basis.* It is worth emphasising, however, that, despite the differences in their categorizations and approaches to understanding language, the Jakobsonian framework to understand language (in combination with sociological and anthropological studies mentioned above by Barnes, Merker, Brandt, Haiman, Trevarthen, Canfield and others) unmistakably underlines and justifies the later Wittgenstein's intense attention to 'depth grammar', i.e. the ways in which the stream of life in which the words have their place determines their meaning and nature. We will presuppose this general *de-emphasis* on the representational function of language in comparison with other functions in our elucidation of the nature and origins of God-talk in Chapter Six.

Another is perhaps too strong an emphasis on what they describe as 'an exception to the continuity of the [evolutionary] emergence of mental capacities', namely, the "symbolic threshold" in both human evolution and child development' (ibid. 110; c.f. Deacon 1997: 79-92).

¹⁷ Developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello in his work also takes up one of the essential insights of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language: the realization that language learning – by young children, for example, or by learners of a completely new language in a foreign culture without the help of a translator or a dictionary – is necessarily dependent on pre- or extra-linguistic means of communication (Tomasello 2008: 59). Furthermore, Tomasello argues that this provides insight into the question of the origin of language; he is clearly in more extensive agreement with Canfield's continuity view (Canfield 2007: 39-41) than with Taylor's binary picture (Taylor 1985: 228-229), when he says, for example:

The linguistic 'code' rests on a nonlinguistic infrastructure of intentional understanding and common conceptual ground, which is in fact logically primary. The basic point is that human communication could not have originated with a code, since this would assume what it intends to explain (as do all social contract theories). Thus, establishing an explicit code requires some pre-existing form of communication that is at least as rich as that code. (Tomasello 2008: 58)

¹⁸ See also Haiman (1998, 1999), Heine & Kuteva (2007), Malloch and Trevarthen (eds.) (2009), and, Hoefler and Smith (2009) for insightful recent contributions to the discussion of the evolution of language.

5.4 The expressive function of larger verbal complexes

What Jakobson's way of thinking about language enables somewhat better than Wittgenstein's is the understanding of larger speeches or texts as units of language. For, example, the fact that certain sentences and paragraphs are a part of a *novel* determines whether it is the expressive or the poetic functions that are in the foreground of such a text, or not. To determine such things, even such 'trivial' factors as whether the physical copies of the book are put on the shelves under 'science fiction', or 'romance', or 'non-fiction', for example, can have a bearing (but people can also mistakenly, of course, place a novel on *wrong* shelves). What is important to realize is that very often, we need to focus on the ways larger verbal complexes work in communal sharing, and not sentences or 'utterances' as such in their immediate contexts. It is not that Wittgenstein was not aware of this. He warns, for example: 'Do not forget that a poem, even though it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information' (Z 160). Most often, however, he prefers to focus on short units of language, like sentences or exclamations – rather than long ones, like poems, speeches, or novels – as examples of language-use on the grammar of which Wittgenstein then reflects and invites reflection.

But it is not only in a poem, of course, that seemingly 'scientific utterances', that seem to plainly describe in-worldly realities, can have a predominantly *expressive* aim as opposed to the aim of giving information. The expressive function can be in the foreground of seemingly highly theoretical systems, for example of philosophy or theology. According to Pierre Hadot, the classical philosophical/ethical systems of the Greco-Roman world – Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, Cynicism, Pyrrhonism – should be understood, not so much as 'abstract theories about the world', but primarily as expressions of 'existential attitudes' (Hadot 1995: 30). Speaking in Bühler/Jakobsonian terms, Hadot's picture of philosophical systems as an 'expression of existential attitudes' includes probably all functions of language being manifest at least in some aspect of such philosophical verbal communication. But Hadot appears to argue that the *expressive* and the

regulative are in this context more 'essential' to the whole verbal complex of a philosophical system than the representational, although the latter is necessarily present (due to a philosophical system being a *verbal* expression):

[Every] existential attitude implies a representation of the world that must necessarily be expressed in a discourse. But this discourse alone is not the philosophy, it is only an element of it, for the philosophy is first of all the existential attitude itself, accompanied by inner and outer discourses: the latter have as their role to express the representation of the world that is implied in such and such an existential attitude, and these discourses allow one at the same time to rationally justify the attitude and to communicate it to others. (ibid.: 31)

Mark Wynn suggests that the existential attitudes of which Hadot speaks are either closely related to, or simply *are*, 'affectively toned states of mind' (Wynn 2005: 135), i.e. different kinds of feeling. In fact, some of the concepts for the typical existential attitudes which Hadot focuses on – for example, 'tension' in Stoicism, and 'serenity' and 'joy of existing' in Epicureanism – seem to express existential feelings, whereas others – 'duty' and 'vigilance' in Stoicism, for example – seem to stand for something like virtues. Perhaps the best way to see 'existential attitudes' is in a more variegated way, or in a way that most of such existential *attitudes* encompass certain existential feelings rather than others, and, in relation to that, certain kinds of actions, virtues and beliefs, rather than others. If at the heart of such philosophical/ethical systems are *expressions* (and recognitions, communications) of existential feelings, as such existential communication is circulated, *taught* and repeated in the community in the form of a philosophical teaching. Such communication attains strong *regulative* as well as *metalingual* functions which is not the case in a single, spontaneous expression of (existential) feeling in language.

A point to note here is that even in theoretical (metaphysical) systems of thought and their communication like those of Epicureanism and Stoicism – or, at least this is what they seem to be to many – where representational function seems to dominate, the 'depth grammar' of these whole systems reveals that the expressive and regulative functions of such language-games are at least equally in the foreground as representational, if not more (remember also that

representational function is *not* the same as ‘scientific utterance’). This is not to say, of course, that the representational function of philosophical/ethical verbal systems should be, or can be, *reduced* to the expressive and the regulative. Neither does that mean that the particular representations of the world, human being and/or god(s), in any such system are simply dispensable. There seems to be a tension in Hadot’s view here: on one hand, he claims that ‘every existential attitude *implies a representation of the world that must necessarily be expressed* in a discourse’ (Hadot 1995: 31), whereas on the other hand, ‘one can remain faithful to one’s choice of a form of life *without being obliged to adhere to the systematic construction* which claims to found it’ (ibid.: 282’ italics added)¹⁹. Note that, in this latter claim, Hadot is not saying only that one can remain faithful to the form of life expressed by the philosophical/ethical system without buying into the claim *that it originates or was founded on ideas* or by the process of intellectual construction of the system of ideas; he offers a stronger claim that the systematic construction (which includes representations of the world) is dispensable while one can still remain faithful to the accompanying ‘form of life’, which is, after all, the essence of what ancient philosophy – as opposed to the modern philosophy as academic, intellectual endeavour – is about (Hadot 1995: 31). And such an idea doesn’t seem to be compatible with the suggestion quoted above, that existential attitudes always imply representations which cannot but be expressed in language.

One way out of this tension is to say that one need not *believe* these ancient philosophical representations of the world, offered by Stoics and Epicureans, for example, or accept them as *explanations* of the world, in order to treat them either as expressions of existential *feelings*, or of *rules* of life, or both. However, this is not going to be our ‘way out’. It seems that taking certain representations seriously, what ‘treating them as a rule’ implies, includes at least some kind of *believing* in them, and another suggestion – again, not ours – can be that this believing is ‘hinge-certainty’ regarding the rules of life and thought. What we will suggest is that we should talk here about *existential believing* – the concept that was introduced in Chapter Four, where we’ve built on Tillich’s understanding of faith as an *existential* (but dubitable) belief-attitude which is different both from

¹⁹ This latter remark was brought to my attention thanks to Mark Wynn (2005: 135).

scientific belief-attitude as well as from hinge-certainty. Religious or existential/philosophical representations of the world (and of humans and of god(s), etc.), in order for them to be life-guiding, have to be believed, and this believing need not be dogmatic/static (utterly indubitable, like 'hinge-certainty'), nor quasi-scientific or quasi-empirical (or, 'other-worldly' in the strong, supernaturalist sense).

The ways in which we can think, in the context of religious (and, why not religious/philosophical?) systems, about the relation between existential/religious believing and existential feelings, will be the topic of the next chapter.

5.5 Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of language: the importance of linguistic innovation

Finally, we need to examine also Merleau-Ponty's way of elucidating and emphasising the expressive function of language, in order both to show how his philosophy of language can be used complementarily to Wittgenstein's, as well as to provide the last building block of the general philosophy of language that is needed for our construction of the integrative view of religious experience, language and belief in the next chapter.

Merleau-Ponty's philosophies of language and mind (not separate, in his work) have several points of contact with the later Wittgenstein's (also not separate), but also go beyond it in directions not really explored by Wittgenstein. Some characteristic later-Wittgensteinian themes can be noted already in Merleau-Ponty's earlier work, i.e. in *Phenomenology of Perception*. There, Merleau-Ponty affirms, for example, that speech and language do not presuppose conceptual *thinking*, but the other way around: 'The orator does not think before speaking; not even while speaking. His speech is his thought' (*PP* 209, 206); very similarly, Wittgenstein critiques and rejects William James's idea that '[the] thought is already complete at the beginning of the sentence', i.e. before speaking (*Z* 1,2). Rather, thinking (conceptual thoughts, not 'flashes of images') is bound up with speaking in complicated ways: it may be something like a silent *would-be* speaking, or it may not be, but it is not normally a completely

parallel activity to speaking, for example, according to Wittgenstein (*RPP I* 200-267). This is very similar to Merleau-Ponty's insistence that speaking is not normally a process by which we let others know the ready-made meanings (in the mind), since 'it is *within a world already spoken and speaking that we think*' (*PP* 213-214). So, the inner language which we operate with is necessarily a *public* language,²⁰ where the 'inner', understood in terms of the picture of the closed mental world of representations directly perceived by the inner self, is an 'illusion' (*PP* 213-214).²¹ Merleau-Ponty arrives at this view from a somewhat different path of investigation than Wittgenstein, but this doesn't make the overlaps in their conclusions any less significant.

Moreover, for Merleau-Ponty (*PP* 213-216), as for the later Wittgenstein, to appreciate the non-ratiocinated, gestural/expressive *origins* of language is of central importance in understanding the nature of language. Just as in the later Wittgenstein's view, it is the 'primitive reactions', the non-intellectual, spontaneous responses to gestures, facial expressions, and so forth, which are

²⁰ In this connection, we can talk of something like 'Merleau-Ponty's private-language argument' which can be found in *Phenomenology of Perception*:

Thought is no 'internal' thing, and does not exist independently of the world and of words. What misleads us in this connection, and causes us to believe in a thought which exists for itself prior to expression, is thought already constituted and expressed, which we can silently recall to ourselves, and through which we acquire the illusion of an inner life. But in reality, this supposed silence is alive with words, this inner life is an inner language. 'Pure' thought reduces itself to a certain void of consciousness, to a momentary desire. The new sense-giving intention knows itself only by donning already available meanings, the outcome of previous acts of expression. (*PP* 213)

²¹ Merleau-Ponty's view of language and thought has evolved into a full-scale rejection of his earlier notion of the 'tacit cogito' from *Phenomenology of Perception*: in his later work Merleau-Ponty concludes that for any *self* (which is a prerequisite for the cogito) to even exist, there must be intersubjectivity and language:

What I call [in *Phenomenology of Perception*] the tacit cogito is impossible. To have the idea of 'thinking' (in the sense of the 'thought of seeing and feeling'), to make the 'reduction', to return to immanence and to the consciousness of [something], it is necessary to have words. It is by the combination of words (with their charge of sedimented significations, which are in principle capable of entering into other relations than the relations that have served to form them) that I *form* the transcendental attitude, that I *constitute* the constitutive consciousness. The words do not refer to positive significations and finally to the flux of *Erlebnisse* as *Selbstgegeben*. Mythology of self-consciousness to which the word 'consciousness' would refer – There are only *differences* between significations. (*VI* 171)

While neither Wittgenstein nor Merleau-Ponty are reductionists regarding consciousness or mental life, they both clearly reject any 'internal perception' picture of the mind, and the view of psychological language as reporting of supposed 'inner objects of the mind' by a supposed already-constituted self directly perceiving these.

at the roots of language, not 'intellectual interpretation', 'representation', or even theory of other minds, even though representation may be the final needed ingredient for the language proper to exist. Merleau-Ponty writes, for example:

'The spoken word is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its. This is what makes communication possible.' (*PP* 213; compare Wittgenstein's *LC* 2, or *CV* 36)

'I do not understand the gestures of others by some act of intellectual interpretation; communication between consciousness is not based on the common meaning of their respective experiences, for it is equally the basis of that meaning. The act by which I lend myself to the spectacle must be recognized as irreducible to anything else.' (*PP* 216; compare Wittgenstein's *OC* 475, *RPP I* 151)

Faced with an angry or threatening gesture, I have no need, in order to understand it, to [mentally] recall the feelings which I myself experienced when I used these gestures on my own account... I do not see anger or a threatening attitude as a psychic fact hidden behind the gesture, I read anger in it. The gesture *does not make me think of anger*, it is anger itself. (*PP* 214; again, compare Wittgenstein's *OC* 475, *RPP I* 151)

But, while there are these and other notable parallels between Merleau-Ponty's and Wittgenstein's views of language,²² there are also important differences. Most relevantly, Merleau-Ponty invests the expressive aspect of language with greater *ontological* significance and draws further philosophical consequences from this than Wittgenstein does. Merleau-Ponty thought that it is crucial to realize that the expression of feelings, or, as the English translation of *Phenomenology of Perception* has it, 'emotions', is at the very creative roots of language. In order to really understand what language is, 'we must begin by putting thought back among the phenomena of expression' (*PP* 212). For the early Merleau-Ponty, this meant that, had we the possibility of going back to the very early stages of the evolution of language,

²² For noting some of these further similarities and the relevance of their position(s) for the contemporary philosophy of language, see Hanna & Harrison (2004: 46, 54-55) and Carman (2008: 24, 147-148).

[it] would then be found that the words, vowels and phonemes are so many ways of 'singing' the world, and that their function is to represent things not, as the naïve onomatopoeic theory had it, by reason of an objective resemblance, but because they extract, and literally express, their emotional essence. (PP 217)

This, 'progressively onomatopoeic' view, that it is in principle still possible to 'derive language directly from an expressive experience' (Flynn 2004), was later abandoned by Merleau-Ponty under some influence of Ferdinand de Saussure (1986), who argued strongly that the relation of the sign (word) to the signified (item in the world) in any language is strictly *arbitrary*.²³ But, although the later Merleau-Ponty acknowledged a strong arbitrary *element* in the significations that contemporary languages contain – i.e. he did not anymore argue, for example, that there is something *in* the very word 'chair' which would directly connect it with the chair itself or human experiencing of/with the chair – he never went all the way and endorses a *complete* arbitrariness of linguistic signs. The connection between human life-world and language is, according to the later Merleau-Ponty, very in-direct and 'nonscientific', but it is still there, and it is to be elucidated phenomenologically. While Wittgenstein only partly shares Saussure's emphasis on the arbitrariness of linguistic signs (Harris 1988: 52), they both, for the most part, concentrated on language as a system of *already given* meanings and viewed the individual speakers as completely powerless to

²³ See Saussure (1986: 69) for his arguments against the presumable evidence of *onomatopoeic* words (words which mimic the sounds, like 'gurgle' or 'woof-woof') and exclamations (like 'aw') that linguistic signs are not arbitrary. His explication of the arbitrariness of language, which he considered to be the 'first principle' of linguistics, is as follows:

The word *arbitrary*... must not be taken to imply that a signal depends on the free choice of the speaker. ... The term implies simply that the signal is *unmotivated*: that is to say arbitrary in relation to its signification, with which it has no natural connexion in reality. (Saussure 1986: 68-69)

The signal, in relation to the idea it represents, may seem to be freely chosen. However, from the point of view of the linguistic community, the signal is imposed rather than freely chosen. Speakers are not consulted about its choice. Once *the language has selected* a signal, it cannot be freely replaced by any other. There appears to be something rather contradictory about this. ... What can be chosen is already determined in advance. No individual is able, even if he wished, to modify in any way a choice already established in the language. Nor can the linguistic community exercise its authority to change even a single word. The community, as much as the individual, is bound to its language. (ibid. 71).

change the meanings of, or to give new meanings to, linguistic signs/words.²⁴ Saussure does recognize that there seems to be ‘something rather contradictory’ about the fact that the meanings of language are completely out of people’s control and at the same time language is a human invention (Saussure 1986: 71) – however, as a linguist, he chooses to focus on the fixed, or given linguistic meanings and the resulting linguistic systems (abstract, rule-governed *langue*), and more or less ignore the question of how new meanings come to being (through concrete speech acts, or *parole*), even going so far as to write at one point that it is language itself that ‘selects’ meanings of words (avoiding crediting the speakers or ‘human volition’ for this).²⁵

Roy Harris notes that, in the context of this discussion, ‘one glimpses the iceberg tip of submerged problems about linguistic innovation which, arguably, are never satisfactorily dealt with either [in Saussure’s *Course of General Linguistics*] or [in Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*]’ (Harris 1988: 52). And it is on this point that Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of language/mind can give perhaps a most valuable contribution to the Wittgensteinian philosophy of language/mind. Closely related to the topics of linguistic innovation, expressivity and ontological significance of language, is a notion which becomes increasingly prominent in Merleau-Ponty’s later philosophy: the notion of ‘silence’. By ‘silence’, Merleau-Ponty means the pre-linguistic aspect of the experienced life-world which is, for Merleau-Ponty, essential for language to even emerge and develop. In order to elucidate this notion, he distinguishes between the ‘constituted speech’ of established meanings in a given language, and the ‘decisive steps of expression’, creative moments of linguistic innovation, where new meanings emerge (*PP* 214). It may be a child learning to speak,²⁶

²⁴ With the difference that Saussure considered that communities are as powerless as individuals to change meanings of language by anything like a communal decision, or ‘convention’, while Wittgenstein saw a difference between the relation of the individual to the language-change or new meanings, and the community (for the discussion, see Harris 1988: 50-60).

²⁵ What holds for Saussure’s linguistics can be said for John Searle’s philosophy of language. He ‘offers his own theory [of language] as a study of *langue*, not of the *parole*: his object is the socially shared aspect of language, which the individual cannot change, but must passively accept as a precondition for the speech acts that she intends to perform’ (Navarro-Reyes 2009: 286).

²⁶ Compare Merleau-Ponty’s view that the creative/expressive moment in language is essential for language (or, ‘true speech’), with Schleiermacher’s notion of ‘divination’ as the ability to ‘transcend [the] rules [of any natural language] in order to understand in a new context where it

or a poet as she happens to express some novel nuanced aspect of feeling 'for the first time', with a particular combination of words or even invention of new words (very rarely); such a poet '[transforms] certain kind of silence into speech' (ibid.). Only by recognizing this 'primordial silence' beneath 'the chatter of words' from which words spring into existence in the creative moments of humanity can we attain a proper understanding of language and, by extension, of human beings (ibid.).

Herein, another difference between Merleau-Ponty's and Wittgenstein's approach becomes apparent. Consider Merleau-Ponty's thoughts in one of his later works, *Signs*, on something which was one of the central concerns for Wittgenstein – namely, *meaning*. The following passages develop his old theme of 'creative language' as opposed to 'established language' further and are worth citing in larger sections:

[The] empirical use of already established language can only be the result of creative language. Speech in the sense of empirical language – that is, the opportune recollection of a pre-established sign – is not speech in respect to an authentic language. It is, as Mallarme said, the worn coin placed silently in my hand. True speech, on the contrary – speech which signifies, which finally renders '*l'absent de tours les bouquets*' present and frees the meaning captive in the thing – is only silence in respect to empirical usage, for it does not go so far as to become a common name. It goes without saying that language is oblique and autonomous, and that its ability to signify a thought or a thing directly is only secondary power derived from the inner life of language. (SG 44-45)

In already acquired expressions there is a direct meaning which corresponds point for point to figures, forms, and established words. Apparently, there are no gaps or expressive silences there. But the meaning of expressions which are in the process of being accomplished cannot be of this sort; it is a lateral or oblique meaning which runs between words. It is another way of shaking the linguistic or narrative

is not self-evident from the context that the rule is applicable, and to articulate the world in new and individual ways' (Bowie 1998: xi-xii; HC 92-93).

apparatus in order to tear a new sound from it. ... Expressive speech does not simply choose a sign for an already defined signification, as one goes to look for a hammer in order to drive a nail or for a claw to pull it out. It gropes around a significative intention which is not guided by the text, and which is precisely in the process of writing the text. If we want to do justice to expressive speech, we must ... consider speech before it is spoken, the background of silence which does not cease to surround it and without which it would say nothing. (ibid. 46)

Merleau-Ponty here puts his finger on the expressive and the poetic functions of language as those that are primarily involved in the creative movements (however slight and anonymous) in which new meanings are created from 'silence', the pre-linguistic richness of being.²⁷ By this, Merleau-Ponty makes a somewhat different point about meaning from the Wittgensteinian idea that 'meaning is use' and that it has predominantly to do with rule-following. We can also allow a more ambitious reading and claim that Merleau-Ponty fills the void, left open by Wittgenstein (and suppressed by Saussure), in relation to the production and the renewal of language(s).

Before concluding, we must point out that this attention to the importance of the pre-linguistic aspects of our experiencing, or 'silence', for linguistic innovation does not mean I espouse the implausible view that *all our experiencing* is this 'silence', or that most experiencing is pre-linguistic or pre-conceptual and only becomes something conceptual when it is expressed in symbolic representation. We've seen above that Merleau-Ponty doesn't think that language presupposes conceptual thinking, but the other way around (*PP* 209). He is clear that speaking is not normally a process by which we let others know the ready-made meanings (in the mind), since 'it is within a world already spoken and speaking that we think' (*PP* 213-214). This means that the highly metaphorical/exaggerated notion of 'speech before it is spoken' is not really speech at all, it is, as Merleau-Ponty explains, 'the background of silence which does not cease to surround [the speech] and without which [the speech] would

²⁷ Merleau-Ponty suggests that language innovation can be elucidated by the comparison of the linguistic expression of a writer with a painter's way of expression on the canvass, and by this linking linguistic and nonlinguistic expression (although, for the most part, modern paintings cannot be considered *pre-linguistic*, of course), but acknowledging also important differences between the 'mute arts' and the 'art of language' (*SG* 45-46).

say nothing' (SG 46). Now, we should note this 'background of silence' of which Merleau-Ponty writes here cannot be simply equated with the 'backgrounds to all our experiences, thoughts and activities' (Ratcliffe 2008: 37) of which we spoke in Chapters One, Two and Three. There we suggested – following Ratcliffe, as well as Merleau-Ponty – that this background is constituted by existential feelings, i.e. 'non-conceptual feelings of the body, which constitute a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality' (ibid. 39). The 'background of silence' from Merleau-Ponty's *Signs* aims at the *non-conceptual* aspect of experiencing more broadly, presumably also aspects of emotional/intentional feelings, even sense-perceptual experiencing the expression of which 'defies language', and not only the *nonintentional* background (existential feelings) to all our intentional thinking and feeling. What we can do is to think of an important, existential *aspect* of this beyond-conceptual 'background of silence' of which the later Merleau-Ponty writes in relation to language innovation, and suggest that this silence captures also existential feelings. It is this aspect of 'silence' which we will pick up in the next chapter when we will use this conceptualization to think about religious concept formation.²⁸

We should note that this view is still different from Charles Taylor's with which we've already engaged. According to Taylor, it is not only *thoughts* and *beliefs* that are contingent upon the existence of language, but also our *feelings*, i.e.

²⁸ Related to Merleau-Ponty's notion of the non-linguistic 'background of silence' which contributes to linguistic innovation is a problem which has been noted with Searle's philosophy of language (Navarro-Reyes 2009). On the one hand, Searle is committed to a strong version of the 'Principle of Expressibility' (PE), i.e. to the claim that 'whatever can be meant, can be said' (Searle 1969: 88). This means that 'whenever the speaker utters a sentence intending to communicate something different from what the sentence means, there does exist (or *can* exist) another sentence which means – of course, literally – what the speaker is intending to say' (Navarro-Reyes 2009: 285-286). However, PE, in conjunction with other claims of Searle's theory, makes it very difficult to understand linguistic innovation, the creation of new meanings. For example, Searle's notion of the *Background* ('the set of practical abilities that, not being intentional themselves, allow the connection between language and world' (ibid. 292) is intended to explain (also) the creation of linguistic meaning. 'If we only had in mind the semantic definitions of language in terms of knowing-that, we would not know how to relate words to the world' (ibid. 293), so this is where the Background comes in. The problem is, of course, that the Background is a non-intentional and non-conceptual know-how which provides 'the "source situations" in which the word can be used' (ibid.), it is exactly the fuel of new linguistic meanings 'from the beyond' of language. Our conclusion is that Searle's categories would need exactly something like Merleau-Ponty's notion of non-linguistic 'background of *silence*' that becomes 'true speech' in the (however slight) movements of linguistic innovations. See also Appendix I for M. Ratcliffe's critique of Searle's concept of 'the Background'.

our felt experiencing (Taylor 1985: 233). As we've suggested in Chapter One²⁹, different kind of feelings may have (phenomenologically) different kinds of relationship to symbolic communication. Sure, all of our ways of felt experiencing have been impacted by the fact that we are beings of language (generally speaking, existential feelings probably less so than emotional feelings). As Merleau-Ponty recognized, our feelings are constituted by both 'nature and culture': '[feelings] and passionate conduct are invented like words' since 'everything is both manufactured and natural in man' (*PP* 220). But this does not mean that language completely frames the structure of all our felt experiencing; neither does it mean that all our ways of feeling are something radically and ontologically different from the ways other animals, or even prelinguistic children, feel. At least in the case of 'basic emotions', we do not need to 'guess' how animals feel (at least primates and many other mammals, and also many other animals) from the perspective of some cut-away, solipsistic inner world of my own experiencing only; pre-linguistic children express feelings, and so do animals, *without* language; many of these feelings we can recognize and respond to in a direct, non-ratiocinated way, as well as realize that many of their feelings are related to our own.

When Merleau-Ponty writes that a (felt) 'background of silence' surrounds all our speech, and that this non-conceptual felt experiencing '...does not cease to surround [our speech] and without [it, our speech] would say nothing' (*SG* 46), he uncovers a very important *aspect* of our being, or, of our life-world, which continues to contribute to linguistic innovation.

5.6 Conclusion

We've seen in this chapter how Wittgenstein's general understanding of the expressive utterances and psychological concepts opens up the possibility of further fruitful reflection on these aspects of language. His emphasis on the complete embeddedness of language in its expressive, gestural and interactive contexts can be further elucidated by using the Jakobsonian view of language through its functions. The sole focus on the representational function of

²⁹ Section 1.3.3.

language can significantly distort our view of language, as the representational function of language is posterior to, and dependent upon, the phatic, the poetic, the expressive and the normative functions of language.

Our special focus has been the *expressive* function of language: the ways the expressivity in language is continuous with non-linguistic expressivity, and the ways the expressive impulse contributes significantly to, although it is not solely responsible for, the linguistic creativity and innovation. In Wittgenstein's terms, the category of expressive utterances is significantly unlike the other two (grammatical and scientific utterances), since expressivity can freely mix or co-exist with any of the other two categories, whereas the grammatical and the scientific cannot (or *should* not) mix in a single utterance. Importantly, Wittgenstein's critique of the 'science of introspection' and the related, empiricist misunderstanding of psychological concepts is not a rejection of introspection *per se*, i.e. a rejection of any kind of careful awareness of our conscious experiencing and reflection upon it.

The next chapter applies the several lines of thought from this chapter (as well as from previous ones) to our questions about religious experience, language and belief. In particular, the three most central themes developed here – namely the insights into 1.) the nature of language through its six functions (Jakobson), 2.) the nature of psychological concepts and expressive utterances (Wittgenstein), and 3.) the ways in which the expressive function of language works in linguistic innovation (Merleau-Ponty) - will enable us to frame our overall understanding of the interrelationships between religious experience, God-talk and belief in God.

CHAPTER SIX

God-talk, Feelings and Beliefs

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Topics of this chapter

The central themes of this chapter are Christian God-talk (its aspects or functions, what does God-talk express, and the way in which it relates to felt experience and belief in God), 'remarkable' existential feelings, beliefs about God, and the connections between these three. Due to the fact that these are deeply intertwined, the themes will be addressed in an interrelated way.

In a traditional approach to God-talk in the analytic philosophy of religious language and beyond, the two questions which have been most intensively discussed are the issue of the reference of God-talk (i.e. whether and how do the word 'God' and claims about God refer), and the question whether God-talk is literal or metaphorical. To an extent, these foci tend to transcend the analytic-continental divide in Western philosophy of religion. Both Janet Soskice (1985), and, more recently, Kevin Hector (2012) – to name two philosophical theologians who draw on both Anglo-Saxon and Continental traditions – intertwine the two by developing systematic answers to the questions of how God-talk can successfully *refer*, given its mobile and metaphorical nature, and how we can account for the meaning of theological terms in a non-correspondentist (both Hector and Soskice) and 'non-metaphysical' (Hector, but not Soskice) way.

In our approach, we will be focusing on somewhat different questions and phenomena, but within a similar framework of understanding of Christian God-talk to that of Soskice, as well as Hector. However, we will try to show how both these discussions, the discussion of the irreducibility of God-metaphors and the one about the reference of God-talk, are closely related to our foci. For us, it will be important to explore the link between felt experiences and 'fresh' – or '*refreshed*' – God-talk; in other words, we will try to give special attention to the

expressive source of the descriptions of God, while neither ignoring nor denying the fact that religious meanings are something that is largely bound by tradition. We will try to show how Merleau-Ponty's insightful emphasis (section 5.5) – namely, that the new meanings come to be through creative moments of expressivity which 'transform certain kind of silence into speech, [the 'silence'] ... without which it would say nothing' (SG 46) – is relevant for understanding religious language, or God-talk in particular. In fact, such 'moments' have to be presupposed even by a strongly 'grammatical' view on religious language that focuses on situations in which religious meanings and doctrines are stable, unchanging rules of life and thought, passed down to us by the tradition.

The insight about the importance of creative/expressive moments in language will be linked with the phenomena of experiential refreshment of God-talk, or, its 'deadness' and 'aliveness', as well as with what we will call the 'belief-inviting nature' of certain kinds of existential feelings. The religiously-relevant existential feelings (chapters One and Two) will, therefore, come back into focus here, this time more connected and intertwined with our work, both on religious believing (Chapters Three and Four), and on the expressivity and other functions of language (Chapter Five). In this context, it will be important to critically examine another strand of interpreting Wittgenstein's understanding of religion, namely the 'Wittgensteinian expressivist' interpretation which tends to exclude *beliefs* from what is relevantly religious altogether. While devoting most attention to the expressive and representational functions of God-talk, we will also note, if only briefly, the ways in which other functions of God-talk are significant in Christian religious life. We will end the chapter with a brief reflection about two different suggestions of understanding the bipolarity, truth and falsity, of beliefs about God and (possibly) many other religious/existential beliefs.

Examples of theistic God-talk with which we will work will for the most part be simple theistic claims like 'God is spirit', 'God created the world', 'God is love', 'It is the will of God', and the like. This may seem like a very limited focus, given the vast variety of Christian religious language in an equally vast variety of contexts. However, these central doctrinal statements often frame or are interwoven into most other Christian God-talk or religious language.

This chapter, then, can be taken as the main conclusion of our whole study. It brings together all the main strands of reflection into a unified whole, and it is only made possible by the in-depth studies of separate topics done in the previous chapters. We will, however, offer the final but very short 'Concluding remarks' after the present chapter. For these structural reasons, this chapter itself will not include its own mini-conclusion, as the previous chapters did. Before moving to our main discussion, however, we will have a brief look at what a 'tradition' is from a sociological perspective, which will provide us with a sociological justification of our focus on the role of expressive language within Christianity.

6.1.2 Religious language between tradition and fresh expression: a sociological perspective

The meanings of the religious concepts and utterances of any religious tradition are to a large degree bound by long-standing rules of correct application. But the normativity of these meanings is not watertight, which means that the meanings of religious concepts are not unchanging. The ability of meanings to change *within* the same tradition is limited, but religious traditions do include ongoing (if not always noticeable) dynamics of negotiation regarding the meanings of main concepts and doctrines, a dynamics which may often consist in very slow and gradual transformations, but sometimes also in more abrupt, dramatic shifts in meanings.

Sociologist Barry Barnes defines a tradition as 'the *continuing* collective accomplishment of human beings' (Barnes 1995: 112). Contrary to a popular perception, he argues, tradition is 'lacking in any power of its own', since 'it exists (only) through the continually exercised powers of human beings themselves' (ibid.). Often enough, religious communities and their narratives suppress or avoid this insight. The temptation, especially in more conservative communities, is to behave as if tradition were something autonomous, something outside and above the present community and its language-use, negotiations and decisions. In this way, a strongly authoritative status of the tradition over the present community and individuals is maintained. Sometimes, such an understanding of 'tradition' goes hand in hand with the belief that the doctrinal formulas or the sacred texts of one's own tradition come directly from

God. According to another sociologist, the tendency of religions to suppress the awareness that tradition *by itself* is powerless – without the continuing exercise of normative power by the present community – is closely related to the desire, or need, of any community to retain communal agreement, stability and social order (Berger 1990: 20-23).

The question is, whether such a religious/theological view of tradition can be even minimally sociologically and historically aware and responsible. The answer we suggest (but do not elaborate here) is, no, it can't. However, according to a different theological understanding of revelation – the one stemming from Friedrich Schleiermacher and/or Paul Tillich – we don't need to view tradition itself as something largely 'from above' and not something that is at the same time 'from below' (Tillich 1973: 22-23, 40-44). Religious traditions are generations-old, accumulated and multi-layered deposits of practices, rituals, meanings, and metaphors which constitute 'inherited knowledge' (Barnes 1995: 112), but which are also in constant, if barely perceptible, flux and change.

This sociological insight into the nature of tradition does not mean a 'sociological reductionism', or 'explaining away' of religion. We should note that Barnes is also critical of the other extreme position: Jürgen Habermas's and Antony Giddens's sharp dichotomy between closed myth-bearing traditions and open, reason-sustaining ones. This sharp contrast, Barnes argues, is illusory, since 'reflexivity is all the time necessary in the continuation of tradition,' whereas Habermas' schema '... precisely permits the old dichotomy between "traditional" and "modern" society to continue' (Barnes 1995: 124). Christian tradition, Barnes reminds us, is and always has been a dynamic process of negotiation of meanings and rules, including the meanings and interpretations of religious concepts and sentences (doctrines), and, of course, of moral, and even scientific claims and concepts. Contrary to the claim to which both Habermas and Giddens subscribe – the claim that there is a sharp distinction between static, dogmatic *traditions* (e.g. Christian) on the one hand, and a modern, critically *reflective society* on the other – Barnes points out that Christian tradition did not exclude or ban (all) reflectivity and critical thinking, although it had a different and more circumscribed place for it than the modern, Western secular tradition has. And, the important realization that the modern,

critical self-understanding of the society is likewise a *tradition* (Modernism, Enlightenment, or similar) means that it, too, contains its own unquestioned commitments (ibid. 125-126).¹

In Christian tradition, as in any other, there is a constant use of the same core religious concepts and claims in ever-changing socio-historical contexts. Even the defining Christian doctrines and the most basic Christian ‘God-talk’, such as that from the Credo, are not immune to changes in meanings. There is an ongoing interpretive activity, negotiations of the traditionally deposited meanings. It is the *present* community at any given time that operates ‘in the name of tradition’, where its ‘collective powers will flow through communications that forcefully and uniformly indicate what the tradition “really” implies’ (Barnes 1995: 117). For any contemporary theology or philosophy of religion, especially any developed understanding of religious doctrine and language, it is essential to be able to incorporate a sociologically and historically aware self-understanding of tradition. And there are, of course, good examples. Kevin Hector, for example, builds his understanding of doctrine on a view that ‘to use a concept is to try to go on in the same way as precedent uses, such that the meaning of a concept use is a product of the normative trajectory implicit in a series of such precedents’ (Hector 2012: 111). While his emphasis is on the normative force of the precedent word-uses (or, of the present community’s acceptance and respect of those uses), Hector also appreciates the dynamics of change in meanings through time within a tradition; he even goes so far as to claim that ‘the meaning of the concept changes, if only slightly, every time it is used’ (ibid.).

We are hoping that the understanding of religious language we are developing here is also sociologically and historically aware, but with an emphasis on the expressive and representational function of God-talk rather than on its regulative function, while appreciating all these, together with its other functions (poetic, phatic, and meta-lingual).

¹ For a longer, theological critique which makes some similar points to Barnes’s, as well as several other critical observations on Habermas’ view on religious traditions and beliefs, see Adams (2006b).

6.2 God-talk as metaphorical and referential: What's in it for us?

The position that theistic descriptions of God can successfully refer despite their being in large part 'irreducibly metaphorical' (Soskice 1985, 2007; Davis 1989) can be fruitfully related to our position and the arguments of this thesis on several levels. A brief examination of these two topics will also enable us to see the relevance of our focus on the expressivity of God-talk and of the relevant interrelatedness of religious experiencing and religious concept-formation. What follows is a brief examination of these ideas – the idea of theistic religious language as irreducibly metaphorical, and the idea that theistic language about God normally successfully refers – in the light of our research questions.

6.2.1 God-talk as metaphorical

First, it is worth noting that the view that God-language is irreducibly metaphorical may strike a reader familiar with Wittgenstein's work as contrary to Wittgenstein's view of religious language. He refused to designate 'religious pictures', which he sees as a feature of religious beliefs, as *metaphors* (Clack 1999: 36). The main problem for seeing religious pictures as metaphors from Wittgenstein's perspective is that, for any metaphor, it is always possible to find a literal 'translation' of it. However, in the case of religious pictures (e.g. the Last Judgement, or the survival of 'the soul' after death), '[the] whole *weight* may be in the picture'² (LC 72)³, i.e. there is no way of saying the same religious message, or believing the same religious belief, without the particular picture which is at the centre of that message or belief. Therefore, Wittgenstein is reported as saying: 'In religion talking is not *metaphorical* either; for otherwise it would have to be possible to say the same things in prose' (Waismann at al. 1979: 117).

² See Kusch (2012) for a closer discussion of the meaning of Wittgenstein's statement that 'the whole weight [of a particular religious belief] may be in the picture' (LC 72), and relating this statement to Wittgenstein's presentation of 'theology as Grammar' (PI 373) in the light of similar views expressed by Johann G. Hamman.

³ See also PPF 23 (i.e. PI part II 23): 'Religion teaches that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated. Now do I understand what it teaches? – Of course I understand it – I can imagine various things in connection with it. After all, pictures of these things have even been painted. And why should such a picture be only an imperfect rendering of the idea expressed? Why should it not do the *same* service as the spoken doctrine? And it is the service that counts.'

Clearly, Wittgenstein's decision not to consider religious pictures as metaphors is a consequence of a popular meaning of 'metaphor' in philosophy of Wittgenstein's time and context. According to that definition, if any 'picture' cannot be, even in principle, substituted by literal description – in other words, if the picture is 'irreducible' – then that picture is not a metaphor. However, this is not the only available understanding of 'metaphor' in contemporary philosophy, linguistics, or theology. In fact, the understanding of metaphor which has it that metaphors are (or *should be*) in principle translatable into literal descriptions (two well-known ones are today called the 'substitution theory'⁴ and the 'comparison theory'⁵) are today largely rejected, held by hardly any influential metaphor-theorist.⁶ And, according to prominent *theological* traditions of understanding of metaphor in both Christianity and Judaism (cf. Tillich 1973: 131, 238-240; Heschel 2009: 64; Soskice 1985: 93-96), there is no contradiction in the expression 'irreducible metaphor': there are metaphors which cannot be reduced to, or translated into, literal descriptions even in principle. Ergo: if we accept such an understanding of metaphor – for example, Janet Soskice's (1985: 93-96) – we should recognize Wittgenstein's 'religious pictures', such as the picture of Last Judgement, or of the soul surviving death, as *metaphors*.

This conceptual point by itself does not, of course, solve any problems which critics perceive in the idea that God-talk is irreducibly metaphorical. But some perspectives that came out of the intense focus on metaphor during the last

⁴ According to the substitution theories, traditionally attributed to Aristotle and Quintilian, 'metaphor is regarded as an improper word which substitutes for the proper one but which is, presumably, replaceable by it at any time; so one says "He is a fox" but could equally say "He is cunning"' (Soskice 1985: 24). Soskice argues, however, that this view is wrongly attributed to Aristotle (ibid. 1-14).

⁵ Comparison theories claim that metaphor of a form 'A is B' is in fact to claim that 'A is *like* B' in certain respects. By using the metaphor we simply present A in terms of its similarity to B, so that it is normally not at all problematic to supply an alternative, literal description of A to which the metaphor is trying to point, despite the fact that we may not find the exact single word to substitute for B (for ex. 'cunning' instead of 'fox'). See Searle (1979: 76-116) who defends a version of the comparison theory.

⁶ Metaphor theorists who have been very influential in socio-philosophy and history of science, linguistics, sociology, and theology, and who reject both the substitution and simple comparison theories of metaphor, include Paul Ricoeur, Max Black, Mary Hesse, George Lakoff, Marc Johnson, and Eva F. Kittay. The analytic philosophers (from Searle, to Davidson, to Rorty) have, for the most part, opted for reductive or non-semantic theories of metaphor (cf. Johnson 2008). For references and recent discussions in linguistics, philosophy and psychology, see Gibbs (2008). For a recent and succinct discussion of the application of these views to theology, see Hector (2012: 112-125).

thirty-five years across several disciplines enable a clearer perspective on why the view that God-talk is irreducibly metaphorical is philosophically and theologically fruitful. Kevin Hector (2012), engaging with the debate on the nature of metaphorical language, criticizes not only the traditional, 'substitution' and 'comparison' understandings of metaphor, but also the more nuanced 'interactionist' (Max Black) view. The interactionist view has it that metaphors *are* irreducible to literal descriptions, since they change the ways in which we see *both* the object we are describing and the 'lens' (the object which is used as metaphor) by which we are describing it. According to Hector, even the interactionist view – just like the comparison view, the substitution view – is 'held captive by a picture according to which the meaning of a statement is its correspondence to a more or less fixed, literal meaning, such that metaphorical meaning could be, at best, something added onto it, or at worst, something deviant, second-rate, or decorative' (Hector 2012: 117). To paraphrase: the problem Hector sees with all of these understandings of metaphor is that the very contrast between literal and metaphorical meaning rests on a particular, unproblematic understanding of the 'literal meaning' which, in turn, rests on an unwarranted or outright erroneous notion of 'meaning' itself.

We need not delve into a detailed critique of these, much discussed, theories of metaphor. Instead, we will emphasise a further observation on metaphorical language which is compatible with Hector's suspicion and which sheds light on the expressive source of religious language. It has recently been argued by Stefan Hoefler, Andrew Smith, Zoltan Kövecses and several other contemporary metaphor theorists,⁷ that the very contrast between literal and metaphorical meaning rests on an inadequate understanding of language and of the ways language emerges and proliferates. As Hoefler and Smith explain, it is not problematic to claim that metaphorical language occurs in 'situations where an extant linguistic form is used ("transferred" in the sense of the original Greek *metaphéreîn*) to express a meaning (its "metaphorical meaning") which is similar, but not identical, to the one that form is conventionally associated with (its "literal meaning")' (Hoefler & Smith 2009: 889). However, they argue that research clearly shows that 'there is no clear-cut distinction between literal use

⁷ See Hoefler & Smith (2009: 889-890) for references.

and metaphorical use, but that the two rather form a continuum'. The difference between literal and metaphorical use of language is not in *kind*, but in *degree of similarity* 'between the conventional meaning of the used linguistic form and the meaning it is used to express' (ibid.).

While we can immediately and easily identify some metaphorical language from the striking nature of the transfer of meaning it includes, the same *kind* of transferred word use in fact occurs in any small deviance from conventional meanings. This happens not only in poetry or religious language, but regularly in every-day verbal communication. Since ignoring the irrelevant differences between two things in order to highlight a relevant similarity for a given communicative purpose is essential in metaphorical language, such language forms a continuum with 'any case of language use where parts of the conventional meaning of the expressed linguistic form are ignored by the interlocutors because they are not relevant in a given context' (ibid. 890). If this 'continuity view' of metaphor is basically correct, then, in any study of metaphors generally, instead of focusing on 'any arbitrary deviance of convention' as a point of demarcation between the metaphorical and the literal, what we should focus on is 'the underlying cognitive mechanism defining the continuum of "loose talk" ... that extends between literalness and poetic metaphor' (ibid. 890).

Looking into how Hoefler and Smith's argument and conclusion are relevant for our discussion of God-talk, we first have to note that their focus is on the so-called '*metaphorical linguistic expressions*' and not on the so-called '*conceptual metaphors*' (Kovescses 2010: 4). Metaphorical linguistic expressions are individual acts of metaphorical language-use which are still 'fresh' in their application of an extant linguistic convention in a relatively new way (like 'So, now you're merely "tweeting" even when you're face to face, instead of having an actual conversation?', or 'Jesus is a homeless immigrant'). *Conceptual metaphors*, on the other hand, are ideas or 'pictures' which lie (normally) in the *unconscious*, in the deep structure of our thought-processes and activities and act as a 'hidden hand that shapes conscious thought' (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 12-13). Think of 'Life is a *journey*', '*finding oneself*', '*overcoming problems*', '*moving forward*' (in time), etc. or, in Christian context, '*growing in faith*', '*close to God*', or 'the *power* of God', etc. There is, of course, as much, or

more, to be said about the role of the conceptual metaphors in religious language than there is to say about the role of the metaphoric linguistic expressions. Most expressions of the central ideas about God in Christianity, such as 'God is love' or 'God is eternal', function as conceptual metaphors;⁸ much of everyday use of such God-talk doesn't involve much noticeable creativity; or, if it does, such moments of creativity are most often not something which is picked up by others and then 'catches on' in the communal language-use. For us, the most relevant feature of Hoefler's and Smith's elucidation of the creative moments, in which novel nuances of meaning are achieved in communication is that it brings to the fore the *expressive* and the *poetic* aspects of language.

Furthermore, it shouldn't be controversial that the conceptual metaphors are (chronologically, genealogically) related to the creative, metaphorical linguistic expressions. This may be difficult to appreciate, especially in the case of deep-seated conceptual metaphors which George Lakoff and Mark Johnson relate to our basic neurological hardware: e.g. metaphorical use of 'below', 'above', 'forward', 'back', 'in front', 'movement', 'path', 'journey' etc., which are used to represent time (instead of space), thinking processes, moral convictions, etc. We also find such metaphors heavily embedded in Christian God-talk: we talk of the 'God above', 'before God', and 'God's way', for example. There seems to be little room for creativity in these very basic and seemingly universally⁹ used

⁸ See Lakoff & Johnson's (1999: 561-568) sympathetic appraisal of the basic Christian *conceptual* metaphors which communicate the spiritual life, provided these are understood in an *embodied*, Merleau-Pontyan way (ibid. 565). They see Marcus Borg's panentheistic theology with a strong emphasis on immanence and connectedness of our mind/flesh with our environment as much preferable to the theologies of 'the distant God' where 'morality is tied to the disembodiment of the Soul' (ibid. 564). See also Medina's (2005: 121-131) elucidations of Lakoff & Johnson's notion of 'ontological metaphors' (a special kind of *conceptual metaphors*) which have existential significance by conceptualizing '*reality* ... in a particular way....As Ricoeur would put it, they inaugurate "ways of being for us", "ways of dwelling in the world"' (ibid. 130). The connections with Matthew Ratcliffe's understanding of metaphorical expressions of existential feelings should be easy to see (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 36-37).

⁹ Note that even the most basic special concepts, such as 'behind', and 'before', are not *universal*. There is scientific evidence which proves that the simplest senses of these concepts are not neurologically 'determined'. For example, in Australian aboriginal language the *relative* special concepts of 'in front', 'behind', 'left', and 'right' are not used for the basic orientation of people (bodies) in space. Instead the *absolute* concepts – 'north from', 'south from', 'east from' and 'west from' are used, even in the most every-day and fast-paced situations. Enquiring for the teacup, the answer you get is 'It's southwest' (from you), meaning *actual* 'southwest' in absolute spatial terms (for journalistic report of this research, see Deutscher 2010). Such use requires, of course, an extraordinary orientation in space (for us) in day and night, but some Aboriginal tribes still have it. If this is so, the concepts 'in front', 'behind', 'left' and 'right'; even in

conceptual metaphors. But even this negative observation is not warranted: behind every conceptual and unconscious metaphor, any nuance of its meaning, there are 'fresh' expressive moments that have happened, transfers of meaning through which these concepts came to mean what they do¹⁰ – that is, fresh uses by which the use of 'above' or 'way' became transferred to mean (also) something else than their basic, somatic-kinetic senses, in order to conceptualize the 'spiritual realm' (another metaphor, of course). For some features of now long-established and basic Christian God-talk, we can, to an extent, trace certain past transfers of meaning back to ancient times.¹¹

If Hoefler's and Smith's insight into metaphorical speech in general is correct, it follows that the peculiar nature of God-talk is not captured entirely or even adequately by calling it 'metaphorical' as opposed to 'literal', since there is a continuum between the two. Furthermore, it seems that entirely 'non-religious' and everyday extensions of conventional linguistic forms also often involve

their most literal of senses, are not universal for humanity and determined by our neurology, as Lakoff and Johnson indicate (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 36).

¹⁰ A critique which Soskice levels at Lakoff and Johnson's account of conceptual metaphors and their *power* is also related to the relation between the conceptual metaphors and fresh metaphorical expressions. One can forget the fact that particular metaphors can also *lose* their (expressive as well as 'structuring') power:

Carried to an extreme, [Lakoff and Johnson's point that conceptual metaphors structure our thought processes] is in danger of falling into the fallacy ... of confusing word derivation with word meaning. Word meaning ... is properly understood synchronically; few present-day speakers of English know that 'ancillary' derives from the Latin term for a serving maiden... There is need for balance. The histories of words and their figurative origins provide interesting information about the formation and growth of abstract concepts, but the thesis goes too far when all dead metaphors are represented as mythic structures or, alternatively, when it is suggested that each man's world is determined by the metaphors his language forces upon him. (Soskice 1985: 81-82)

¹¹ Take the example of the concept 'Spirit of God' (c.f. 'pneuma' 1968). It goes back (at least) to the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*, both with the primary meanings 'wind' or 'breath'. Note that, before the process through which the Christian religious meaning of 'Spirit of God' was institutionally prescribed and doctrinally fixed (which hasn't unified or completely fixed the meaning of 'Spirit of God' in Christianity, of course, since this meaning has varied and still varies widely even within the descendant Christian communities of Western Christianity), the use of this concept was often contextually intertwined with its primary, 'non-religious' meaning. So, for example, in Genesis 1:2 the 'Spirit of God' (*ruach elochim*) is said to be 'hovering over the face of the waters', and in John 3, where Jesus is depicted as talking about the need of believers to be born again (something which he describes there as being 'born of the Spirit'), Jesus says: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit (*pneuma*) is spirit. ... The *wind* (*pneuma*) blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit' (John 3:6, 8). So, whereas through the later development of the religious meaning of 'Spirit' (*ruach*, *pneuma*, and then the Latin *spiritus*) has become disassociated from the primary meanings ('wind', 'breath'), we see that in the early Christian communities (Johannine) the connection between the religious and the primary meanings was still very much alive.

irreducible metaphors. Turning silences into speech is not an exclusively religious phenomenon. Hoefler, Smith and several other theorists of language today press the point that a ‘crucial aspect of metaphorical language use ... is its creative potential: a metaphor may allow a speaker to express *a meaning for which no extant convention exists yet*’ (Hoefler and Smith 2009: 890; see *ibid.* also for other references). In the words of Merleau-Ponty, it is *metaphors* – in this, broadened sense – which are the manifestation of the ‘inner life of language’, the ‘expressive [or] ... true speech’ which transforms ‘certain kinds of silence into language’ (SG 43-44).

If so, we must accept that not even the notion of the irreducibility of God-metaphors captures the special nature of God-talk in particular. But we can also agree with Janet Soskice’s conclusion that no general theory of metaphor, however well argued – even a theory which successfully showed that many or even most metaphors are irreducible, just like the metaphors for God – can ‘answer the difficulties of one who is troubled specifically by irreducible metaphors in the theist’s talk about God’ (Soskice 1985: 96). The problem of God-talk is rather in that ‘radically elusive nature of its subject matter’, namely, God, and what is said about Him, so that even the most literal descriptions such as ‘... “infinite” and “transcendent” and “one” can be seen on examination to be oddly used when used of God’ (*ibid.*).

Put this way, the sceptic’s problem is not a problem with metaphor as such when employed in religious language, but with the possibility of language about God at all. His difficulty is not with the way in which religious metaphors are significant or intelligible, but with the problem of how, even granted the existence of a transcendent God, we can possibly claim to talk about him in finite language. (Soskice 1985: 96)

If the philosophical ‘difficulty’ with God-talk, or the ‘intriguing nature’ of such language, does not consist in the general question of how it can be that irreducible metaphors can successfully say anything at all, this difficulty has to be addressed from other angles. One way is to focus more closely on the questions whether and how God-talk can *refer* to God and relate this discussion with the long-standing discussions of the reference of God-talk (as do Soskice, and Hector). Another way (*not* incompatible with the first) is to try to further

elucidate the ways in which more original, expressive moments of God-talk convey meanings and how such expressive God-talk is related to conventional God-talk. And both of these ways would typically involve *theological* judgements or commitments.

6.2.2 The reference of God-talk

In order to show how the expressive and poetic source of theistic God-talk is related to the referentiality of God-talk, we will again take the position of J. Soslke as our point of departure. In the build-up of her cumulative argument in favour of the referentiality of Christian God-talk, she rejects the 'empiricist dogma, that reference is fixed by unrevisable description' and opts for a social theory 'where reference is established partly by senses of terms [descriptions], but largely by speaker's use of those terms in particular situations' (Soslke 1985: 150). Accepting Saul Kripke's (1980) and Hilary Putnam's (1975) arguments against *determinate* theories of reference, Soslke nevertheless criticizes their alternative *causal* theories, conceding that speakers refer only *partly* due to causal constraints which reality has on us as language users (ibid.). She emphasises that it is *speakers* who refer, not words or sentences themselves (ibid. 135), which reminds us of Merleau-Ponty's privileging of *parole* over *langue*. In line with a broadly Wittgensteinian outlook, Soslke is committed to the view that both meaning and reference are 'context-relative':

Reference is determined by speakers in contexts of use, and not simply by individual speakers but communities of speakers whose language provides access to the states and relations which are of interest to them. (Soslke 1985: 132)

When comparing the broad categories of scientific language-games and religious ones (not in the singular, but in the plural), she observes that different scientific and religious communities use their particular vocabularies and sets of meanings due to each of these communities being bound together as a group by their own common interests, commitments, assumptions, and traditions of interpretations. In fact, Soslke's 'critical realism' is in agreement on several points concerning meaning, language and reference, with a Wittgenstein-inspired 'meaning finitism' (Kusch 2002: 198-211), although not accepting 'epistemic relativism' which is a characteristic feature of the latter. Both

emphasise that words and sentences do not have fixed extensions; that the meanings of concepts, both scientific and religious, are always open in principle; that language does not 'mirror reality'; and that meaning is determined by the community's language-use which in turn is determined by community-specific interests and patterns of life (Soskice 1985: 131-141; 150-1).¹²

As for God-talk in particular – even the most basic and simple Christian God-talk, like 'God is love', 'God is Spirit' etc. – Soskice argues that what secures its reference has to be linked with *experience*. Answering the empiricist objection which says that such statements about God *cannot* refer, she writes:

Now it may seem that if we deal with murky definition, with a sense developed over centuries, and with a thousand innuendoes, we have the difficulty which the empiricist describes of not knowing exactly what we are saying, and hence not saying anything at all. The realist response to this complaint is that the claim that "God is spirit" is not grounded in unequivocal knowledge. It denominates rather than describes God, or, more precisely, *it denominates the source of thousands of experiences which Jews and Christians have spoken of, using the descriptive language at their disposal as the working of the spirit, and which they take to be God.* (Soskice 1985: 154; italics added).

So, what is being claimed is that the word 'God' has been grounded as the source of (or, 'the presence in') certain kinds of experience, through linguistic and other communicative expressions. But Soskice (ibid.153) is clear that this should not be understood as a single 'dubbing' event, but as an on-going reference-grounding process for the word 'God'. Granted, some individuals (prophets, mystics, leaders, and in Christianity, Jesus himself) may have had disproportionately greater influence on the meaning of 'God' than the majority of other God-talkers in history, but this process of representational expression is a

¹² It seems that this seemingly irreconcilable difference between Kusch's and Soskice's position – the former's epistemic relativism, as opposed to the latter's insistence on realism – can be exaggerated and misunderstood due to the common misunderstanding of 'relativism' in Kusch's sense. His relativism is constrained by the following "realist" idea (Kusch 2002: 200-9): although words do not have 'fixed' extensions, and conceptual boundaries are in principle always open since they are negotiated on the basis of similarity judgements, these judgements are not completely arbitrary or subjective. 'Most of the time we have no difficulty in arguing that two cats are more similar to each other than are a cat and a bulldozer'(Kusch 2002: 203). This is so because the 'environment does have a causal influence on what we come to believe, but it does not determine how we must use our terms' (ibid. 204).

communal, longstanding, trans-generational development. As C. F. Davis (agreeing with Soskice) explains:

Linguistic continuity, shared associations, and causal links with experiences and events can all enable the grounding of a reference. Metaphorical and inadequate references to God can thus be considered to be reality-depicting if they are grounded in community history and experiences. (Davis 1989: 13)

Phenomenologically, Soskice distinguishes between two broad categories of experience (ibid. 150-151) as reference-grounding God-talk. The first are particular, 'dramatic', 'pointed' extraordinary experiences, which either people having such experiences or those around them recognize as pointing to God. The second, on the other hand, is a 'diffuse kind' of experience which can cause subsequent 'metaphysical reflection' – she explicitly mentions 'the experience of contingency', 'experience of cause', and 'the experience of order'. Relating such experiences to Aquinas' 'Five Ways', Soskice suggests that 'even the abstractions of natural theology are based, in the long run, on experience – although of a diffuse kind' (ibid. 150). Soskice cautions that grounding the reference of God-language in experience does not mean that *only* mystics or those who have had the relevant experience can talk of God. The tradition of talking of and describing God in certain ways and not others is passed on normatively from generation to generation (Hector 2012: 171-172).¹³ It is this trans-generational, normative trajectory of use which secures the success of any believer's reference to God when she talks about God in ways established by the tradition, even when she doesn't have the reference-grounding experience. However, neither having the relevant experience nor being in the normative chain of God-talk guarantees the 'infallibility' of God-talk (Soskice 1985: 139); communities can arrive at agreement that the ways of describing God and God's relationship to the world used by their forefathers in the tradition (or by themselves at an earlier time) were 'wrong'. We should add that, this lack of infallibility of God-talk goes hand in hand with the understanding that the

¹³ The importance of the grounding of the reference to God in the forefathers' God-talk is a prominent, even 'grammatical', feature of the biblical narratives and statements about God, prayers to God, and so on. When the Jews pray to the 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', and when Christians pray to God 'in the name of Jesus Christ', both are 'committing [themselves to their] ... particular chain of reference' (Hector 2012: 172).

corresponding *beliefs* about God which such God-talk expresses are not *indubitable* – which was our conclusion about religious beliefs at the end of Chapter Four (4.6.2 and 4.6.3).

Soskice's understanding of the ways in which Christian God-talk can refer is expressed somewhat vaguely and in quite general terms; obviously, religious experience was not the main focus of her *Metaphor and Religious Language* (1985). As such, her account calls for further clarification on several points it briefly but insightfully addresses. Our work here picks up the above-mentioned clues given by Soskice in relation to the experience on which God-talk is said to be ultimately grounded. Now, as we've seen in earlier chapters, there are very different philosophical accounts of religious experience (Chapters One and Two), as well as of conscious experience in general (Chapter Five); while Soskice's remarks on religiously relevant experience can also be interpreted from a very different standpoint than ours – e.g. from the 'perception' approach of Alston, or Yandell, or Swinburne¹⁴ – we suggest that her remarks can be more fruitfully combined with a combination of phenomenological and Wittgensteinian approaches to experience in general, and religious experience in particular. If our (phenomenological-theological) judgement about the crucial importance of existential feelings in religious experiencing (Chapter Two) is accepted, then we can (or, should) interpret at least some of the experience she describes or implies through existential feelings. 'The experience of contingency' (Soskice 1985: 150), for example, can be read as an existential feeling of contingency (c.f. Phillips 1988: 282), or, an all-encompassing experience that we are '...only by a hair' and that we 'could easily not be' (Kohak 1984: 188) – an experience which we can, according to a plausible interpretation, relate to what Schleiermacher described with 'feeling of absolute dependence' (CF 4.4).¹⁵

It is possible to interpret also the other 'diffuse' kinds of experience, which Soskice says could be considered as the experiential background of the classic

¹⁴ This is, roughly, the approach taken by Caroline F. Davis, for example, who sees her own position to be in substantial agreement with that of Soskice (Davis 1989: 13-14) but builds also on Swinburne's cumulative argument for theism that includes the 'argument from religious experience' (Swinburne 1991: 245-257).

¹⁵ See Chapter Two (2.2.2).

arguments for theism (at least the teleological and the cosmological argument), as having to do with existential feelings phenomenologically combined with perceptual, inworldly experiences, although such an interpretation may be somewhat against the grain of what Soskice may have had in mind.¹⁶ And, while the ‘pointed’ kind of experience can quickly bring to mind striking examples of visions and of hearing voices by the prophets or visionaries, they can also involve experiences of sudden, short-lived but dramatic changes in existential feelings (c.f. Chapter Two; Ratcliffe 2008: 274-275; Wynn 2012), rather than – or *together with* – the quasi-sensory experiences. It has to be said, however, that in our scheme we don’t distinguish between the ‘pointed’ and the ‘diffuse’ experiences in *kind*, so much as we distinguish them in *degree* and see these experiences as spanning from the more ‘ordinary’ to more ‘extraordinary’ variations of existential feelings (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 274-275; Daniels 2003: 53; Steinbock’s 2007: 31-32).

6.3 On ‘Wittgensteinian expressivism’

There is one rather big question yet to be fully addressed in this study: the relation between religiously-relevant existential *feelings* and religious/existential *beliefs*. Indeed, this question has often been intertwined with the question of the nature of God-talk, along the following lines: Does God-talk express proper beliefs at all, or does it (legitimately) express ‘merely’ feelings (or, emotions, or passions, or affects)? The starting point from which we will approach this question is by examining an *expressivist* view of religious language. The central claim of the expressivist view is that religious language does not, or cannot, express (proper, legitimate) beliefs; the best it can do, if it is to have any value for humans at all, is to express desires or intentions (conative), or emotions/feelings. It is also more than relevant for our study that the most popular interpretation of Wittgenstein’s view on religion, apart from the grammaticalist interpretation we have engaged with in Chapter Four, has been an expressivist interpretation which attributes an expressivist view of religious

¹⁶ For a recent interpretation of the main arguments for the existence of God through felt experience, see Kohak (1984: 188-9), Wynn’s reading of Erazim Kohak’s phenomenology (Wynn 2008), as well as Re Manning (2011).

language to Wittgenstein. And with a critique of this interpretation of Wittgenstein we shall begin our investigation into the interrelations between feelings, God-talk and beliefs.

6.3.1 Exposition of the two strands of 'Wittgensteinian expressivism'

There are many reasons why we need to devote attention to the expressivist interpretation of Wittgenstein in religion. One of our central points was that at the centre of religious experience are, not some inner perceptions of an otherworldly realm, but certain kinds of *feelings* (Chapter Two); another was that it is the *expressive* source of religious language, of metaphorical God-talk, which is of special interest to us (Chapter Five and the present chapter) and which it is necessary to appreciate if we want to understand God-talk; yet another was to 'vindicate' Wittgenstein's phenomenology of feelings and advocate a favourable interpretation of Wittgenstein's view of 'expressive utterances' (section 5.2.1). Isn't it just natural and even obvious, given all these affirmations and claims we've made, that we have to opt for something like 'Wittgensteinian expressivism'? In this section, I will try to explain that this is not the case, and that 'Wittgensteinian expressivisms' (we can talk about at least two possible types) are inadequate both on exegetical and philosophical grounds. Expressivist interpretations of Wittgenstein on religion have been critiqued and corrected (both exegetically and philosophically, respectively) already in insightful ways by Brian Clack (1999). In part, our examination and critique of Wittgensteinian expressivism builds on his work; but we will also add to it and engage with expressivism from different angles.

Expressivists regarding religious language claim that religious utterances are expressions of either something *felt* (emotions, moods) or something *conative* (desires, wishes, intentions), but definitely not of something *cognitive* (beliefs, opinions, i.e. something 'descriptive' or 'factual' or 'propositional'). To simplify: the grammaticalist and the expressivist interpretations of Wittgenstein on religion agree on the point that religious utterances are for Wittgenstein not 'scientific' (in Wittgenstein's sense), but they present a different picture of the nature of what these are: instead of seeing religious utterances as 'grammatical' as opposed to 'scientific', expressivists would see them as 'expressive' rather than 'scientific'. To immediately complicate this simplification, however, we need

to say that there are several interpreters who are combining grammaticalist and expressivist understanding of Wittgenstein on religion as defined here. Michael Kober, for example, whom we've counted as one of our case studies of the grammaticalist interpretation, reveals his expressivist side when he talks about great similarities between 'religious stance' and a 'mood' in Wittgenstein, or when he suggests that 'the kind of religious belief that Wittgenstein is mainly interested in *is not a genuine belief at all*' (which is why he rather talks about 'religious stance'), or, when he presents religious stance as *nothing more than an 'attitude' towards life* (Kober 2007: 241-242; italics mine), where we might read 'attitude' in the later Wittgenstein as *emotional attitude*¹⁷ (Schulte 1993: 29). Similarly, as we shall see shortly, R.B. Braithwaite (1971), whom we are treating as a representative of expressivism below, also has his grammaticalist side. Despite such overlaps, we can nevertheless distinguish between distinct types of interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion, and most of these fall either under a predominantly grammaticalist, or a predominantly expressivist approach.

According to Clack, we can distinguish between at least two different strands of expressivist view of religion: the expressivist-cathartic and expressivist-conative (Clack 1999: 41-43). The expressivist-cathartic view has it that religious utterances (as well as rituals) express *feelings* or *emotions* – i.e. religious utterances are 'regulated symbolic expressions of certain sentiments' (Radcliffe-Brown, quoted in Clack 1999: 42) with no other purpose than individual and communal *catharsis*, a structured way to relieve personal and social tension. And, the expressivist-conative view sees religious utterances (and rituals) as declaring intentions/desires/wishes to behave in a certain way, or to 'follow a [certain] way of life' (Braithwaite 1971: 81). R.B. Braithwaite is objecting to a cathartic view of religious language, according to which 'religious assertions... [are] primarily evincing feelings or emotions', claiming that this would commit the religious expressivist also to the emotive theory of *ethics* in the same breath, which he finds unsatisfactory (ibid. 79). He opts for the expressivist-conative view instead: 'I cannot regard the expression of a feeling of any sort as

¹⁷ Schulte explains that 'attitudes' are for the later Wittgenstein *directed (emotional) feelings*, as opposed to the undirected moods: 'In Wittgenstein's classification of psychological terms, emotions can be subdivided into directed and undirected ones; of these the former might be called "attitudes", and include surprise, fright, admiration and enjoyment' (Schulte 1993: 29).

the primary element in religious assertion; but this does not imply that *intention* to feel in a certain way is not a primary element' (Braithwaite 1971: 83; italics added).

Wittgenstein's view of religious language (and ritual) has been interpreted along both lines, expressivist-conative as well as expressivist-cathartic, or as advocating a combination of both. Most expressivist interpretations of Wittgenstein are based predominantly on a reading of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough* where a lot of attention is devoted (as in Frazer's *Golden Bough*) to magic, the so-called 'primitive religions' and their rituals, and somewhat less to the highly organized, structured, and highly 'intellectualized' religions like Christianity. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to see Wittgenstein's remarks on magic as related to and continuous with those on Christianity (Clack 1999),¹⁸ and scholars – among them B.R. Braithwaite, Anthony O'Hear, and Michael Banner – have seen Wittgenstein's *overall* understanding of religion in expressivist terms, either cathartic or conative or a combination. While some of the most characteristic texts which seem to offer themselves to expressivist readings come from earlier or middle Wittgenstein's period (for example, from the *Remarks on Frazer* or from 'A Lecture on Ethics'), some later remarks can also be so used. Both, the early and the late examples include:

The description of a wish is, *eo ipso*, the description of its fulfilment. And magic does give representation to a wish; it expresses a wish. (*RFGB* 4)

'If I, who do not believe that somewhere or other there are human-superhuman beings which we might call gods – if I say "I fear the wrath of the gods", then this shows that with these words I can mean something or express a feeling that need not be connected with that belief' (*RFGB* 8)

Burning in effigy. Kissing the picture of a loved one. This is obviously *not* based on a belief that it will have a definite effect on the object which the

¹⁸ Although this is does not hold for the *RFGB* throughout. For example, Wittgenstein also compares Augustine's prayers to God in the *Confessions* with devotional expressions of a Buddhist holy-man, and claims that '*none* of them was making a mistake except where he was putting forward a theory' (*RFGB* 1).

picture represents. It aims at some satisfaction and it achieves it. Or rather, it does not *aim* at anything; we act in this way and then feel satisfied. (*RFGB* 4)

Among other things Christianity says, I believe, that sound doctrines are all useless. ... Knowledge is passionless. By contrast, Kierkegaard calls faith *a passion*. (*CV* 61)

When I have [the extraordinary experience that is behind religious expressions] I wonder at the existence of the world. And I am then inclined to use phrases as 'how extraordinary that anything should exist' or 'how extraordinary that the world should exist.' I will mention another experience ... the experience of feeling absolutely safe. ... [The] first of them is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world; and the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God. (*LE* 11-12)

Now, we shall return to the last remark (from *A Lecture on Ethics*) soon and interpret it somewhat differently as expressivists do. For now, our brief point was to make it easier to see how some of Wittgenstein's remarks at least seemingly give rise to expressivist interpretations of religious language. Let's see a few examples of such interpretations.

Michael Banner, who argues against 'Wittgensteinian expressivism', reads Wittgenstein as saying that religious discourse is 'concerned with... expressing and commending a particular attitude towards the world [and not with] describing and explaining (hence with making statements to be judged true or false)' (Banner 1990: 69). According to Banner's Wittgenstein, 'the sense of observances [as well as religious language, is] in the nature of human life and emotions, rather than in speculative, explanatory theories' (ibid. 70). Another formulation of the expressivist reading of Wittgenstein (combining both cathartic and conative interpretations) is given by Anthony O' Hear:

Ritual itself is fundamentally action 'without purpose' ... symbolizing and expressing your feelings and attitudes... In Wittgenstein's view, there is in human beings a deep need to symbolize and express what is

important to them in their lives ... Primitive rituals and their accompanying beliefs do for those who participate in them what the symbolic acts we have do for us, expressing and evoking deep needs and emotions. (O'Hear 1984: 10-12; as quoted in Clack 1999: 43)

Finally,¹⁹ let's also mention an influential expressivist-*conative* author and interpreter of Wittgenstein whom we've already mentioned, R.B. Braithwaite, who has been credited as 'one of the earliest philosophers of religion to apply some of the changes that occur in the later Wittgenstein to an analysis of religious language' (Harris 2002: 49). Braithwaite's expressivism has been a target of many attacks on this position *as such* (but not so much as an interpretation of Wittgenstein) (e.g. Swinburne 1977: 88-91). Note the clues, however, to the Wittgensteinian theme 'the meaning of an assertion is given by its use' (as opposed to the verificationist principle of meaning to which Braithwaite objects (Braithwaite 1971: 73)), in his characteristic formulation of expressivism (conative):

...the meaning of a religious assertion is given by its use in expressing asserter's intention to follow a specified policy of behaviour. To say that it is belief in the dogmas of religion which is the cause of believer's intending to behave as he does is to put the cart before the horse: it is the intention to behave which constitutes what is known as religious conviction. (Braithwaite 1971: 80)

According to Braithwaite, the Christian assertion that God is love, for example, is to be taken as a declaration of 'intention to follow an agapeistic way of life...[since unless] religious principles are moral principles, it makes no sense to speak of putting them into practice' (Braithwaite 1971: 81). In short, the meanings of religious assertions are simply 'principles of conduct' (*ibid.*), i.e. 'religious principles are moral principles, ... implicitly specifying a particular way

¹⁹ Other authors, cited by Clack as those who read Wittgenstein (or at least Wittgenstein of the *Remarks of Frazer*) as an expressivist regarding religious language, include A.J. Ayer, M O'C. Drury, John Cook, N. Rudich and M. Stassen (Clack 1999: 21-50). Richard Swinburne, who treats D.Z. Phillips, together with R. Braithwaite, as an advocate of the 'attitude theory' of religious language (Swinburne 1993: 88-96), does *not* in fact attribute the 'attitude theory' to Wittgenstein directly and even attempts to dissociate D.Z. Phillips's view from that of Wittgenstein (*ibid.* 92, 95). However, as we've seen in the examination of Schoenbaumsfeld (2005) in Chapter Four (4.2.2), Swinburne's understanding of religious language and belief is of course radically different from that of Wittgenstein.

of life' (ibid. 81, 80). In a religious-pluralist tone, it is also argued that the same or very similar principles are at work in different religions, only that these are 'associated with thinking of different *stories*'²⁰. Importantly for Braithwaite, however, these stories needn't be *believed* as factual reports or historical statements in order to work perfectly well *as religious stories* (or, allegories, or myths, etc.) (Braithwaite 1971: 84- 88).

Now, something on which all grammaticalist *and* expressivist interpreters of Wittgenstein agree is that, for Wittgenstein, religious utterances are *not* scientific utterances or 'explanations of facts in the world of nature' (Braithwaite 1971: 75). But where expressivism goes further than grammaticalism is in denying that religious language expresses proper beliefs altogether. Religious utterances express feelings/emotions/passions (cathartic), or intentions/desires/wishes (conative); if they *do* express beliefs at all, however, it is either illegitimately or non-essentially, so to speak. We've seen that the grammaticalist Kober is also leaning in this 'anti-belief' direction in his interpretation of Wittgenstein's view (Kober 2007: 241-242). However, although Braithwaite doesn't mention Wittgenstein specifically, it is in his famous 'Lecture on the Nature of Religious Belief' (Braithwaite 1971) that we can probably see the clearest expression of this expressivist thought. He concludes the essay by saying that, through his investigation of the meaning of religious assertions by applying the principle that 'meaning is to be found by ascertaining use' (ibid. 89), he has '*...discovered nothing which can be called "belief" in the senses of this word applicable either to an empirical or to a logically necessary proposition. ... Neither the assertion of the intention nor the reference to the stories includes belief in its ordinary senses*' (ibid. 89). Through expressivist eyes (but not grammaticalist), then, Wittgenstein's statement that 'there is this extraordinary use of the word "believe"' when we talk of religious believing (LC 59) must be read as cynical and utterly pejorative, as implying that 'extraordinary beliefs' means 'illegitimate beliefs', or 'not real beliefs'. For this reason, it is no problem for the expressivist to hold that *genuinely* religious beliefs cannot be true or false, since they are no beliefs at all – whereas, at least for some grammaticalists (as we've seen in Chapter Four), explaining how

²⁰ Compare Wittgenstein's remark that, in religion, '[rules] of life are dressed up in pictures. And these pictures can only serve to *describe* what we are to do, not *justify* it' (CV 34).

a religious belief can be a belief but *not* bipolar may present a problem, one which they attempt to address through describing religious beliefs in terms of 'hinge-certainties' (e.g. Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 175-6).

6.3.2 Critique of 'Wittgensteinian expressivism'

The expressivist move to effectively legislate *belief* out of the picture when trying to explain religious language (Christian included) and rituals is foreign to the *overall* picture of religion presented by Wittgenstein, especially the later Wittgenstein. This point will not be exegetically elaborated here as we've devoted considerable attention to Wittgenstein's affirmation of religious belief as a *special kind of belief* in Chapter Four.²¹ To sum up: although the later Wittgenstein held the view that, in Christianity at least, '...sound doctrines are all useless'; that Christianity 'is not based on a historical truth'; and that what is essential in Christianity is that 'you have to change your *life* (Or the *direction* of your life)' – he was at the same time clear that 'Christianity ... presents us with a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not believe this report with the belief that is appropriate to a historical report – but rather: *believe through thick and thin*' (CV 61, 37). When Wittgenstein is talking about religious beliefs being 'extraordinary' in *Lectures and Conversations* as opposed to 'ordinary' beliefs of science and everyday opinions, he is *not* exposing religious beliefs as either mistaken ordinary/scientific beliefs or non-beliefs (conations or feelings) but continues to take religious beliefs as *beliefs*, trying to elucidate the *nature* of these beliefs through grammatical investigation.

To understand why expressivist interpretations of Wittgenstein on religion tend to exclude beliefs from the meaning of religious language, we need to pay attention to the underlying assumptions, i.e. the whole philosophy of mind framework within which these interpreters read Wittgenstein. One such deep-seated 'rule of grammar' at work in both R.B. Braithwaite's and M. Banner's reading of Wittgenstein, for example, is 'the assumption of the cognitive–conative divide' (Helm 2001: 4). In Chapter One we described it as a theory of the mind that presupposes a sharp distinction between two basic kinds of mental states, *cognitions* and *conations*, which supposedly constitute the 'basic

²¹ It is not our task to examine Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer* separately and closely – for this, see Clack (1999).

architecture of the mind' (Nichols and Stich 2003: 13) and which are exclusive of each other. Brian Clack recognizes that such an assumption lies as a grammatical rule at the foundation of the expressivist view of religious language when he observes that, in expressivist interpretations, 'hard dichotomies ... between the descriptive and the non-descriptive, and between the articulating of *beliefs* and the expressing of *attitudes*' emerge (Clack 1999: 44). We may add that, as we've seen in Chapter One, the partition which emerges is in fact *tripartite*: cognitions, conations, and the non-essential 'subjective colourings', i.e. feelings. While the expressivist-conative view such as Braithwaite's sees *conations* being expressed by religious utterances, the expressivist-cathartic view such as Drury's emphasises that *feelings/emotions* are expressed by them. But the expressivists are a part of a much broader horizon here: It is instructive to note that this strong underlying framework, the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, operates both in the systems of thought of most 'analytic cognitivists' regarding religious experience/language/belief (such as Alston, Swinburne, Yandell, and Banner, to name a few), as well as expressivists (like Braithwaite).

As Clack also notes, however, it is wrong to present Wittgenstein as operating with the assumption of the cognitive-conative divide, especially in his later writings. He resisted the empiricist/positivist regimes for using expressions like 'description', 'proposition', and 'belief' exclusively for *empirical* (or, quasi-empirical!), scientific (or, quasi-scientific) descriptions, propositions and beliefs, respectively. Instead, Wittgenstein talked about Christianity – no doubt deliberately – as 'a *description* of something that actually takes place in human life' (CV 32), for example. And there is another similar, but more general point to be made here, closely related to the Wittgensteinian understanding of 'description', 'proposition' and 'belief' as family-resemblance concepts. This point goes beyond the discussion of Wittgenstein interpretation, however, and suggests a notable critique of expressivism as a philosophical position. In Chapter Three, we've examined Rodney Needham's Wittgensteinian-anthropological argument for the conclusion that Folk Psychology (as well as the empiricist view of mind) includes two great 'errors': one is 'the assumption that there must be something in common to all instances of believing', and the

other that 'there must be a mental counterpart [i.e. a state of consciousness] to the expression of belief' (Needham 1972: 122).

In the light of this insight into the broader concept 'belief', Needham criticizes Braithwaite's expressivist view. To Braithwaite's conclusion that he has 'discovered nothing which can be termed "belief" in the senses of this word normally applicable either to an empirical or to a logically necessary proposition' (Braithwaite 1971: 89), Needham notes that, under a combination of close scientific scrutiny of language-uses in different cultural and historical contexts, and an attentive phenomenological awareness, the concept of belief *in general* also disintegrates under rigorous analysis. '[In] many of its non-religious uses as well the word "belief" (and its inflected forms) can very well be translated away, and it is a question whether there is any belief-statement which cannot be treated in the same way' (Needham 1972: 127-128). The linguistic legislating with the concept 'belief' done by expressivists such as Braithwaite is a normative, prescriptive act in a philosophical language-game which does not have a scientific (historical, or anthropological, or neurological, etc.) or phenomenological basis, and, for most of those who *believe* in God in an existential way, it will be difficult to see why they should accept it.

Before concluding our assessment of the expressivist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religious language, we have to take into account two lessons about Wittgenstein's view of expressive language from the previous chapter. First, Wittgenstein's understanding of *expressive* utterances is such that the *expressivity* can easily mix with scientific utterances (and, if our argument from the previous Chapter holds water, with grammatical utterances as well) – i.e. an utterance can be expressive and dubitable at the same time in a *non-confused* way according to Wittgenstein (*BB* 103; *RPP I* 727), whereas it is harder to claim this for Wittgenstein's view on the mixedness of scientific and grammatical utterances where we have an either-or situation: 'In one case we make a move in an existent game, in the other we establish a rule of the game' (Z 294). On the other hand, expressivists tend to present the expressivity of utterances as in an either-or situation with the scientific nature of utterances, i.e. they regard religious language as expressing *either* beliefs (cognitions) as one option, *or* feelings (affective add-ons) and/or desires/intentions (conations) as the other, and then claim that it is the latter two (one of the two, or a combination of the

two), but not beliefs, that religious language (essentially, legitimately) expresses. Whereas from a Wittgensteinian standpoint – we will argue – it is plausible to suppose, not only that there is no problem with a scientific belief being expressed ‘feelingly’, but also that the *phenomenological* content of the feeling and the *semantic* content of the related belief can be somehow connected – a point to which we shall return shortly.

And second, and most important: The grain of truth which the expressivist interpretations of Wittgenstein on religion do contain is the awareness that there is an important parallel in Wittgenstein’s work between, on the one hand, the linguistic expression of feelings (like depression) or sensations (like pain), and the linguistic expression of *religiously* relevant feelings (or ‘intentions’), on the other. But, contrary to the expressivist view, this parallel *does not* show that religion doesn’t importantly have to do with believing. In order to make this clear, we need to pay attention to Wittgenstein’s emphasis on ‘primitive reactions’ in the expression of feelings/sensations *and* the related beliefs, be this in the context of religion or not. As we’ve seen in Chapter Five, in relation to our *beliefs* about each other’s minds, wellbeing, emotional state, etc., Wittgenstein says:

Believing that someone else is in pain, doubting whether he is, are so many natural kinds of behaviour towards other human beings; and our language is but an auxiliary to and extension of this behaviour. I mean: our language is an extension of the more primitive behaviour (For our *language-game* is a piece of behaviour). (*RPP I* 151)

Like *beliefs* and *doubts* about other people’s states of mind, Wittgenstein relates – not only religious *language*, but – religious *beliefs* (and why not *doubts*), too, to primitive or instinctive reactions. For example,²² interpreting a complex fire ritual and the associated beliefs about who may perform this ritual and who not, Wittgenstein says of these beliefs and associated practice that ‘this too would only be a later *extension of instinct*’ (*RFGB* 80; italics added). Then, in *Lectures on Religious Belief*, Wittgenstein compares religious believing to the instinctive or primitive reactions in the face of a life-threatening situation:

²² This example is taken from Clack (1999: 85).

A man would fight for his life not to be dragged into the fire. No induction. Terror. *That is, as it were, part of the substance of [religious] belief.* (LC 56; emphasis added)

In the light of this, we can read Wittgenstein's claim that, while 'a sound doctrine need not *seize* you', in living Christianity 'you have to be seized & turned around by something' (CV 61), as saying that a living faith or 'proper' religious belief has a primitive, experiential, *felt* source that includes a particular *belief-inviting* pull. Again, it is important to see that this isn't the same as the expressivist claim that religious language expresses just 'feelings' or 'emotions' or 'intentions', or that any belief-component of religion is either non-essential or illegitimate (e.g. erroneous scientific). While, according to Wittgenstein, 'quite intricate religious systems have developed out of ... primitive reactions ... [he] is not of course being reductionistic: it is certainly not claimed that a fully-developed religion essentially *is* a pre-reflective response to the world' (Clack 1999: 85).²³ As Clack aptly explains:

In order to make sense of [Wittgenstein's view of religious language], we need to understand the kind of analogy which can be drawn between the language of pain and the language of religion. [For Wittgenstein] the language of pain is said to develop out of instinctual, non-linguistic

²³ In relation to this point, we should offer a brief critique also of the 'expressivist strand' of Michael Kober's view of religious belief and his interpretation of Wittgenstein. Kober, who relates 'religious stance' (religious belief-attitude) closely with 'epistemic stance' (hinge-certainty) (Kober 2007: 241-248), also sees – both in Wittgenstein, and as his own view – great similarities between religious stance and a 'mood' (ibid. 246-250), e.g. 'depression, excitement, euphoria, and so on', accepts that moods lack intentionality, that they 'cannot be rated rational or irrational' and they 'fundamentally belong to what it is to live a human life'. The differences which he sees between a 'religious stance' and a 'mood' are very minor: one which he explicitly mentions consists in the way they are expressed or made manifest: 'Moods may be specified by adjectives; a religious stance becomes manifest by prayers, similes' (Kober 2007: 249). In respect to several other characteristics, Kober sees religious stance and moods on one side, and compares them with epistemic stance on the other. He says, for example, that a 'mood or a religious stance does not define truth, but a certainty does'; and 'whereas moods and religious stances usually turn up or happen to be there, certainties must be acquired' (ibid.). It should be clear by now that this cannot be Wittgenstein's, or even a Wittgensteinian view. First, as we've argued in Chapter Five (5.2.2), while moods are felt 'states of consciousness' for Wittgenstein (i.e. 'mood' is a phenomenological category), beliefs are not states of consciousness (i.e. 'belief' is not a phenomenological category; *RPP II* 45, 258). And second, Kober's approximation of 'religious stances' and 'moods' has the expressive tendency (although his overall interpretation is more on the grammaticalist side) to radically minimize or delegitimize the belief-component of religion – we get the impression that religious stance is really a weird, special case of 'mood' on one side, and a special case of a hinge-certainty on the other, as we've seen in Chapter Four. By contrast, we've argued that Wittgenstein *distinguishes* in interesting and illuminating ways – and, in markedly *different* ways than Kober claims Wittgenstein does – religious believing from, both, hinge-certainty (Chapter Four), as well as religiously relevant feelings or moods.

behaviour. Similarly the language of religion (the articulation of religious *beliefs*) is an extension of certain primitive reactions, say a natural expression of wonder or of fear. Note, however, that the religious belief is not *equivalent* to that expression of wonder (the expressivist view). Rather, just as instinctive pain-behaviour opens up a logical space whereby a greater articulation can occur, so the primitive religious reaction opens up a conceptual space, making possible the articulation of thoughts about the meaning and ultimate end of life, making possible new experiences, new ways of relating to the world. ... What he is saying is that it is inconceivable that an elaborately worked-out doctrinal system could come into existence without the initial, affective, primitive reactions he emphasises.²⁴ (Clack 1999: 85)

6.4 The concept-forming and belief-inviting pull from existential feelings

6.4.1 Feelings, beliefs about God, and the functions of language

We are now ready to say more about the complex relationship between religiously relevant feelings, religious language and religious beliefs. As a point of departure, we will take the broad Wittgensteinian picture of the role of feelings in religious concept- and belief-formation, nicely summed up by Clack above (Clack 1999: 85). However, we will focus – for the most part – more narrowly on Christian God-talk, beliefs about God, and (phenomenologically) on *existential* feelings, whereas in the previous section we've kept a somewhat looser focus on 'religious belief' and 'religious language'. The central idea that I want to explore here is the one which has been briefly suggested above: that a 'proper' religious belief has a primitive, experiential, *felt* source – a source that includes what I've called a '*belief-inviting pull*'.

This particular picture of the relation of Christian religious experience and religious beliefs about God needs some unpacking. Unlike the picture of

²⁴ It should be added that both Wittgenstein's view of the origin of the pain-language and beliefs about pain, as well as his view of the source of religious language and beliefs, should be seen as related to his overarching view that the source of language *in general* is in our primitive (either felt or sensation-based) reactions. 'The origin & the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can the more complicated forms grow. Language – I want to say – is a refinement, "in the beginning was the deed"' (CV 36).

religious feelings as ‘affective reactions to a believed presence’ (Alston 1991: 50) with which the ‘analytic perception model’ of religious experience operates (Alston, Yandell and Swinburne),²⁵ the picture we are developing includes a claim that certain kinds of feeling are in some contexts *an important source* of Christian God-talk, as well as of beliefs about God. This doesn’t mean that we can’t recognize situations and contexts where certain ways of feeling are an affective *reaction* to a believed representation of God or of God’s relation to the world; it also doesn’t mean that all existential feelings which may have a role as a source of Christian beliefs about God are pre-linguistic, or perhaps ‘pre-religious’. Our claim does mean, however, that a crucial *aspect* (crucial both theologically and philosophically) of Christian religious concept-formation as well as belief-formation has to do with existentially-felt experiencing as their living source.

To make clearer how the claim we are suggesting here is linked with certain theological, moral or even religious commitments, we can describe it, as well as our research focus as a whole, through the conceptual lens of Jakobsonian functions of language (see section 5.3). If we accept that many larger units of language have some combination of the representative, expressive, poetic, phatic, regulative and meta-lingual functions, it is of course trivially true that God-talk and other Christian religious language has a combination of these functions. In some contexts of use – and these can be extremely varied – one or some of these functions will be at the forefront, i.e. more dominant compared to other functions; and, in other contexts, other function(s) will be so. Our very general claim from Chapter Five that phatic, poetic, expressive and normative functions of language are *prior to, or more ‘basic’ than*, the representational and the metalingual functions, could be elucidated in concrete or typical cases of God-talk. And, while we are clearly choosing a very narrow range of such cases here, it needs to be emphasised that this narrow diet is justified, besides space limitations, by our research focus: namely, the contexts which show how feelings can have a belief-inviting role and contribute to Christian concept- and belief-formation.

²⁵ See Chapter One (1.2.1).

A few remarks about the possibilities of a much broader analysis of God-talk will help us understand this better. For example, one aspect of the fact that God-talk is a social institution is the fact that it can have a recognizably *phatic* function, i.e. a role 'to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication' (Jakobson 1990: 75). It may not strike us as unusual that people may engage in Christian God-talk largely *for the sake of* the social contact, in order to partake in a community. Note that this opens up a possibility of 'free-riding' of such language predominantly for the purposes of social interaction even when a person engaging in God-talk does not *believe* in God (we may see such a situation as one in which the phatic function of God-talk is completely in the foreground and, in a sense, 'overrides' other possible aspects which God-talk can have, or is meant to have). However, the 'active' function of Christian God-talk to establish or prolong communication, of course, doesn't *by itself* open up the gates of insincerity so wide that we should render all such utterances as 'probably insincere'. Insincerity is itself parasitic on the idea that, normally, claims, or 'assertions', are genuine expressions of belief (Williams 2002: 75).

It makes sense to emphasise that we are here studying only God-talk that is not uttered in such a purely instrumental (and deceiving) fashion.²⁶ Neither are we focusing here on God-talk uttered in irony, sarcasm, or simply 'as a manner of speaking', or in the contexts where pretence is expected (like acting in a play) – however philosophically or theologically interesting such God-talk can be. In short, although we should recognize the phatic function as 'equally basic' to God-talk as the expressive (and as more basic than representational, for example) we will for the most part have only those contexts in mind where people 'say what they mean' when they engage in God-talk, i.e. where claims about God are 'direct expressions of belief' (Williams 2002: 79). This research focus is partly guided by the theological/moral perspective that it is wrong to regularly and in a calculated way say other than what you mean, either in God-talk or any other talk. And, in relation to God-talk, this means that insincere assertions of what gives a calculated impression that one believes in God are

²⁶ Any communication, including verbal communication which involves God-talk, is often a manifestation of spontaneous human inclination towards our intersubjective way of being, but that does not mean it is done for 'extrinsic ends' in any calculative way (Barnes 1995: 100-101).

morally wrong (the same judgement doesn't apply, of course, to God-talk uttered in irony, sarcasm, or play-acting).

A similar point can be noted in relation to the *regulative* function of God-talk. Christian God-talk often has a notable, even prominent regulative function – for example, consider the context of preaching a sermon where the preacher is calling believers to live upright, moral lives. Even sentences like 'God is love', or 'God is Spirit', in such and similar contexts can have a predominantly *regulative* aspect (for example, if the former implies 'God doesn't condone hateful behaviour', and the latter 'Appropriate worship of God should not be bound to a particular place'). However, there are situations where God-talk is used – or abused – more or less *only* for the sake of regulation of other people's behaviour, often in the self-interest of the speaker. We may easily think of blatant cases such as a preacher trying to influence people to donate money to the church (or even, directly to his own salary!) by implying God will be displeased with the believers if they refuse to do this; or a politician who, while not actually believing in God, weaves claims about God's will into his speeches with the purpose of influencing people to support his plan of going to war. These are – empirically, factually – well documented uses of Christian God-talk; however, from our religious as well as ethical standpoint, such cases of an imbalanced dominance of the regulative function of God-talk, particularly when coupled with insincerity, are wrong. And also, such kinds of God-talk are not of research interest here.

Lastly, an observation can also be made about the *representational* function which is, as we've seen, normally taken as a defining feature of language as such and is by no means confined to dispassionate scientific utterances with the aim of giving information about in-worldly realities; verbal representation is richly and importantly at work in Christian God-talk and in poetry, for example. However, it can be said that in (particularly dispassionate) scientific utterances the representational function is very often in the foreground (most dominant). And, the representational function, just like the phatic and the regulative functions, can be misused in religious language. One relevant kind of misuse that particularly bothered Wittgenstein was investigated in Chapter Four. It consists of trying to give an impression that with claims about God we are representing some super-empirical reality in a very similar way as when

representing in-worldly realities, i.e. by making scientific utterances about God. Such a misuse need not involve insincerity, as the previous two cases of misuse of God-talk have; but it is a misuse nevertheless, perhaps as a result of a 'bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of language' (*PI* 109). However – as shown (Chapter Four 4.3) – Wittgenstein's criticism of such use of God-talk has a definite *prescriptive* dimension. It is not a 'purely descriptive' form of grammatical investigation, but includes a commitment about what a genuine religion is (or should be) and what it is not (or should not be) – which very likely involves a theological commitment of some sort (c.f. Mulhall 2001: 110-117). So, again, there are contexts in which a certain *kind* of over-dominance of one function of God-talk, we might say, stands in need – in Wittgenstein's judgement and in ours here – of a religious/theological critique (this time, not a *moral* condemnation, however).

All this also means that we are *not* claiming that God-talk has its *sole* source in the expression of certain existential feelings, or that our reflections are meant to offer anything remotely similar to a complete account of Christian God-talk, or that the intimate relation of God-talk (also) to existential experiencing which we want to elucidate is, say, *sociologically* or *historically* the most significant aspect of God-talk. A study of Christian God-talk can be done from many perspectives and with very different research foci; many of these can be equally as fascinating as ours here, and moreover, they can be complementary and together illuminate many aspects of Christian language about God. Our own study, similarly to Schleiermacher's, for example, is guided by a phenomenological-theological judgement that in the face of certain remarkable existential feelings, reality is 'evoking a [belief] response' (Bowie 1998: xvii) which leads 'in a theological direction' (*ibid.*), i.e. towards religious belief-formation. Schleiermacher recognized, however, that there can be many other sources of one's belief in God when he (normatively) claimed 'You cannot believe in [God] by force of will or because you want to use him for solace and help, but *because you must*' (*OR* 54).

Now, returning to our Wittgensteinian picture of religious experiencing, religious language, and religious believing. There are very few places where Wittgenstein talks directly about what we could call religious *experience*. But the remarks that do refer to it reveal a very nuanced understanding. There is an interesting

difference, however, in the tone and even in the implied broader picture about religious experience, depending on whether we consult the earlier or later Wittgenstein. Unsurprisingly, it is the later remarks which are in greater harmony with the broader later-Wittgensteinian understanding of language, experience and belief that we have described in Chapters Three to Five of the present study.

Consider the later Wittgenstein's remark in *Culture and Value* on the way experience can lead to religious believing in God:

Life can educate you to 'believing in God'. And *experiences* too are what do this but not visions, or other sense experiences, which show us the 'existence of this being', but e.g. sufferings of various sorts. And they do not show us God as a sense experience does an object, nor do they give rise to *conjectures* about him. Experiences, thoughts, - life can force this concept on us. So perhaps it is similar to the concept 'object'. (CV 97)

Firstly, what we can see in this short remark is that Wittgenstein is clearly rejecting the 'Analytic perception model' of religious experience: experiences that 'educate' us to believing in God are not 'visions' or any other kind of (inner or outer) 'perception': genuinely God-belief-inviting²⁷ experiences don't 'show us God as a sense experience does an object', as Alston (1991: 31,49-51) and Yandell (1994: 42-43) have it, for example. Wittgenstein's rejection of what we termed the 'Analytic perception model' is consistent with our (phenomenological) critique of the Analytic perception model from Chapter One, as well as Schleiermacher's critique of the same (*Dial T* 31; *CF* 4.4), interpreted in Chapter Two. Secondly: Wittgenstein writes that the God-belief inviting experiences also don't 'give rise to *conjectures* about him'. In other words, it is not that such experiences give rise to a *hypothesis* that God may exist, where we could attempt to establish probabilities on the basis of empirical evidence, investigating the believability of the existence of God, etc. (Swinburne 2001: 8-9). Both of these epistemological models, the 'Analytic perception model' and

²⁷ Our assumption is that the fact that Wittgenstein put the 'believing in God' (CV 97) in inverted commas doesn't indicate irony or sarcasm, or that believing in God is not proper or legitimate, just as we interpreted the distinction between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' believing from *LC* 59, not as indicating that 'ordinary' is real or legitimate believing, and 'extraordinary' is not real or legitimate believing.

'religious belief as scientific hypothesis' model (or a combination of them, as in Swinburne), misrepresent the way religious believing is related to experience, according to Wittgenstein.

When Wittgenstein in the above passage (CV 97) suggests his own interpretation of the kinds of experience which 'can educate you to "believing in God"', he does not say very much. He writes about 'experiences, thoughts, – life...', and about 'sufferings of various sorts', which can '...*force* [the concept of God] on us'. This 'forcing' cannot be either rational compulsion, as we've seen, or something like a direct social pressure, where society is directly forcing this concept on us. While 'experiences, thoughts, life, sufferings,' etc. all have, or normally have, their communal dimension, their felt or even *non-conceptual* aspect is equally or even more significant here. Of course, we may say that there is a huge gap to be bridged from something like feelings or 'sufferings', to 'the concept of God', a gap about which Wittgenstein here says almost nothing. But we may suggest an interpretation: bridging this gap must be originally related to that elusive transition from 'certain kinds of silence into language' (SG 43-44) – in this case, the transition from certain kinds of felt experiencing to new forms of God-talk – which has happened through the creative moments of language innovation and can be 'relived' through relating that God-talk to one's own existential experiencing. It is instructive to note that Wittgenstein considers *concept-formation* ('forcing the concept of God on us') and *belief-formation* ('educating us to "believing in God"') as going hand in hand here (CV 97).

While in the above passage Wittgenstein doesn't spend many words elucidating the *kinds* of experience which educate us into believing in God, elsewhere he does say a bit more. Most notably and (in)famously, we find an instance of such elucidation in the somewhat earlier Wittgenstein of 'A Lecture on Ethics' (1929). There, we can detect a rare moment in which Wittgenstein explicitly gives examples of the *expressions* of certain kind of *feelings* which he considers to be behind (two) central Christian claims about God. He refers to his own 'experience par excellence' which he sometimes has. The best way to describe one of these is

...to say that when I have it I wonder at the existence of the world. And I am then inclined to use phrases as 'how extraordinary that anything

should exist' or 'how extraordinary that the world should exist.' I will mention another experience ... the experience of feeling absolutely safe.' ... the first of them is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world; and the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God. (*LE* 11-12)

Now, one may quickly notice that this passage – in particular the final two sentences – sounds recognizably expressivist: the experiences of 'the wonder of existence' and of 'feeling absolutely safe' are said to be that which people are *referring to* 'when they said that God has created the world [and] that we feel safe in the hands of God', respectively. In other words, it is not God that people refer to with such language – as Soskice (1985: 150) claims, for example – but their experiences, and these felt experiences of course are *not* understood as 'perceptions of God'. This is, in fact, in keeping with the overall tone of 'A Lecture on Ethics' (*LE*): a 'distinctly Tractarian' work (Plant 2005: 116) that has more affinities, not only with aspects of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, but also with the empiricist and logical positivist perspective on language, than it does with the later-Wittgensteinian one. Wittgenstein of *LE* says, for example, that 'a certain characteristic *misuse of our language* runs through all ethical and religious expressions', and that 'it is *nonsense* to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing' (*LE* 9); on the other hand, for the later Wittgenstein religious claims are not characterized as a *misuse* of language but as a special, 'extraordinary use' (*LC* 59), neither is it 'nonsense' to express religious experiences such as 'recognition of sin' or 'redemption through faith', which are characterized simply as '...*descriptions* of what has happened to [believers who express such experiences]' (*CV* 32; emphasis added).²⁸

²⁸ It is interesting, however, to see the Wittgenstein of 'A Lecture on Ethics' apparently torn between a logical-positivist sounding approach to the language of religion and ethics on one hand, and a 'deep respect' towards the tendency to talk religion and ethics on the other. The two places where this comes out perhaps most clearly are, first, where Wittgenstein says:

when I say they are experiences, surely, they are facts; they have taken place then and there, lasted a certain definite time and consequently are describable. And so from what I have said some minutes ago I must admit it is nonsense to say that they have absolute value. And I will make my point still more acute by saying 'It is the paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have supernatural value. (*LE* 10)

Another interesting difference to note between the Wittgenstein of LE and the later Wittgenstein is that, in ‘A Lecture on Ethics’ (as well as more generally during that period²⁹), Wittgenstein chooses to focus on what we could describe as more ‘positive’ existential feelings: the feeling of the wonder of existence, and the feeling of absolute safety. On the other hand, in the remark from *Culture and Value* that we took from the later period, Wittgenstein talks (also) about more negative experiences, ‘e.g. suffering of various sorts’ (CV 97). A plausible way of interpreting this is as an indicator of a trend of Wittgenstein’s thought on religious experiencing, from more positive to more ‘heavy’ aspects of our existential experience. As mentioned in Chapter Two (section 2.4.3), the later Wittgenstein attributes central religious-relevance also to a radical, existential guilt, ‘wretchedness’ (CV 51), or ‘*infinite* distress’, out of which alone one can really become a Christian (CV 52; italics added). While this doesn’t necessarily mean that by the mid-1930s Wittgenstein changed his mind about the religious import of the more ‘positive’ existential feelings which he analyses in ‘A Lecture’, the notable lack of any mention of ‘guilt’ or ‘suffering’ in ‘A Lecture’, together with an increasing emphasis on such experiences in his later thoughts on religion, can still be considered as a sign of a ‘trend’ in Wittgenstein’s thoughts on the religiously (most) salient experience.³⁰

And second: after Wittgenstein offers a ‘way out’ of this paradox, he still concludes the lecture on a note of tension, however:

For all I wanted to do with them was just to go beyond the world and that is to say beyond significant language. 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 11-12)

So, the ‘Tractarian Wittgenstein’ seems still to have won Wittgenstein’s internal argument in ‘A Lecture of Ethics’ philosophically, while publically conceding to the ‘religious-ethical Wittgenstein’ of the time a deep respect of the tendency towards religious and ethical language, as well as its right not to be ridiculed.

²⁹ This is confirmed by the remark from 5.11.1930 (CV 7-8) in which Wittgenstein upholds the value of ‘wonderment’ or ‘marvel’ at the world even in this scientific age, in response to – and sharp criticism of – Ernst Renan’s suggestion that wondering by the ancient Israelites at the very basic facts of life such as birth, death, sickness, dreams, and so on, was due to their lack of scientific education and understanding.

³⁰ A very interesting reading of Wittgenstein’s descriptions of feelings of ‘existential wonder’ and ‘absolute safety’ (LE 11) within the progression of Wittgenstein’s thought from his earlier to his

Although Wittgenstein did not explicitly talk of *existential* feelings, and although we can undoubtedly see also episodes of *emotional* feelings implied in his talk of ‘suffering of various sorts’ which ‘life’ brings our way (CV 97), there is more than enough interpretive room for us to use Wittgenstein’s understanding of religious experience as involving certain remarkable existential feelings. Most obviously, Wittgenstein’s descriptions of the ‘wonder at the existence of the world’, as well as ‘the feeling of absolute safety’ (LE 11-12) can hardly be read as anything else than special instances of feelings ‘...which constitute a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality’, as these ‘are not evaluations of any specific object’ (Ratcliffe 2008: 39). A significant resemblance of these experiences to certain kinds of *mystical* experiences which we’ve looked at in Chapter Two (2.3.1-2.3.3) suggests that we should treat them together; the same is suggested by our understanding that those most radical mystical experiences of the famous mystics, and the ‘remarkable’ existential experiences of occasional, ‘non-professional mystics’ (like Wittgenstein), form a continuum. And, while ‘radical guilt’, ‘wretchedness’, and ‘terror’ may describe either intentional or non-intentional feelings, Wittgenstein’s descriptions of these in the context of religious experience seem to describe some ultimate, all-encompassing and existential states, powerful enough to ‘seize you’ and ‘turn around’ (CV 61) one’s whole orientation in life, and not

later phase has been offered by Louis Sass (2001). He argues that the huge importance these two kinds of experience had for the Wittgenstein of 1929 has to do with the tendency, particularly in Wittgenstein’s *earlier* thought, towards ‘a position of detachment or removal ... a state in which one has the sense of floating outside the entirety of one’s being, consciousness, or world, and of taking all of this everything that one is or experiences or within which one moves, as the target of objectifying experience in the present moment’ (Sass 2001: 117). Sass associates this with a broader set of ‘schizoid’ (not schizophrenic) tendencies in, and unusual sensibility of, Wittgenstein’s character and thought more generally (ibid. 100-106). Sass claims that the later Wittgenstein was battling against this tendency, having moved ‘to a position in which, on the philosophical plane as well as on that of personal existence, he seems more concerned about the errors and dangers of detachment, in which he struggles to cure himself of the temptations of the schizoid position and to reinsert himself into society and reconnect with the world’ (ibid. 116). While Sass brings to view an important aspect of Wittgenstein’s life and philosophy, it is not necessary to read his descriptions of existential wonder and absolute safety as manifestations of his tendency for detachment – in fact, they can also be read as indicating the opposite: as expressions of a deeper *connectedness with*, if not unreflective immersion in, the ‘miracle of the world’. However, Sass makes a valid point that Wittgenstein’s later view of philosophy as ‘mere description’ still contains this (somewhat obscuring) tendency towards detachment, although it has become less dominant and balanced with the emphasis on the value of ‘engagement’ and ‘immersion’ in the language-games and forms of life one describes/aims to understand (Sass 2001: 118-120). We can read Sass’s critical interpretation of the later-Wittgensteinian understanding of philosophy as ‘purely descriptive’ as consistent with B. Clack’s critique of the same (1999: 122-123) and with the critique of D.Z. Phillips’s austere descriptive view of philosophy (Phillips 1999: 45-46) by S. Mulhall (2001: 110-111). C.f. Chapters Three (3.5) and Four (4.5).

merely an emotional episode with a focus not going beyond some specific inworldly object, event, or even a person.

In order to further elucidate the possibility of certain remarkable existential feelings being 'religious-belief-inviting', we will now go beyond Wittgenstein exegesis and proceed through a critical engagement with two different descriptions of this 'pull': the first is by D.Z. Phillips who explicitly builds on the aspects of the Wittgensteinian picture; and the second is by Abraham J. Heschel whose own, specific genre of religious-phenomenological writing (Kaplan 2001: 1) includes a special emphasis on the belief-inviting moments in religious experience by *presupposing* them, in an attempt to evoke both the relevant feelings and the belief-inviting momentum within them. Both authors focus on the monotheistic God (Phillips on Christian belief in God, Heschel on Jewish), central theistic beliefs and the related God-talk.

6.4.2 D.Z. Phillips on primitive reactions and religious concept formation

D.Z. Phillips develops an interpretation of Wittgenstein's concept 'primitive reactions' in which he offers an in-depth treatment of the relation between religious 'concept formation' and the primitive reactions (Phillips 1988: 281-283). While Phillips examines several examples of what he takes to be (Wittgensteinian) 'primitive reactions', we will examine only his exploration into the *experience of wonder* at being a part of the natural world and how that is related to religious concept formation.

The example Phillips uses for his philosophical reflection is Jakob Fries's expression or testimony of the his experience of 'contingency of life' and the related 'wonder' in the face of 'the power of nature':

[When] I find myself in the power of nature, with neither advice or assistance, the fortifying and elevating thought of eternal Destiny presents itself to my soul and the fear vanishes. Never shall I forget the sublime impression made upon me on the evening when I made my first acquaintance with the raging power of the sea. ... Suddenly the storm fell upon us, ploughing up the floods of the sea and hurling foaming waves against the sheer and rock cliffs nearby. ... Our little bark pitched to and fro, one moment riding the crest of a wave and the next plummeting the

depths of a trough. I turned my gaze upon the roaring tumult and then at the black and threatening heavens above. But of my anxious trembling there was no more trace. I was seized by a sublime thrill at the thought of the holy omnipotence of God. So vivid was that impression that I would today fain issue forth once more to renew my acquaintance with that tumult. And thus am I wont happily to stand, free and proud, confronting the thunder. Thus, in the thick of the battle, does the sublime thought steady my nerve and elevate my mind. (quoted in Phillips 1988: 280-281)

Assuming this expression is sincere, one explanation of it that Phillips examines is a suggestion that Fries's invoking of God's omnipotence in the middle of the sea storm is simply a culturally-conditioned construction: an ad-hoc 'rational' explanation ('An omnipotent God is behind this storm') as a reaction in a time of crisis, out of the need for consolation. This can be, not only a standard naturalistic or atheistic interpretation of such testimony, but also a theist-evidentialist one. Phillips (ibid. 281-282) argues that such an interpretation is wrong: a more sensible interpretation of this testimony is to treat the experience and the accompanying belief-reaction as a 'primitive reaction' which is not an explanation at all.

The radical feeling of contingency of one's existence in the face of the powerful forces of surrounding nature is where the notion of God's will *gets its sense in the first place*, claims Phillips, and not the other way around, as suggested by the claim 'that primitive man responds in this way because of a *prior* conclusion he has reached, namely, that because he is not responsible for the storm, someone else, greater than himself, must be responsible' (Phillips 1988: 281). Such a view, which interprets Fries's reactions in the storm as 'a *consequence* of previously held beliefs, ... ignores concept-formation in religious belief. The sense of belief in God is itself rooted in reactions such as reactions to the storm', Phillips suggests (ibid.).

We may doubt whether such simple *inversion*, of what comes first and what second, can be an appropriate interpretation of Fries' belief-response. In fact, one can concede to Phillips' (unnamed) philosophical opponent here that, in this particular case at least, we should recognize that Jakob Fries's upbringing and inculturation into God-talk has very likely predisposed him to respond to the

existential feeling of wonder/contingency in the face of nature with a *theistic* belief-response. The concept-formation and belief-formation which resulted in the concept of/belief in the 'holy omnipotence of God' did not form in Fries's mind into a vacuum of total absence of any God-concept or beliefs about God. This, however, doesn't contradict the suggestion that such existential experience was *sense-giving* to Fries's belief in God. The extremely vivid feeling of contingency in a direct and non-ratiocinated way may not have *brought about* Fries's belief in God's omnipotence, but it has nevertheless *refreshed* it. It has produced an extra-'vivid ... impression' (ibid.) of this religious picture, and it may even have *made God real* for Fries for the first time. It may be said that only through such and similar existential experiences can the belief in God itself become an *existential* belief, rather than being merely a 'dead thought', or an utterly unquestioned rule which is to be dogmatically followed, or a quasi-empirical hypothesis without any power to guide life. In this way, then, the experience which Jakob Fries went through can be seen as being at the very roots of his 'religiously proper' concept-formation *and belief-formation* (we don't posit such a clear difference between these in this context as might Phillips), despite a recognition that he must already have operated with theistic God-concepts in his life up to that point.

If we see it in this way – as an example of an existentially decisive, experiential renewal of God-talk – Fries's experience can be compared to the one had by 'Colonel Gardiner', cited and examined by William James (1985: 220-223). While in many ways different from that of Fries, Colonel Gardiner's experience also involves a dramatic, felt experience – a 'marvellous stillness' and 'supreme happiness' (ibid. 221). And, again: in and through this experience, the basic doctrinal formulas of Christianity which Col Gardiner has known for all his life until then became deeply meaningful for the first time in his life:

It was here that God met me face to face, and I shall never forget the meeting. 'He that hath the Son hath life eternal, he that hath not the Son hath not life.' I had read this scores of times before, but this made all the difference. I was now in God's presence and my attention was absolutely 'soldered' on this verse, and I was not allowed to proceed with the book will I had fairly considered what these words really involved. (quoted in James 1985: 221)

According to his testimony, before that moment Col Gardiner ‘never had a desire to reform on religious grounds’ and had, on that July afternoon, been ‘in perfect health, having been off from the drink for nearly a month... [and] in no way troubled about [his] soul’ (ibid.). While his testimony may not be completely honest in that we can recognize a degree of ‘re-construction’ in his re-telling of his own conversion story, I am nevertheless inclined to take Col Gardiner’s dramatically felt presence, marvellous stillness and supreme happiness, to be a genuine expression of an existential feeling. I also accept his statement that, in terms of his understanding of the biblical verse he refers to (1 John 5:12), this dramatic existential experience ‘made all the difference’, as he writes. In our terms: a certain remarkable existential feeling made alive the conceptual formulation, which was not genuinely (or existentially) believed before, and transformed it into a ‘deeply felt conviction’ (James 1985: 221).

So, while we are not dealing here with particular theistic language-innovations at crucial points of Christian conceptual history, the quoted experiences of Jakob Fries and Col Gardiner can nevertheless be taken as of the kind which is at the very source of theistic religious concept-formation and belief-formation. Note also that we need not understand these existential feelings as *pre-linguistic* (Ratcliffe 2012: 26-27) or unaffected by language. However, we take it that any linguistically-influenced existential feelings are ‘only’ refinements of, and developments out, of our felt being-in-the-world as a basis which is ‘already there’ (c.f. section 1.3.3) and can even be thought to have connecting links with non-human animals (c.f. section 5.3.2). Accordingly, even such religiously-relevant existential feelings as those of Jakob Fries and Col Gardiner should by no means be understood as being *created* by God-talk, although the particular nuances of these feelings may have been co-influenced and *evoked* by it³¹. Our

³¹ Related to this feature of religious language is its *evocative* power. Consider the practical-spiritual question of many experiential believers: How can we keep the faith alive when the strongly felt experiences which are meaning-giving for our religious beliefs, subside? Mark Wynn formulates the challenge, as well as the solution with the help of religious language, thus:

Even allowing that we continue to acknowledge the authority of the original experience once the feeling has subsided, there is a question therefore about how we are to appropriate its meaning at later times, and appropriate the meaning ‘really’ and not just ‘notionally’. ... Verbal formulations ... can be used to ‘rekindle’ (rather than simply describe) the content of something like the original experience. ... In the case of afterglowing feelings, we are still trying to recall the content of the original feeling at the level of intuitive insight, albeit with the assistance of language. (Wynn 2005: 71-72)

point is that, when the religiously-potent existential feelings or changes in them make Christian God-talk 'alive', this can be a genuine sense-giving and belief-inviting moment which would be seriously obscured by supposing an all-powerful role of language as *creating* (allegedly) such experience.

Let's expand this discussion somewhat and examine the transition from the inability to see God-talk as meaningful (its 'deadness') to the situation in which it becomes meaningful ('alive') a bit more closely, and relate this to the topic of the metaphoricity of God-talk addressed earlier. We must not confuse the distinction between *metaphoric linguistic expressions* and *conceptual metaphors* (Kovescses 2010: 4) with the distinction between 'alive' and 'dead' religious language. To remind ourselves: metaphoric linguistic expressions are those moments of linguistic innovation when a certain concept, like 'love', or 'spirit' ('wind' or 'breath' in its older meanings), has been used to describe God (or gods) in new ways. Any established religious language-game must presuppose such 'moments' to have happened in the past. Note, however, that it is not *necessary* that such linguistic innovations are religiously or existentially 'alive' in the sense we've understood this 'aliveness', i.e. they are not necessarily related to some remarkable, significant existential feelings and ways of living. But one would *hope* they are, especially the innovations that had taken place in one's own religious-linguistic tradition in the past. Theologically and from the Christian perspective, presumably the central Christian God-metaphors like 'God is love' or 'God is spirit' have had to do with existentially alive linguistic innovation in either Christian or the related pre-Christian conceptual histories. On the other hand, established *conceptual metaphors* in Christian God-talk – for example, 'God is love' – can also be either dead or alive for one, or for a community as a whole. 'God is love' can be *refreshed* by experience, in ways that this happened to Col. Gardiner (James 1985: 220-223), for example. So, God-talk with its *established* conceptual metaphors can be very much alive, dependent not only on the felt experience of the speaker or the listener, but also, for example, on the cultural/historical context of its utterance and the currency of the related expressions *outside* religious situations in those particular contexts.

As opposed to that, God-talk can become dead or 'idle' when 'the revelatory situation changes and the former symbols become obsolete' (Tillich 1973: 240).

This happens, for example, when the believers who recite doctrinal formulas cannot 'make connections' anymore, i.e. they cannot associate the expressions used in God-talk with any other meaningful expressions for them, either within or outside of their religious stream of life. Now, religious traditions have developed several ways of 'fixing' the problem of deadness of religious language. Focusing on Christian tradition, we can observe that one way is simply to *drop* an expression which has lost its power to describe God or God's relationship to humans, for example. Janet Soskice (2007: 68) mentions the example of the metaphor 'slaves of God' which has been widely used in the early Church to describe the relationship between Christians and God, but has, through time, lost its currency among Christians. Presumably, this was due to the post-slavery Christian cultures associating more bad with the very notion of 'slave' than good.

An interesting contemporary Christian example which may be somewhat 'threatened', but is by no means abandoned, is 'God is our father' (Soskice 2007: 70-83). While this description has fallen out of favour in many quarters of Western Christianity where feminist social and political thought has penetrated religious thinking, and where general attitudes towards women in society have changed substantially, Soskice – herself a feminist theologian – argues, not for abandonment of this established metaphor, but for keeping it alive by *reinterpretation*.³² Other ways of keeping religious language alive³³ which are

³² It is often argued that the metaphorical statement 'God is our Father' is based on an outdated patriarchal understanding of the family and social relations, and that it perpetuates the 'hierarchical patterns of male activity and female passivity' (Soskice 2007: 72). Building on Paul Ricoeur's reflections, Soskice argues that the historically most significant use of the God-as-father metaphor for Christians – Jesus addressing God as 'Abba' – was something quite different than the 'sloppy eighteenth-century rhetoric of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man' (ibid. 83). In the biblical-Hebrew application of 'father' to God, the meaning of this 'father' was not self-evident or invariable, nor established. Used often together with other kinship metaphors such as husband or mother, father-language to describe God was, from the start, 'problematic, incomplete, even shocking' (ibid. 77). It is only through an abolition of the biological meaning of 'father', and a notable transfer of meaning, which enables father-language to be usable for God in non-idolatrous ways. Jesus's use of 'Abba' (some translate it as 'daddy') to address God was especially 'rare, difficult, and audacious' according to Ricoeur (quoted in Soskice 2007: 78). Through centuries, the meaning of God-as-father was changing, and, no doubt, in a current cultural situation in the West, this metaphor has become not only fossilized but connected with forms of life (family life, communal life) and power-relations which are now largely seen as bygone or unethical. For this reason, 'God is our father' can be refreshed perhaps only by revisiting and re-describing the contexts where this was as a *fresh* metaphorical expression of a spiritual insight – and this is exactly what Soskice is trying to do.

³³ The deadness of religious language can be related to much more general processes of *habitualization* and *ritualization* of language-use. Haiman (1998: 139-146) sees the very

well established in Christianity are: connecting it with more contemporary expressive and 'new' ordinary-descriptive language, and by this creating fresh metaphors; singing it in accordance with fresh musical styles and to new melodies; interpreting it in contemporary terms; changing the order of the ritual use of God-talk; relating it to visual images which are in tune with contemporary culture, and so on.³⁴

This discussion, however, has taken us significantly beyond D.Z. Phillips's claims about God-talk and its relation to existential feelings. As we've mentioned, in his analysis of Fries's testimony, Phillips is primarily concerned to disabuse the reader of the interpretation of these parallel impulses – or, indeed, *one and the same* impulse – toward religious concept-formation and belief-response, as a quick intellectual manoeuvre, i.e. as an ad hoc evoking of a handy but clumsy *explanation* of the experience. Phillips even talks of a person with such experience as 'dying to understanding' in the face of wonder of existence (Phillips 1988: 282), which is his interpretation of the Wittgensteinian point that religious belief is not a *scientific* or rational explanation of the relevant feeling, and that any public, rational evidence-games cannot *settle* the question whether a belief in God is 'valid' or not. Phillips's occasional radical 'anti-understanding talk' may give an impression that there is *no* understanding in religion at all,³⁵ and not only that religious understanding is not scientific

process by which a *representational* function of language came to being, as related to these well documented psycho-social processes in human behaviour, habitualization and ritualization. By a regular repetition in similar contexts, a gesture (linguistic or non-linguistic) is habitualized and ritualized in a way that it becomes unnoticeable in a normal stream of life. The same process is at work when ritualistic use of religious language 'drains meaning away' from religious utterances due to constant repetition and becomes an 'empty ritual', claims Haiman (ibid. 146).

³⁴ Yet another way of battling against the fossilization of God-talk, not widespread in Christianity but very much alive in Sufi mysticism, for example, is a deliberate, *excessive* repetition of God's names (Haiman 1998: 139). The idea is that, through these practices, the names of God *in and of themselves* become *meaningless*; it is hoped that a certain transcending of 'mere symbols' and coming into a direct touch with what these symbols denote – namely, God – can happen through this practice. This can be read with Wittgensteinian glasses as indicating that Sufi mystics are aware of the power of language to 'bewitch' our understanding, even without agreeing with the elements of the broader religious picture of Sufi Islam. In Eastern religions – Hinduism, for example – the practice of repeating words or *phrases* is also widely used, although somewhat differently and often not having anything to do with the names for god[s] and transcending these: it is a constituent part of saying the mantra ('internally' or vocally) in meditation.

³⁵ For example, Phillips writes:

understanding; however, neither does Phillips claim that belief in God is 'irrational' or contrary to reason, but that its source is *a*-rational. However, we don't need to engage in further detail with Phillips's view or his interpretation of Wittgenstein to appreciate Phillips's well stated point that religious, felt experiencing such as that of 'wonder at the contingency of life [and/or at] ... the miracle of existence' (Phillips 1988: 282) is an important sense *prior* and sense-giving to the conceptually articulated religious beliefs and the associated God-talk:

The man in awe before the majesty of God's will in the storm can hardly be characterised as someone who postulates a higher order in the cosmos in order to legitimate his own worthwhileness. His reactions are not based on prior beliefs; rather, his beliefs get their sense in the context of these reactions. (ibid. 299)

What we have here, then, is an overarching Wittgensteinian perspective which brings together into one philosophical-theological picture the early-Wittgensteinian focus on the religious significance of wonder, the feelings of contingency and of 'miracle of existence', and the recognizably later-Wittgensteinian emphasis on 'primitive reactions' and religious *believing* – a construction similar to that we've proposed above.

6.4.3 Religious Phenomenology of Abraham J. Heschel

Notably different from any Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion is a religious-phenomenological approach to religious experience and belief, developed by Abraham Joshua Heschel. It will hopefully become apparent, however, that our broadly Wittgensteinian way of describing the relation between religious experience and belief has interesting points of contact with Heschel's descriptions of similar phenomena. For us, Heschel's writing will be, not so much an example of philosophical elucidation, but more an 'object for study': a special example of a set of creative moves in a religious language-game (a strand of Jewish God-talk) very similar to that which we are trying to elucidate

In the face of [wonder at the contingency of life, the miracle of existence], a man dies to the understanding, but not in the sense of failing in, or waiving, an understanding of what could be understood. On the contrary, he dies to the understanding in the sense of *seeing that what confronts him is not a matter for the understanding*. (Phillips 1988: 282; italics added)

(Christian God-talk). This doesn't mean, however, that his writings are not informed by attentive phenomenological awareness.

Generally speaking, for Heschel, experience comes before belief or doctrine or religious knowledge:

Long before we attain any knowledge about [God's] *essence*, we possess an intuition of a divine *presence* ... The speculative proofs are the result of what man does with his reason. But speculation, as we know, is not our only source of certainty. ... Thus, awareness of God does not come by degrees: from timidity to intellectual temerity; from guesswork, reluctance, to certainty; it is not a decision reached at the crossroads of doubt. It comes when, drifting in the wilderness, having gone astray, we suddenly behold the immutable polar star. Out of the endless anxiety, out of denial and despair, the soul bursts forth in speechless crying. (Heschel 1976: 67-75)

It is not hard to spot the affinities of this picture with both Wittgensteinian and Schleiermacherian-Tillichian traditions of philosophical and theological understanding, respectively. Genuine religious insight doesn't originate in, and is not based on, rational argument; religious certainty is not the result of empirical evidential procedures, or those coming from 'pure reason'; it has to do with certain remarkable experiences with an 'ultimate' existential import. Heschel sometimes describes such experiences as *mystical moments*, not dissimilarly to Schleiermacher's description in *the Speeches* of the the 'Ur-affektion' (OR 31-32), the deepest unity with all:

[A] moment comes like a thunderbolt, in which a flash of the undisclosed rends our dark apathy asunder. It is full of overpowering brilliance, like a point in which all moments of life are focused or a thought which outweighs all thoughts ever conceived of. (ibid. 78)

After likening our everyday life-world which lacks any apparent mystical consciousness to a 'cage', Heschel then turns the picture around, writing: 'There is so much light in this cage, in our world, it is as if it were suspended among the stars. Apathy turns to splendour unawares. The ineffable has shuddered itself into our soul', and so on (ibid.) – bringing this reflection to a

characteristic existentialist and *panentheistic* conclusion: 'We are penetrated by His insight. We cannot think any more as if He were there and we here. He is both there and here. He is not *a being*, but *being in and beyond all beings*' (ibid.).

Convinced that what gives sense to religious beliefs and doctrines are these mystical moments, or, the intensive flashes of 'light' into our darker, everyday experience, Heschel sometimes suggests that conceptual thought is not well fitted to express such experiences, but nevertheless feels compelled to express them and finds such expressions meaningful (Compare *OR* 31-32). While God is ineffable according to him, such belief-grounding experience which refreshes religious language has something like a 'partial ineffability' for Heschel. We can read this with the characteristic of many existential feelings in mind – remember that these are '... usually very difficult to express ... [so that] such talk is ... often vague or metaphorical. However, there are no good philosophical grounds for dismissing this talk as meaningless' (Ratcliffe 2008: 60).

As we've seen, Heschel writes of a kind of non-scientific 'certainty' in God in the face of experience, a certainty which is not the result of 'speculative proofs'. That certainty, however, is completely irrefutable *only in certain mystical moments*, not all the time of the believer's persistence in her trust in God (Kaplan 2001: 11). Like Tillich, then, Heschel considers the belief in God to be *dubitable*. And, although he rejects the idea that there is evidence for religious belief in a scientific or 'rational-philosophical' sense, for him, there is something he calls 'another kind of evidence for what God is and means'. It is 'the result of what man does with his ultimate wonder, with his sense of the ineffable.'

[The] imperative of awe is its certificate of evidence, a universal certificate which we all witness and seal with tremor and spasm, *not* because we desire to, but because we are stunned and cannot brave it. ... The indication of what transcends all things is given to us with the same immediacy as the things themselves. (Heschel 1976: 63)

Heschel elucidates this with another metaphor: existential wonder in the face of the ineffable should be recognized as 'a question': 'Wonder is a state of being asked. The ineffable is a question addressed to us...'. And to this question, he claims, the belief in God is *the* answer. In this process, '...the ultimate question

... is not the mind's *creation ex nihilo* but a reiteration in the mind of what is given to the soul' (ibid.). In other words: basic theistic concept- and belief-formation are for Heschel not entirely and merely constructed in our minds, either as a consolation or in self-deception, but the mind's response to something genuinely *given*.

Here we have, then, Heschel's metaphorical description of the 'belief-inviting-pull' of religiously relevant, remarkable experiences. That which is given can be described as a 'sense of the ineffable', which leads, however, to a reiteration in the mind as 'the ultimate question'. The answer which it calls for, or even demands according to Heschel, is necessarily a *belief* in a certain reality beyond the world of 'mere objects'. He distinguishes between the bare feeling of 'mystery', or 'wonder', or 'awe', or 'fear'³⁶, i.e. the existential feelings, on one hand, and that accompanying '*question* what to do with the mystery of feeling, what to do with awe, wonder, or fear' (ibid. 68), on the other. The beginning of faith or the root of religion is not the feeling alone, Heschel maintains, but 'a consciousness that something is being asked of us' (ibid. 69).

Before we accuse Heschel of over-intellectualizing what is, after all, a *primitive* belief-reaction, we must note that Heschel explains (in a notably Tillichian manner) that the belief-invitation from the feeling of existential wonder – which Heschel calls 'endless wonder' or 'unutterable wonder' and describes it as a kind of wonder which is not a wonder *at* things, but a wonder *with* things – is *not* an academic or speculative question. Rather, it is an 'existential demand'³⁷:

³⁶ This 'fear' can be interpreted as 'angst', i.e. the existential, non-intentional fear.

³⁷ The urgency with which the 'ultimate question' addresses us, is one of life and death for Heschel. The immediacy of this experience is likened to

the moment in which a fire bursts forth, threatening to destroy one's home. ... [In such a moment] ... a person does not pause to investigate whether the danger he faces is real or a figment of his imagination. Such a moment is not the time to inquire into the chemical principle of combustion (Heschel 1976: 69).

The similarities between this description with, both, Wittgenstein's description of the immediacy and the ultimacy of the pull to religious belief, as well as with Tillich's similarly existentialist understanding, are notable. Remember that Wittgenstein describes the 'substance of [religious] belief' with a picture of a '...man [who] fight[s] for his life not to be dragged into the fire. No induction. Terror' (LC 56). A similar life-and-death understanding of genuine religious impulse is inherent in Tillich's famous notion of faith as 'the state of being ultimately concerned' (Tillich 2001: 4).

The ultimate question, when bursting forth in our souls, is too startling, too heavily laden with unutterable wonder to be an academic question, to be equally suspended between yes and no. Such a moment is not the time to throw doubts upon the reason for the rise of the question.

(Heschel 1976: 69)

According to one interpreter, we should read Heschel's notion of the demand for a belief-response, not as a 'logical', but as an 'ethical' demand (Kaplan 2001: 8).³⁸ This doesn't remove the overly intellectual description of the belief-pull as a 'question', but it does help us to see it as a highly metaphorical, even 'stretched' description in the broader context of Heschel's thought.³⁹ And there is also an opposite, 'anti-intellectualist' trend here: Heschel seems to imply with the 'extended metaphor of radical amazement' that in the face of this remarkable existential feeling, we shouldn't engage forever in '...undue critical questioning' (ibid.) that tends to obscure the import of such experience. An undue persistence in doubt is compared by Heschel to a dousing of God's

³⁸ Compare the following thoughts, expressed by Sir John Rutter, the famous British composer of Church music. Rutter describes himself as a 'friend, fellow traveller, and agnostic supporter of the Christian faith' (Macfarlane 2009). However: as he told to Simon Russell Beale in the BBC 2010 documentary *Sacred Music*, Rutter, although being 'one of nature's don't-knowers', considers himself to be '...a believer for as long as it takes to write the piece' (Service 2010). Rutter went on explaining to Beale that he *genuinely* feels or *even is* a believer temporarily (!), while writing Christian choral music (which is steeped, of course, in the conceptual, doxastic, and narrative world of Christianity, i.e. it presupposes it). If not said in irony or insincerity, Rutter's self-description may be taken as a manifestation of the 'religious-belief-inviting' pull to which the composer 'opens himself up' in the creative process of writing Christian music and, perhaps, 'let it work' in him for the time. He doesn't (cannot) let it develop into a full-fledged, permanent Christian believing, however – one of the blockers of such a process for him is 'the problem of evil', and another the superficiality and self-centeredness of American, evangelical Christianity that he witnessed from up close. However, Rutter's other spiritual self-descriptions confirm this spiritually appreciative attitude towards life, which, while having some belief-component, doesn't include a full-fledged belief in a personal God (Christian or other). For example:

I think there are quite a lot of people like me; Vaughan Williams was similar in that he had a sense of generalised spirituality which was triggered by things like standing on top of the Malvern Hills and contemplating the beauty of nature, or walking through the west door of a cathedral and being awestruck by the grandeur and mystery of the building, or being inspired by 'Pilgrim's Progress'; I think he would not have called himself a Christian, yet his life was steeped in Christianity at every point; I am like that and my moral compass probably does derive in large part from Christian ethic and teaching; I owe Christianity a huge debt and it is rather ungrateful of me not to believe in it more. (Macfarlane 2009)

³⁹ In fact, in most other descriptions of the pull to belief from remarkable existential feelings Heschel uses less intellectual and more 'primitive' notions, like 'the *imperative* of awe', 'a *compulsion* to be aware of the ineffable', 'a moment of *enforced* concern', or the 'turning within the mind by the power from beyond the mind ...[by which] ...we are *coerced* into believing' (Heschel 1976: 64-78).

burning bush. Heschel doesn't say that feeling itself is *obviously* religious; it is possible not to recognize the 'state of being asked the ultimate question' in the remarkable existential feeling (awe, mystery, wonder, etc.). In such a case, the belief-forming process is blocked.

This may be seen as a move that widely and dangerously opens up the gates for any arbitrary, uncritical belief – religious, superstitious, fantasising, etc.... – to form in one's mind, and hence as a move which abandons philosophy's basic role for *critical* reflection. And, to an extent, this remark may be justified; so far as Heschel is 'ethically condemning' the persistent doubter, atheist or agnostic, for his lack of any religious belief-response to the existential wonder, he is *judging* the atheist or agnostic and hence he is speaking, not as a philosopher, but as a religious writer, a preacher – which is not wrong as such, of course, but it may lack a certain 'critical bite'.⁴⁰ On the other hand, a more sympathetic interpretation of Heschel is also possible here. Instead of being guilty of condoning blatant intellectual irresponsibility in (religious) belief-formation, he could also be seen as a thinker who is well aware how *any* existential belief, or stance, or worldview – be it theistic, or of other religious kind, or atheistic such as *empiricism*, for example – does not *stem* from rational deliberation in evidential procedures, but from the existentially felt source beyond evidential procedures (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 248-253; 2004: 157-159). We may remember that a similar awareness of the arational source of religious believing expressed by Wittgenstein, and his persistent refusal to condemn religious believers *on the basis* of this insight have earned Wittgenstein some very similar accusations too, even from his interpreters who are otherwise positively predisposed towards his philosophy.⁴¹

This understanding may be read as an extension into a theological direction of that which we found in the phenomenological work of Matthew Ratcliffe. Just as the 'existentially unhealthy' kind of doubt which is characteristic of certain kind

⁴⁰ See the footnote below.

⁴¹ For example: '[Wittgenstein's] philosophical stance ... appears to be beyond further reasoning, so much so that his philosophical account – cf. "We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place" (*PI* 109...) – lacks a "critical bite"' (Kober 2007: 249). In Wittgenstein's life time, the prime example of a philosopher puzzled by and critical of Wittgenstein's 'mystic ardour' (Monk 1991: 210-211) and his non-condemnation of Christianity was, of course, an atheist and Wittgenstein's former mentor, Bertrand Russell.

of philosophical thinking can be a manifestation of an 'artificial detachment from everyday social experience, a detachment that involves both alienation and a disposition towards excessive reflection on what is ordinarily taken for granted' (Ratcliffe 2008: 242), a conscious and continuous blocking of *any* religious or 'spiritual' belief-response, i.e. a doubt applied simply 'across the board' even in the face of remarkable (mystical) existential feelings or changes in them, may also involve a certain – existential, spiritual, religious, not medical – unhealthy 'alienation'. It seems impossible for Heschel, however, to characterize this kind of alienation in any non-circular way – that is, in any *non-theological* way.

While there is no evidential procedure which could 'settle' this question in a scientific or *purely* rational way, reasoning nevertheless has an important role *after* the belief-call. For this reason, Heschel doesn't give up on the notion of 'knowledge of God'. The latter is for him not a well-evidenced proposition, however, not a 'thought within [the pious man's] grasp, but a form of thinking in which he tries to comprehend all reality' (Heschel 1976: 108).⁴² Heschel doesn't claim merely that there is a general call in mystical existential feelings to *some* religious belief in a world-transcending reality; he suggests a theistic view: ultimately, the belief which is called for by existential-mystical experiences is the belief in a *personal* God:

There is a holiness that hovers over all things, that makes them look to us in some moments like objects of transcendent meditation, as if *to be* meant *to be thought of* by God, as if all external life were embraced by an inner life, by a process within a mind, pensive, intentional. (Heschel 1976: 64)

The way in which Heschel tries to temper – as a phenomenologist – this strongly theistic interpretation of existential feelings is by saying that this appears so 'to the religious man' (meaning, to a experiential *theistic* believer), as well as by advocating a pan-metaphoricist view of God-talk: he writes that

⁴² Heschel's understanding is that a certain, quite elaborate and developed continuation of the initial, more primitive religious belief-response to the mystical feeling is necessary in order to the experiential religion to be re-awakened in the future. An interpreter explains it thus:

In a certain sense, Heschel ... considers the search for the ineffable a reconstruction: Although we can get sudden insights into the mysteries of reality ... we can really grasp and *understand* them through consequent reflection and articulation. When there is not such a 'reconstruction', people *forget* that primordial experience. (Lycka 2009: 50)

the picture of personal God who is the 'inner life' of all 'external life' ... '...is, of course, a simile, but it is only in similes that we can communicate when speaking of the ultimate' (ibid.).

It is at this point that it is useful to remember the distinction between the *descriptive* and *prescriptive* mode of philosophical discourse, which we used in order to understand the sometimes obscure aspects of Wittgenstein's own, and more contemporary Wittgensteinian philosophy (D.Z. Phillips, D. Moyal-Sharrock, G. Citron, and others). In Heschel's case, the descriptive-prescriptive distinction could at times be understood in terms of the distinction between the *phenomenological* and the *religious* mode of his writing. Of course, there are no clear-cut borderlines between these in Heschel's work; and, as we've seen, even in much more disciplined philosophical writings by self-consciously descriptivist Wittgensteinians like D.Z. Phillips, there is a prescriptivist, even *religious*, or anti-religious (e.g. Kober), aspect which is hard to prise apart from the descriptive element, although this is sometimes not admitted or recognized. Furthermore, it may be argued that, to achieve its rhetorical and theological purposes, Heschel's writing *must* blend the phenomenological and religious modes.⁴³

For our purposes, however, this can be somewhat obscuring. One may feel that the movement from existential feeling to a fully-fledged *theistic* belief is presented as 'too quick', and with too little attention to the historical nature of any religious language, including (Jewish, and Christian) God-talk. Despite the vital phenomenological insights which both Heschel's and D.Z. Phillips's attention to the religious belief-inviting pull in existential feelings offer, we must now, again, broaden our reflections somewhat, and see how their theologically informed interpretations can be understood with non-theistic responses in view.

⁴³ Edward Kalpan considers Heschel's characteristic combination of religious and phenomenological styles of writing as a special *genre*. It is not phenomenological philosophical work, but 'phenomenological writing', i.e.:

...a creative process manifested in a plurivocal expository style that combines critical analysis and literary methods—appealing to both rational and intuitive faculties. This discourse fulfils contradictory tasks: it 'deconceptualizes' theology in order to foster insights beyond language. Critical dialectics expose gaps between received ideas and the ineffable; at the same time, Heschel reconceptualises such insights in order to participate in sacred tradition. Heschel thus manoeuvres the reading process itself to effect the transition from concepts to an encounter with the divine presence. (Kaplan 2001: 1)

In other words: while our focus is, just like D.Z. Phillips's and Heschel's in the above mentioned works, on beliefs about God and theistic God-talk, we need to place this investigation in the context of some further reflection on existential feelings, the nature of the religious/existential belief-attitude, and on how any existential belief-response to them may be better understood.

6.5 Critical reflections on existential/religious belief-formation

6.5.1 Variety of existential belief-responses

When we talk of existential *feelings* on the one hand and religious *beliefs* on the other, we are operating with two quite different categories – the concept 'existential feeling' is a *phenomenological* category, whereas the concept of 'religious belief' is not phenomenological but a *socio-psychological* category. Despite this, we've maintained that the relation between these two categories can be summed up by saying that certain, remarkable existential feelings (or changes in them) *can be* religious belief-inviting. In saying this, then, we are engaging in a certain form of cross-categorical discourse. And yet, only with such a methodological synthesis – between the 'grammatical investigation of religious belief' and the phenomenological investigation of existential feelings – is it possible to illuminate the philosophically crucial point of the belief-inviting 'pull', this compelling movement of an 'emerging, believed-in thought' in the face of feeling.

Secondly, we have also seen that existential feelings are non-intentional, whereas the intentionality of beliefs can be a more complicated matter than it may seem at first sight. Our understanding is (c.f. section 3.4; see also Appendix I) that it makes no sense to talk of the intentionality of hinge-beliefs, and that, when talking about intentionality of *any* beliefs (scientific, or religious/existential, but not hinge-certainties) we are not talking about a *phenomenological* kind of intentionality. Now, we assume that beliefs *about* God are intentional, but the intentionality of such beliefs is mostly due to the 'thought'-construction that is posterior to religious-belief formation, the metaphorical *representation* of the 'Source of all' to which our believed descriptions are then directed. *Phenomenologically*, the source of God-beliefs is

not intentional feelings or perception, but non-intentional, existential feelings or changes in them.⁴⁴

The way to link the non-intentional feeling and intentional belief about God is with a little help from Schleiermacher's theology of feelings, through which we can re-describe the belief-inviting pull into religious believing in God as an 'intentionality in becoming'. As mentioned in Chapter Two (2.2.1), it was exactly in this way that the 'grey area' between feeling and belief was described by Louis Dupre (1964) and more recently by Ten Kate (2007), in their respective interpretations of the early Schleiermacher's concept of 'religious intuition' (in the first edition of the *Speeches*). While their readings admittedly involve considerable creativity as well as sympathy towards Schleiermacher's descriptions of 'intuition' in the *Speeches*, to interpret 'intuition' as an unfinished, instinctive act towards religious descriptions and belief-commitment (Dupre 1964: 110) and as something which mediates between feeling and belief, 'itself not coinciding with these opposite poles' (Ten Kate 2007: 396-397), may indeed be the best way to make Schleiermacher's 'intuition' useful in today's discussion of the relation of existential feeling and religious believing.

Speaking most generally and non-theologically, we must observe, of course, that the belief which seems called for by existentially felt experience may be theistic or not, or, indeed, people may not feel urged to believe anything at all in the face of such experience. The content of the 'invited' belief most often depends on many cultural and other factors, of course; even calling existential beliefs 'religious' is a culturally and historically relative decision. The belief may be, for example, in the 'primary reality beyond the world from which everything stems'; or, in the 'spiritual connectedness of everything'; or, in certain ultimate

⁴⁴ Compare Tillich's distinction between the experiential 'ecstasy' or mystical union, which we interpret as consisting of extraordinary existential feelings, and the 'knowledge of God'. A mystical union with any segment of the world, for example, is closely related to the knowledge of God, but it cannot be that (or any other) knowledge since 'there is no knowledge without the presence of both elements' (Tillich 1973: 97), i.e. the element of union as well as the element of detachment. In other words, any knowledge necessarily includes mental and linguistic representation, as well as distinction between the knower and the known, the subject and the object, whereas in the religiously-relevant experience, such a distinction is transcended. Whatever religious knowledge of God may be, and however different from scientific knowledge it may be, Tillich says, it is important to note that there is 'an object, even in our knowledge of God' (ibid. 97). In other words, Tillich builds his systematic theology with a clear awareness that beliefs about God which he takes to be knowledge have to be intentional, whereas mystical union cannot be (and therefore these can't be one and the same thing).

'goodness of being'; or, it may even merely be a *belief in* – and not merely a *feeling of* – the 'miracle of existence'. An existential belief that 'There is something ultimately meaningful about the existence of the universe' may be related to a feeling of a certain all-important depth in one's kinship with nature, planets, stars, and galaxies, where the decision whether this belief is 'religious' or not is not simply given in the experience itself.⁴⁵ For this reason, when we deliberately speak as generally as possible, it is good to speak of *existential* rather than *religious* belief. Whether such beliefs are to be regarded as 'religious' or not is a sociologically, theologically, historically, and at any rate culturally conditioned, decision.

Regardless of where we draw the line between 'religious' and 'non-religious', both non-religious and religious expressions of existential feelings would normally include metaphorical linguistic representation (Ratcliffe 2008: 36-37). Neither is the difference between one and the other necessarily in that the religious response goes a step further than the non-religious since it leads also to a *belief*, while the non-religious does not. In fact, the negotiation as to whether certain existential beliefs are religious or not is a dynamic process in Western societies today, where social pressures to not be 'religious' (but rather, perhaps, just 'spiritual') unavoidably influence the meaning of 'religious' – somewhat similarly, perhaps, as in past ages in Europe the social pressures favoured all kinds of beliefs and experiences to be described as 'Christian' rather than not.

However, it can be typical for a contemporary self-conscious atheist to argue that existential (or any other) feelings *should not* lead to *any* religious, metaphysical, or even what we've dubbed 'non-religious existential beliefs'. The reductivist-naturalist regime of such 'ethics of belief' says that any beliefs which may seem invited from feelings (existential or other) should be blocked and never taken as legitimate or justified, but rather as resulting from some non-

⁴⁵ See, for example, how the nature-mystic, Richard Jefferies expresses the belief-inviting pull from existential feelings – not in the direction of theistic belief, but in the direction of a pan-en-henistic, or even pantheistic, existential belief:

The fact of my own existence as I write, as I exist at this second, is so marvellous, so miracle-like, strange, and supernatural to me, that I unhesitatingly conclude I am always on the margin of life illimitable, and that there are higher conditions than existence. Everything around is supernatural; everything so full of unexplained meaning. (Jefferies 2007: 20)

cognitive and delusionary processes, such as wishful thinking, or similar sources of self-deception. This is often taken as a 'rule of grammar' in the Wittgensteinian sense by the committed atheists, although it may often be presented as 'proven by science' as in the case of Richard Dawkins.⁴⁶ But it may also be a philosophically very elaborate position that is not necessarily amalgamated with scientism, at least not blatantly so. An example of this is perhaps Quentin Smith's view. Smith (1986) argues that, philosophically, we have a choice between two sharply distinct kinds of metaphysics: one he calls 'metaphysics of reason', and the other 'metaphysics of feeling'. The world as a whole is rationally meaningless, and the only proper response to the problem of rational meaningfulness of the world, Smith maintains, is a radically different kind of metaphysics which he calls 'metaphysics of feeling' – a metaphysic which abstains completely from any explanations, theories, or even *beliefs* about the world as a whole. 'From the perspective of reason, it is *reasons* for the world that are meaningful, whereas from the perspective of feeling, it is the ways in which the world is *important* that are meaningful. ... Relation of reason to the world is *explanative*; relation of feeling to the world is *appreciative*' (ibid. 20). Smith's position has similarities with 'Wittgensteinian expressivism'⁴⁷, and

⁴⁶ Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* (2007) is a good example of such popular metaphysics and belief-regime that borrows its legitimacy from the association with 'science' (due to Dawkins' scientific credentials). According to Dawkins, either the belief in God is a full-fledged scientific 'hypothesis' that is ready and willing to enter the game of scientific evidential procedures, or it should not be a *belief* at all (ibid. 135-136).

⁴⁷ Interestingly, Smith's criticizes even Heidegger and Wittgenstein as representatives of the 'metaphysics of reason', although he credits them for coming closer to the realization of 'metaphysics of feeling' than anyone else in the history of Western philosophy. Surprisingly and in opposition to 'Wittgensteinian expressivists' we mentioned above, Smith takes even the Wittgenstein of 'A Lecture of Ethics' as too theological, i.e. still entangled into the mire of the metaphysics of reason:

...the emphasis still remains on the rational spirituality; the feeling is assumed to be of significance only insofar as it provides a vehicle for raising the question about reasons. Thus Wittgenstein ... states that the experience of wondering at the existence of the world leads him to use such phrases as 'how extraordinary that anything should exist' and 'how extraordinary that the world should exist.' Although Wittgenstein places a central emphasis on this feeling of wonder at the extraordinary existence of the world, he does so not because he is concerned with this experience as a fulfilment in itself, i.e., as an appreciation of a felt meaning of the world, but because he is concerned with this experience in the respect in which it can be interpreted as pointing beyond the world to a God and an absolute value. ... Wittgenstein interpreted these expressions as having an ethical-theological import; they are attempts to refer to an absolute value and to God. ... But what must be emphasized is that Wittgenstein failed to realize that he could, from a different perspective, have interpreted the extraordinariness of the world's existence as a felt meaning of the world, and the wonder as an appreciation of this meaning. By interpreting them as pointing to a God and Goodness, he revealed that he

a lot of these have to do with the fact that he obeys strictly the assumption of cognitive-conative divide, keeping the realm of feeling (non-cognitive) and the realm of reason and beliefs (cognitive) completely and entirely separate and taking this strict separation as the highest intellectual virtue.⁴⁸

Beside observing that atheist thinkers such as Dawkins or even Smith don't recognize that there may be different *kinds* of belief-attitudes, or don't recognize any other than the scientific kind (in Wittgensteinian sense) of believing as legitimate, we must also note that any decision as to whether *any* existential belief-response to feelings is legitimate or not, or 'healthy' or not, is neither trivial nor (ultimately) 'scientific'. They involve phenomenological, non-scientific and theological (or anti-theological) decisions and judgements about the import of existential feelings, which are bound to be circular at some level. In other words: any atheist, theist, agnostic, or any other kind of religious judgement on this, any arbitration between which if any belief-response is legitimate, is itself, ultimately, existential.

It is, of course, often the case that people express existential feelings verbally, i.e. through linguistic representations – metaphors, while not at the same time expressing any existential *beliefs* (either religious or non-religious). For example, the expression of an existential feeling of depression by uttering 'all is dark and void' need not, by itself, express a belief or any *intentional* state although it involves representation. The content of the existential feeling is

was interested in them only from the viewpoint of a metaphysics of reason. (Smith 1986: 23)

⁴⁸ Compare the expression of what comes close to being an existential (but not religious) *belief*, by a naturalist religious studies professor Bron Taylor who is somewhat more sympathetic towards religious believing than Quentin Smith. He concludes the end of his recent book, *Dark Green Religion*, with the following thought:

Even though I am a naturalist, in the absence of any compelling explanation for the universe as a whole or the life that is in and around me on this little blue planet, I can think of no better term than 'miracle' to describe all I perceive. Even the bizarre fact that I am here to perceive it, reflect on it, and share my musings strikes me as nothing less than miraculous. In this, I fully understand the impulse of scientists and others who fall back on religious terms to express their deepest feelings of delight and wonder at all they sense and know. (Taylor 2010: 221)

It is interesting to note that Taylor sympathetically recognizes the '*impulse*' towards religious believing in the face of the miraculousness of the world, although he then describes a positive response to such an impulse with a slightly pejorative notion of 'falling *back* on religious terms' to express it.

being represented/expressed in terms of the 'picture[s]' (Z 489) of darkness and void. However, the feeling with such a *content* – if one vividly feels this way for longer periods, say – *can* pull one to, or strongly contribute to, believing some things about the world, oneself, life, humanity, God, and so on, as opposed to other views. Plausibly, the content of the resulting existential beliefs can be related to the *content* of the feeling 'all is dark and void'. Quite apart from religious contexts, then, prolonged periods of depression, for example, can create an immense downward pull towards all-encompassing, 'bleak' existential beliefs with a life-guiding import. Some forms of depression therapy therefore focus on blocking or 'braking' this connection between feelings characteristic of depression, and the characteristically resulting beliefs (for example, the belief that one is worthless, or a belief in the meaninglessness of life in general, or a belief that suicide is a reasonable thing to do in one's situation) (c.f. Trower et al. 2011: 7-8).⁴⁹ Of course, this is not to say that the phenomenal *content* of feeling is the *only* factor, or even the most crucial, which contributes to the *content* of the resulting existential beliefs – there are all kinds of historical trajectories of word-uses, associations, conceptualizations of the world, God (or gods, or 'the real'), humanity, and their interrelationships, within which any contemporary expression of existential feelings or belief lives and from which it borrows. Nevertheless, these contingencies don't mean that we should deny there is any link between the content of feelings and that of beliefs.

6.5.2 On existential/religious truth and falsity

To make it even clearer why we have to say that Heschel's description of the transition from existential feeling of 'infinite wonder' to a fully-fledged theistic belief in a personal God is too quick, we need to address a few more complexities in relation to religious beliefs about God.

⁴⁹ This is not to say that the cognitive-behavioural therapy of mood-disorders argued for by Trower et al. (2011) has an elucidating overall 'picture of the mind', at least from our perspective. Quite often, there is an excessive emphasis on *inference* in their understanding of emotions, as if the beliefs resulting from emotions would *normally* consist of an inference on the basis of certain premises. When the belief-formation occurs in a very instinctive or primitive way, the tendency is to interpret this as 'thinking turning to emotions', or subconscious, very quick inference. See Ratcliffe (2008) and Sass (1994) for careful phenomenological and Wittgensteinian critiques, respectively, of the picture of the mind with which this psychological school (among several others) operates.

First, we've argued that the best way to understand religious believing is to take it as life-guiding, but not indubitable. Despite the fact that her basic beliefs about God *normally* function as rules of life and thought for a Christian, they are nevertheless dubitable, bipolar and fallible beliefs. However, we've resisted taking the way in which scientific empirical beliefs are dubitable, bipolar, falsifiable and verifiable, as an appropriate model for thinking about religious/existential dubitability, truth, falsehood, religious/existential falsifiability or verifiability. There are different senses of 'true' and 'false' as these are attributed to different *kinds* of beliefs (Baker and Hacker 1985: 280). And, since '[it] is only when we appreciate the sense of religious beliefs that we can see what calling them true or false amounts to' (Phillips 2000: xi), a proper attention to the sense of religious beliefs must determine our understanding of what it means for such beliefs – Christian beliefs about God – to be true or false.

Our limited study, however, doesn't include any detailed investigation of the senses in which Christian beliefs about God can be true and false, falsified, let alone verified (if that is a meaningful idea). What we can do, however, is to take two existing accounts within somewhat similar broader philosophical-theological picture as is ours, and indicate, in broad strokes, in which direction this discussion could proceed: The Tillichian account, and a Schleiermacher-Hickian account. Let's start with Tillich.

Tillich begins by accepting several limiting presuppositions about the notion of truth in general. First, he makes the point that theology cannot escape the discussion of the meaning of the term 'truth' for the simple reason that it makes truth claims (Tillich 1973: 100-101). Second, he doesn't object to the logical rule that 'true' is conceptually interconnected with 'false': If a belief or a 'judgement' *cannot* be false, it cannot be true either. When discussing different candidates for the meaning of 'truth' and 'true' in the philosophy of his time⁵⁰, Tillich unsurprisingly rejects the empiricist understanding according to which '... "truth" is restricted to empirically verifiable statements' (ibid. 100). However, he concedes to the empiricist that the concept they invest so much in, '*verification*', is, just like the concept 'falsehood', also logically connected with the notion of

⁵⁰ Tillich was writing his *Systematic Theology* in the 1940ies and 1950ies.

'truth'. He writes: 'The verifying test belongs to the nature of truth; in this positivism is right.'

As opposed to empiricists, Tillich makes clear that he takes 'verification' as an umbrella term here, a concept that is to be understood in a very broad sense, simply as 'a method of deciding the truth or falsehood of a judgement' (ibid. 102). He finds the positivist-empiricist prescription that the notion of verification is to be confined to the experimental method and scientific evidential procedures, to be an 'impermissible' piece of linguistic legislating. His reasons for this are not only theological or philosophical, but also, or even primarily, ethical.⁵¹ A distinction which he then suggests is between two broad kinds of verification (Tillich 1973: 100-101): an *experimental* verification which corresponds to the kind of knowledge he calls 'controlling knowledge', and an *experiential* verification which corresponds to a different, 'receiving knowledge'.⁵² These two types of verification are quite different, Tillich claims.

⁵¹ In the context of his time, Tillich, undoubtedly having the horrible consequences of the effective use of the then-highest scientific and technological achievements by the Nazi war- and holocaust-machinery, argues that, when the experimental method of verification which corresponds to the controlling knowledge claims complete control on truth,

[life], spirit, personality, community, meanings, values, even one's ultimate concern, [is] treated in terms of detachment, analysis, calculation, technical use. ... A consequence of this attitude is a rapid decay of spiritual (not only of the Spiritual) life, and estrangement from nature, and, most dangerous of all, a dealing with human beings as with things. ... Cognitive dehumanization has produced actual dehumanization. (Tillich 1973: 99)

⁵² Tillich (1973: 97-105) observes that the kind of knowledge which is most clearly 'scientific' is the knowledge characteristic for natural sciences like physics and chemistry which strives for as much detachment as possible. He calls such, an almost idealized, notion 'controlling knowledge'. The central tendency of such knowledge is that it 'transforms the object [of knowledge] into a completely conditioned and calculable "thing", which such knowledge "objectifies" not only logically (which is unavoidable) but also ontologically and ethically' (ibid. 97). The controlling knowledge, however, is always in such or other combination with what Tillich calls 'receiving knowledge', which 'takes the object into itself, into union with the subject' (ibid. 98). The receiving knowledge does not tend towards detachment; to the contrary, it is based on *participation* between the knower and the known. Tillich maintains that, on a certain level of experience, 'union with everything is possible' – even a union of an engineer with a particular piece of metal that she researches, since metals, too, have their own 'interestingness of existence' or 'elements of subjectivity'. Hence, the 'element of union' and the 'element of detachment' are always both present in any knowledge, although in different combinations. While a highly controlling knowledge, dominated by the element of detachment (e.g. knowledge of the movement and mass of particles in a particle accelerator), is at one end of the continuum, a highly receiving kind of knowledge, dominated by the element of union (e.g. personal knowing of a close friend), is at the other end. There are several kinds of knowledge where these two elements are mixed in less simple ways, such as sociological, psychological, anthropological or historical knowledge (Tillich 1973: 97-98). For Tillich, as could be expected, knowledge of God is more heavily dominated by the element of union than detachment, but it transcends both the ordinary controlling and the ordinary receiving knowledge. In fact, he writes, these two kinds of knowledge ultimately lead to a 'threatening dilemma' or conflict between epistemological

The former is very precise, repeatable, controllable by strict experimental method, and bound up with empirical evidential procedures; the latter is imprecise, not repeatable, not controllable by experimental method, and not linked with *scientific*, or at least empirical, evidential procedures (ibid. 102-103). Nevertheless, Tillich refuses to give up on the notion of *experiential* verification, since:

Verification can occur within the life-process itself. Verification of this type (experiential in contradistinction with experimental) has the advantage that it need not halt and disrupt the totality of a life-process in order to distil calculable elements out of it (which experimental verification must do). The verifying experiences of a nonexperimental character are truer to life, though less exact and definite. ... Receiving knowledge is verified by the creative union of two natures, that of knowing and that of the known. This test ... is not final at any particular moment. The life-process itself makes the test. (Tillich 1973: 102-103)

Now, through a Wittgensteinian lens, this understanding may look very suspicious at best, if not worthy of outright rejection. True, Tillich and Wittgenstein (according to our interpretation) agree that 'true' should be conceptually interconnected with 'false' and that truth-aptness of a belief should be connected with its dubitability. But here, the similarities between the understandings of the two thinkers over (the very possibilities of) religious truth or falsity, let alone 'verifiability', seem to end.

Wittgenstein, as we saw, associates the truth-aptness and knowledge-aptness of a statement or a belief with 'checking a statement', 'giving grounds', 'justifying the evidence', etc. (OC 79-80, 204) – in short, with some kind of verification procedures which have to do with 'general consent' (OC 555). A knower of *any* kind of knowledge has to be able to give *some kind of answer* to the question 'how does he know it?' (OC 550) to the relevant epistemic community. When Tillich insists on his notion of 'experiential verification' in connection with the knowledge of God, he is suggesting that religious beliefs, including the very

legitimacy (controlling knowledge) and significance (receiving knowledge). The dilemma, he argues, leads either to a 'desperate resignation of truth' (*ala* Richard Rorty, in more recent times), or into a genuinely *theological* direction, towards a 'quest for revelation', which is to say, question for the knowledge of God (ibid. 105).

basic and normally 'grammatical' belief in God, are in their own way verifiable, truth-apt and knowledge-apt. The problem with this suggestion from a Wittgensteinian perspective is that the notion of 'experiential verification' needs some notion of 'evidence', some communally agreeable notion of what it means to 'give grounds for' or 'justify' beliefs about God. Clearly, if we follow the standard, grammaticalist reading of Wittgenstein on religion, Christian (or any other) basic beliefs about God are (always) *beyond* questioning, beyond doubting games, beyond the very possibility of giving grounds and evidence, etc. They are, as are the basic 'frameworks of thinking' or 'hinge-certainties', simply 'there – like our life'.

Remember also that, from the Wittgensteinian perspective which we accepted, 'evidence' can only be something *in the world* and not in the mind. There are no 'thing-like' experiential units that could serve as evidence; justifying beliefs or giving grounds is not (originally, or ultimately) an internal game within the mind. Now, Tillich doesn't explicitly conceptualize 'evidence of experience' in this interiorized sense. But his account of 'experiential verification' relies on the idea of 'participation of one with the segments of the world', which in turn has to do with what we've called existential feelings (for example 'ecstasy', in Tillich's terminology). While Tillich doesn't elaborate on this, his notion of '*experiential verification*' brings together 'verification' with 'experience' in a way that strongly suggests that certain internal experience is 'evidence' for religious knowledge.

On the other hand, we've seen that there is a minor strand of thought in the later Wittgenstein on religion which has *some* affinities with what Tillich is (according to a plausible reading) talking about by invoking 'experiential verification'. We noted that the later Wittgenstein recognized the element of *volition* in religion, when writing that believers are called to *persist* in faith (CV 37), or that, once 'turned around' (into faith in God), believers should then 'stay turned around' (CV 61). Presumably – and this is a possible *interpretation* – such calls for persistence are needed in the face of experiences that are potentially *challenging for faith*. For example, longer periods of (felt) meaninglessness of life, or a completely 'desecrated' experience of the world and oneself. Such existential feelings could be seen as pulling one into existentially believing in an utterly God-less, meaningless and valueless world as the ultimate reality. It is because such experiences can have the power to

weaken or challenge one's belief in God that one needs to persist in doctrines of faith as *rules*, i.e. 'grammatically', through times when the religious belief-inviting experiences such as existential wonder (*LE* 8-12) or even 'sufferings of various sorts' (*CV* 97) don't happen (and the related God-talk may be 'less alive').

Seemingly at least, it is not a big step from this stream of Wittgenstein's thought to Tillich's idea that the 'life-process' or experiential episodes constitute an ultimate *test* of one's beliefs about God. Life-experiences, broadly speaking, are able to give, or fail to give, 'existential confirmation' (*ibid.* 96) to our existential beliefs, theistic or non-theistic. This seems directly to clash with Wittgenstein's remarks such as: 'Whatever believing in God may be, it can't be believing in something we can test, or find means of testing' (*LC* 60). And yet, two things need to be noted here. First: Tillich obviously operates with a very different sense of 'testing beliefs' than Wittgenstein does in *Lectures on Religious Belief*. Tillich attempts to explain the specific sense of 'testing' which applies to religious/existential beliefs, and the ways in which it is *very different* from any experimental/empirical testing which is, quite obviously, what Wittgenstein has in mind when saying that believing in God cannot be tested (*LC* 56-59). In fact, Tillich, very consciously, fights this kind of grammatical (prescriptive) battles regarding meanings of other concepts for which recognizably specific meanings have been developed in Western philosophy. For example, distinguishing between 'ontological' and 'technical' reason (Tillich 1973: 72-75), he insists that the meaning of the word 'reason' (and, 'reasonability', etc.) should not be constrained to scientific, technical or logical reasoning alone (*ibid.* 71-81). He also writes about a 'depth of reason' (*ibid.* 70) and suggests there is a deep harmony between reason and *revelation*, rightly understood (*ibid.* 94; revelation is for him related to 'ecstasy', extraordinary kinds of phenomenological givenness 'beyond' subject-object structure). For Wittgenstein, on the other hand, it is clear that 'reason' and 'reasonability' have a much more formal and narrower sense, according to which only the *falsely* religious (superstitious, quasi-scientific) believing '...has all the appearances of trying to be reasonable', but it is not; reasonability is conceptually related to empirical, historical evidence-giving, i.e. scientific justification of beliefs (*LC* 98-95) whereas religious claims such as those in the Pauline epistles are 'not reasonable',

neither do they 'pretend to be' (LC 58). In contrast to this, Tillich would never concede that religious beliefs are not subject to reasonability as he understands it (Tillich 1973: 86).

And the second remark on the conflict between the Tillichian idea of testing religious beliefs and the Wittgensteinian picture: It is, of course, not controversial that the idea that beliefs about God can/should be *tested* – or that a 'life-long testing' of our beliefs about God '*must* go on continually', as Tillich insists (Tillich 1973: 103) – is in tension with the believer's tendency to hold these as *unquestionable*, indubitable rules of life and thought. But the Tillichian disagreement with Wittgensteinian-*grammaticalist* does not consist in the Tillichian denying that Christian basic beliefs about God tend to be, or even often legitimately are, 'grammatical'. It consists in rejecting the grammaticalist resolution of the tension between the 'grammatical' tendency of central religious beliefs on the one hand, and their 'aiming at truth' (and hence their 'dubitability') on the other.⁵³ This tension is not resolved by denying either. Instead, it is exactly in seeking to understand beliefs about God as including the tension

⁵³ As noted in Chapter Four (4.6.2.2), the grammaticalist solution to this problem is favoured by D.Z. Phillips. Consider his argument against Nelson Pike's quasi-scientific interpretation of St Theresa's religious experience and belief in God. The problem with the suggestion that mystical experience can even in principle '...serve as a source of support for belief in the existence of God' (Pike 1994: 230; quoted in Phillips 2000: 109) is, in Phillips's words, that it confuses the all-important distinction between 'the two senses of criteria...: criteria which operate within a form of life and criteria which show us the character of the form of life in question' (Phillips 2000: 108). It was only with the former and not the latter that St Theresa was concerned, Phillips argues. Of course, this is a valid observation. So is Phillips's observation that Pike is wrongly assuming the possibility of 'something we think we understand, independent of all contexts, namely, assigning truth-values to propositions' (ibid. 111). The very distinguishing between truth and falsity regarding religious beliefs '...is itself a religious act. ... To ask for a determination of religious truth which will be non-confessional in character is to ask for an illusion' (ibid. 124). Phillips cautions against a context-free notion of truth here, and this is where we have to agree with him; he rightfully accuses Pike for not giving any indication 'what assigning a truth-value in [Christian religious context] would amount to' (ibid. 110). But while these are valid points, in our view Phillips ventures too far when claiming that determining religious truth is simply 'confessional in character' (ibid. 124). We suggested (4.6.2.2) that his two kinds of criteria, the criteria that 'operate within a form of life' and the criteria 'which show us the character of the form of life in question' (ibid. 108) are too neatly divorced from each other. Different forms of life – religious, or confessional, or secular, or cultural – are not isolated islands or units of human or communal ways of going on (Plant 2005: 106). Rather, they are overlapping and interweaving with one another, 'agreeing' in many 'primitive reactions', hinge-beliefs as well as in many ethical, common-sense, scientific, and even some *religious* beliefs. There are mutual 'conceptual spillages' between epistemic communities, deeply influencing each other's conceptual belief-worlds. We may say, then, that the common aspects of the forms of life (let alone common aspects of experiencing) which Christians share with non-Christians that enable the possibility that even the belief in God *can* at times be doubted by Christians. Contra Phillips, we must recognize the possibility that 'Christian form of life' in its particularity can be put under question, although *indirectly*: through the most fundamental type of doubt (existential, not scientific doubt) in God.

between these two tendencies that our task lies, the task which may be formulated as one of balancing valuable insights of Wittgenstein on one side, and Tillich on the other.

So, if we *were* to choose the Tillichian language-game in order to elucidate the bipolarity of religious beliefs, this would mean going against the grain of Wittgenstein's use of the concepts of 'testing' beliefs, 'reasonability', and a few other concepts as well. Testing of religious/existential beliefs, according to such a picture, would not be like scientific, *experimental* verification or falsification; it would consist in something like over-arching life-reflections about our most basic existential predicament, taking into account that certain remarkable existential feelings are a life-giving source of God-beliefs (in the case of a Christian), and that other kinds of existential feelings or changes in them may seem to invite, say, atheistic existential belief. Such a Tillichian reflective appraisal which would be *communal* as much as individual would presumably arbitrate (or confirm, or fail to confirm) which believed representations of reality 'ring more true', all things considered. Yet, this 'all things considered' can never be literal, of course: any such 'judging' is always local and partial, and to a large extent (but not completely) historically limited with the existential, religious and everyday discourses at our disposal.

But we need not commit to this Tillichian picture here. In fact, there are still several problematic features in it from our perspective, two of which we can shortly mention here. Firstly: it is hard to see whether the Tillichian notion of 'testing' religious/existential beliefs can completely avoid treating relevant experiences as 'inner evidence' or 'data'. It is, after all, described as '*experiential verification*' (Tillich 1973: 100). Secondly, about the '*verification*' part: even if we concede that it makes sense to prescriptively insist on a radically non-scientific sense of 'verification' and use it in theology or philosophy of religion,⁵⁴ it may be that we can only, or better, establish the *falsity* of

⁵⁴ I am inclined to think that the strong association of the concept 'verification' with science, measurements, repeatable observation in experimental settings, as well as statistical research, evidence-procedures at court, etc. is a reason enough for parting company with Tillich and for abandoning this concept in theology. When 'verification' becomes so conceptually connected with such contexts in culturally very entrenched language-games, we arrive at a point where retaining it in a theological context, in relation to establishing the truth or falsity of religious beliefs, can as much misrepresent as it can elucidate the process of *testing* existential truth and falsity.

religious beliefs than their *truth* anyway. Under critical reflection or testing, we may still always end up with a certain plurality of possibly true religious beliefs, or possibly true *larger complexes/systems* of religious beliefs in a given context. While one of these systems of beliefs – say, Progressive Protestant Christian – may be much closer to my heart than any other, or simply habitually believed and *lived* by me, I may be unable to tell that it is, on the whole, more justified than some other systems which I haven't inhabited. This is a point made by the pluralist John Hick. While he retains a sense that 'religions' can be bearers of *religious* truth or falsity, Hick sees most theological advocacy of the supposed truthfulness of one's own religion (even by inclusivists such as Tillich) as 'arbitrary superiority-by-definition' (Hick 1987: 23). If we are in such a position – the position of not being able to tell the truth or falsity in relation to at least *several other traditions* as our own – then it is not sensible at all to talk about 'verification' of religious beliefs or systems of beliefs, although may still be able to talk about a certain kind of 'falsification'.

And here, what Hick suggests is of further interest, as it suggests a rather different approach to the problem we noted with the bipolarity of religious beliefs than does Tillich. His famous view is that the only thing we could take as criteria for the acceptability/truth of a religious belief-system, apart from its internal consistency, are 'observable facts, ... constituting the fruits of religious faith in human life' (ibid.). These fruits are, admittedly, 'bewildering in scope', Hick maintains, and yet, 'two threads are available to guide us: we can look for both individual and social transformation' which a given religious belief system, or a given religious belief within its broader system of meanings, results in or fosters (ibid.). In such a picture, then, the practical outcomes of religious beliefs *are* the 'evidence' that we have to decide their truth or falsity. Importantly, unlike the Tillichian approach, Hick's doesn't take 'evidence' as something interiorized ('experience' or 'qualia') but as *public* evidence which, however, is not understood in *scientific* terms or taken up into a scientific evidence-game. In this picture, an important strand of Wittgensteinian philosophy of mind which we found acceptable and relevant for philosophy of religion – the rejection of any interiorizing of 'evidence' – can be fully upheld.

It is worth noting that, in a somewhat similar suggestion to that of Hick, Schleiermacher, on the basis of a link he sees between God-consciousness

and moral endeavour, suggests a *practical/ethical* test to adjudicate whether a religious tradition (a system of religious beliefs) is a result of God-consciousness or not, or even to what extent (CF 70.3, 75.1). Since religious traditions in their noetic aspect are systems of understanding ourselves, others (including those outside one's own tradition), the world, the deity, and interrelatedness between these; and since, for this reason, religious traditions determine 'how and what we will value, and therefore how we will act' (Marina 2004: 141), we can judge the adequacy of a religious tradition by looking at this particular kind of *evidence*, namely 'works', i.e. what kind of actions and practices the tradition of religious beliefs and symbols brings (eventually) forth. Presumably, this can be in principle observed in the life of individual believers, local religious communities, and also on a much bigger scale: in terms of what kinds of *culture*, i.e. what ways of relating to different kinds of people, non-human beings and the environment a certain religious tradition has brought forth, lead to, or contributed to. Like Hick, Schleiermacher too thought that there can be a plurality of possibilities, '...two or more systems of symbolic representations [that are] more or less adequate expressions of the experience of the Absolute' (Marina 2004: 127). However, this didn't mean for Schleiermacher that all religious systems of belief are equally adequate; unlike Hick, he even thought, rightly or wrongly – but, for many of us today, at least naïvely – that 'Christianity is the most perfect expression of the feeling of absolute dependence', and that this can be established on the basis of ethical/practical criteria (ibid.).

A seeming advantage of this Schleiermacherian-Hickian approach to adjudicate the falsity (if not the exclusive truth) of religious belief-systems (and individual beliefs *only* within this or that system of meanings) is that it doesn't assume that the believer will herself necessarily have or recognize in her life the sense-giving and belief-inviting religious experiences, i.e. the remarkable existential feelings which are at the source of religious believing. If such felt experience is 'merely' the *source* of the religious belief-pull but not also the 'evidence' by which to adjudicate the truth or the falsity of religious beliefs, then the process of adjudicating the truth and falsity doesn't depend on having or even recognizing this kind of experience. Just as an 'emphasis on experience does not mean that only those privileged with mystical experiences can speak'

about these experiences and God *believingly* (Soskice 1985: 151), so also the judging whether religious beliefs or claims (in their contexts) are true or false is not limited only to those privileged with mystical or remarkable existential experience. It is the *moral fruits* of religious belief-systems within the broader contexts of life which constitute religious *evidence*, not the belief-inviting feelings which are at the root of religious concept-formation and belief-formation.

Still, there are many unanswered questions left here as well. One of these is whether moral/practical fruits of this or that existential believing in the lives of individuals or communities can indeed help us to adjudicate even such a basic question as whether a belief in one God is false, or whether the existential belief that there is no God is false. For example: if the atheist belief-system could bring about a similarly good and righteous society as a Christian belief-system can (and there are *Christians* today who think it can), we wouldn't be able to say whether any of these two very basic existential beliefs is false, or even 'less false' than the other. And secondly: when we make *moral* judgements about which kind of lives and relations and actions are good and which not, do we not in that very process also rely on our existential *beliefs* which the morally-judged evidence should test? Or even more problematically, don't our moral judgements about the nature of the evidence here itself rely on our *felt* experiencing, i.e. primitive reactions to the 'face of the Other' (Levinas 1996: 95), for example? In either case, we are dealing with some kind of circularity. These challenges may not be devastating for the Schleiermacher-Hickian approach, but they would certainly have to be addressed.

At this stage we have to leave this discussion and hope for its continuation on some other occasion. What our brief exploration into the two possible frameworks for thinking about a specifically religious/existential bipolarity and falsifiability of religious beliefs, the Tillichian and Schleiermacher-Hickian models, was meant to show is that such frameworks offer some initial plausibility or philosophical-theological workability with a substantial nod, again, to important strands of Wittgensteinian understanding of religious beliefs. To a notable extent, both approaches include similar understandings to ours of religious experience, religious language (God-talk), and religious believing. But

neither approach is without problems from our perspective; in any future engagement with either of them, these problems would have to be addressed.

This reflection also ends the connective Chapter Six where we brought together the streams of reflection from the previous chapters. In the next and final part, we will recapitulate the main contributions of the present study and suggest a few possible lines of further complementary research.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this final section we will briefly recapitulate the main claims of the thesis and then, also very briefly, mention possible further venues of research which could be seen as following ‘naturally’ from this study.

7.1 Brief summary of the study

The central claim of this thesis is a combined theological-phenomenological one: it is the claim that important kinds of Christian religious experiencing which are related to basic Christian beliefs about God have *existential feelings* as their crucial feature. With the help of phenomenological investigation of this kind of feelings (based largely on the work of M. Ratcliffe who in turn built on Heidegger’s concept of ‘moods’ and Merleau-Ponty’s concept of ‘living/feeling body’) and building on our interpretation of Friedrich Schleiermacher’s understanding of ‘feeling as the essence of religion’, we have suggested that a range of nature-mystical and social-mystical experiencing that involves existential feelings are a theologically essential aspect of Christian experience. Perhaps, the feelings of ‘existential wonder’ (Wittgenstein, D.Z. Phillips), ‘awe’ (A. Heschel), ‘utter contingency of being’ (E. Kohak), ‘primordial guilt’ or ‘wretchedness’ (Levinas, Wittgenstein), and the feeling of ‘redemptive community’ (Helmer), can be seen as the most prominent in Christian experiencing. While we have focused on non- or *less*-linguistic existential feelings as both the philosophically and religiously most relevant aspect of Christian religious experiencing, such experiencing normally involves, of course, also highly conceptually-structured aspects, *emotional* feelings, and sense-perception.

Our interpretation of Schleiermacher’s ‘feeling’ enabled us to bridge the gap between somewhat opposing interpretations: the social (Kevin Hector, Christine Helmer) and the existential-mystical (Thandeka). While each examined interpretation offers valuable insight into the Schleiermacherian concept of

‘feeling’ – Kevin Hector’s reading of ‘feeling’ as ‘attunement to one’s envioning circumstances’, Thandeka’s reading of it through an existentialist phenomenology of the ‘feeling of Being’, and Christine Helmer’s emphasis on Schleiermacher’s Christian social mysticism – the reading of Schleiermacher’s concept of religiously-central ‘feelings’ as ‘existential feelings’ provides an overarching account that unifies several descriptions of such feelings in the work of the early as well as later Schleiermacher. Our interpretation of Schleiermacher’s overall understanding of religious experience is not unbiased or strictly exegetical, however. Our own theological and philosophical commitments, including the decision to put a *variety* of ‘remarkable’ existential feelings or changes in these at the centre of Christian religious experiencing (and not just the ‘feeling of absolute dependence’), resulted in our prioritizations of certain strands of Schleiermacher’s thought over others.

Other main and closely related claims of our study concern Christian *believing* and Christian religious *language*, especially God-talk. In order to have a good understanding of Christian religious believing, we’ve engaged extensively with Wittgenstein’s thought on different kinds of belief-attitudes and his understanding of religious belief-attitude as ‘extraordinary’. By way of interpreting Wittgenstein, we’ve tried to show that the grammaticalist reading of the later Wittgenstein on religious *belief* – i.e. the view that Wittgenstein understood religious beliefs (Christian or other) to be either utterly indubitable sub-species of ‘hinge-certainty’ (D. Moyal-Sharrock) like ‘my name is L. Wittgenstein’ and ‘the world exists’, or, equally indubitable kind of beliefs that are highly similar to hinge-beliefs (M. Kober, G. Shoenbaumsfeld) – misses a strand of the later Wittgenstein’s thought on religious belief (e.g. CV 37, 61). That minor strand of the later Wittgenstein’s thought appreciates the role of conscious determination and volition in a religious belief, and thus recognizes its *dubitability*. We have then backed up this strand of Wittgensteinian understanding of religious belief by some further attention to Christian religious believing and God-talk in practice, as well as combined it with Paul Tillich’s understanding of faith as ‘dynamic’ and religious belief in God as ‘existential’.

As our basic framework for understanding Christian God-talk, we’ve combined the later Wittgenstein’s understanding of language – i.e. his categorization of ‘utterances’ as grammatical, scientific, and expressive – with Roman

Jakobson's way of thinking about language through its six *functions*: the representational, expressive, regulative, metalingual, poetic, and phatic. Importantly, there is a sense in which the *expressive* function of language (generally) is at the very roots of language (interwoven with other functions, but as developmentally and evolutionary *prior* to representational function), which is shown also in its continuous role in linguistic innovation. And it is the expressive function we deemed worthy of special emphasis and focus in our philosophy of religious language when examining Christian God-talk, where all three of our main foci – existential feelings in religious experience, Christian beliefs about God as existential, and God-talk with its expressive roots – came together into a unified picture. God-talk is embedded in complex forms of life, important aspects of which, however, Christians share with non-Christians.

Lastly, our integrative suggestion which links together all the threads of this thesis was that certain remarkable kinds of existential feelings – like feelings of 'existential wonder', 'awe', 'contingency of being', 'wretchedness', or 'deep unity with everything' – is that these kinds of feelings or dramatic changes in them can have a 'religious-belief-inviting' pull. This claim is partly phenomenological in that many people witness to experiencing it, but partly theological, in that our suggestion is that it can be existentially and doxastically appropriate to respond to it with religious concept- and belief-formation (or, not to block this 'primitive' response as such). Building on J. Soskice's work on religious language, we've tried to elucidate how both the issue of the metaphoricity of God-talk and the issue of its referentiality are ultimately linked to its expressivity and to the belief-inviting pull of remarkable existential feelings, respectively. Focusing further on Christian God-talk, we also suggested God-talk is 'alive' when it succeeds in expressing either existential beliefs or feelings, but the relation between the latter is not 'reductive': religious *beliefs* about God are not to be explained *away* in a way that God-talk is considered to express *merely* feelings or conations, as 'Wittgensteinian expressivists' (like R. B. Braithwaite) have claimed. On the related issue of interpreting Wittgenstein on religion, we've argued that the 'anti-phenomenological' understanding of Wittgenstein's approach to psychological concepts is misguided and that the expressivist interpretation of Wittgenstein on religion is mistaken.

7.2 Possible further research

Because of the large and various bodies of literature consulted in this study, there are multiple and various ways in which this research could be enriched, developed further, complemented, or applied. We will mention only three areas of possible further research that may offer 'natural' ways either to fill in certain voids left by this research, or to build upon it.

First and perhaps the most obvious thing would be to develop a religious *epistemology* consistent with the phenomenological, grammatical and theological perspectives suggested by this thesis. This would be an apt extension of the very brief discussion of 'religious/existential truth and falsity' in Chapter Six (6.5.2). Any suggestion of more positive criteria for truth, or at least falsity, of religious beliefs as existential beliefs would have to address many additional questions than those mentioned in 6.5.2. Such an epistemology may most naturally be a 'value-driven' epistemology, and possibly close to contextualist or even communitarian frameworks (c.f. Kusch 2002, 2009, 2011; Williams [Bernard] 2002; Williams [Michael] 2007a, 2007b). Also, the ways in which theological or broader *cultural* (pre-)conceptions and commitments, including widely shared *conditioned* hinge-beliefs, would necessarily shape or undergird *any* epistemology consistent with our phenomenological and grammatical investigations, would have to be made as explicit as possible.

Another possible venue of research that would build on the present thesis would be to engage current *theological* schools of thought and their understandings of religious language, belief and experience into an in-depth conversation with the overall theological-philosophical picture developed in this study. For example, it would be sensible to engage in detail with both Postliberal interpretations of Wittgenstein and Schleiermacher, respectively, as well as the Postliberal understanding of doctrine, God-talk, and religious experience itself. On several fronts, the views presented in this thesis have been almost diametrically opposed to that of Postliberal theology: our critique of the Wittgensteinian grammaticalist understanding (both in terms of Wittgenstein interpretation and on its own terms of understanding Christian belief-attitude); our emphasis on the *expressive* function of God-talk; the suggestion to 'bring feelings back into

philosophical theology'; and the partial rehabilitation of both Schleiermacherian and Tillichian – all but forgotten – understandings. All this may be read as a challenge to the consistent (now dominant in the UK, and to some extent in the US) theological school represented by George Lindbeck (2009), Hans Frei, Stanley Hauerwas (1984), Nicholas Adams (2006a, 2006b), David Ford, Mike Higton and several other influential scholars.

Lastly: another way to complement this research would be to apply the philosophical-theological picture developed here to understanding interfaith relations, agreements and disagreements, which could be seen as an extension of the discussion of the example of Christian-Muslim disagreement presented in Chapter Four (4.6.2.2). Such an applied study could be done with a particular *local* focus (for ex., the variety of Christian-Muslim relations, agreements and disagreements in past and present Bosnia-Herzegovina)¹, in a way that empirical study – sociological, anthropological, geographical, and so on – and philosophical-theological investigations would complement and mutually inform one another. Due attention could be given, not only to different religious grammars and disagreements, but also to the shared inhabited geographical and cultural worlds and certainties, religiously-relevant existential feelings expressed, and trans-religious values in the chosen location/culture (largely) shared by different religious communities. While such an approach may be somewhat 'out of fashion' today (especially from the Postliberal perspective; c.f. Adams 2006), it can be done responsibly, both to the 'grammatical sensitivities' of philosophy and to the local culture of religious disagreement.

Undoubtedly, there are plenty of other ways the research of the thesis 'From Existential Feelings to Belief in God' could be taken up and made better, be built upon, or applied. The three suggestions above are merely a narrow selection, somewhat arbitrarily reflecting this author's research interests, or rather his 'life' (Phillips 1999: 100), i.e. the 'realm of the personal' (Mulhall 2007: 21).

¹ The author has been involved in applied and interdisciplinary research of interfaith relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina for several years. See Wilkes et al (2012).

APPENDIX I

Hinge-certainty, the 'Background of Realism', and Intentionality

1 Moyal-Sharrock on hinge-beliefs and intentionality

An interesting 'grammatical' question about hinge-beliefs that we answered only 'dogmatically' without any discussion in Chapter three (3.6), is the following: does it make sense to say that hinge-beliefs are *intentional*? Is such talk sensible, given that hinge-beliefs are the non-intellectual, non-propositional and non-epistemic 'bottom of our language-games' (OC 204)? By asking this question, a more fundamental challenge of relating the two kinds of philosophical reflection – the phenomenological reflection and the Wittgenstein-inspired grammatical investigation – also opens up, in a somewhat different way to the way in which this meta-methodological question has opened up and been addressed in Chapters Five and Six where we related a Wittgensteinian phenomenology of feelings and his understanding of religiously relevant experience to contemporary phenomenology of feelings and of religious experience, respectively. This same meta-methodological issue of relation between these two ways of philosophizing can be approached also with a focus on hinge-beliefs.

The question, then, is this: should we conceive hinge-beliefs like 'The World exists', 'I have a body', or 'Germany is a country', as intentional? It has been noted that Wittgenstein didn't really use the word 'intentionality', either in *On Certainty* or elsewhere in his later philosophy (Crane 2011: 1). However, his work as a whole can be seen as very close to the theme of intentionality since the concept of *meaning*, so central to Wittgenstein's work, has traditionally been seen in philosophy as interrelated to that of intentionality (ibid.). Not much help is available on this point in terms of Wittgenstein's straightforward remarks in *On Certainty* (OC). In her extensive treatment of the OC with which we have engaged in Chapter Three, Daniele Moyal-Sharrock (2007) doesn't treat the question of intentionality of hinges in any extensive manner either. Unfortunately, on the two occasions she does touch

upon it, the descriptions we find – or their straightforward implications – seem to be in tension.

On the one hand, Moyal-Sharrock clearly suggests that hinge-certainty is a doxastic attitude which is *directed towards* certain physical objects or states of affairs which ‘stand fast’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 55-6). The background of this claim is a standard understanding of the later Wittgenstein’s view more broadly, according to which even physical objects – like the red object used as a colour sample in ‘This is red’, or the Standard meter stick in Paris of ‘The Standard meter is one meter long’ (*PI* 50), or the hand in ‘Here is one hand’ (*OC* 1) – are ‘part of grammar’ in the broader sense (Glock 1996a: 276). This is to say that physical objects can function as linguistic instruments, i.e. as ‘means of representation and not something represented’ (Canfield 2009: 117). For Moyal-Sharrock, this clearly means that such hinge-beliefs are *directed towards* the respective (physical) sample objects which ‘belong to grammar’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 55). In other words, she describes hinge-beliefs as intentional.

On the other hand, Moyal-Sharrock also uses Searle’s concept of the ‘Background’ to interpret hinge-certainty as a belief-attitude (ibid. 61). She attempts to explain several important features of hinge-certainty by endorsing Searle’s descriptions of what constitutes the Background, namely ‘mental capacities, dispositions, stances, ways of behaving, know-how, savoir-faire, etc.’ (Searle 1992: 196), and by explicating these. It is not hard to see that Searle relates the Background to very similar notions to which Wittgenstein relates hinge-certainty: pre-reflective dispositions to ‘fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc.’ (*OC* 476) that are shared by children and adults; ways of behaving, i.e. ‘...our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game’ (204), something that is simply ‘there – like our life’ (*OC* 559); according to Moyal-Sharrock’s interpretation (and ours), their non-reflective and nonpropositional nature; and so on. Wittgenstein repeatedly claims that only because hinges stay ‘fixed’, completely unquestioned and indubitable, the games of knowing and doubting with propositional beliefs can be ‘played’ at all. Similarly, Searle claims that the network of propositional, intentional states needs ‘a bedrock of mental capacities that do not themselves consist of Intentional states (representations), but nonetheless form the preconditions for the functioning of Intentional states’ (Searle 1983: 141).

However, it is one of the central features of Searle's understanding of the 'Background' that it consists of *non-intentional* states: 'Background abilities... are not themselves intentional states' (ibid. 143). Even when we use intentional-sounding language to express the states that constitute the Background, Searle is adamant that we cannot talk of proper intentionality; at best, he says, we are dealing with something 'pre-intentional' (1983: 156). So, for Moyal-Sharrock who wants to see hinges as directed, there is a problem: If the most basic 'bedrock of mental capacities' is in any relevant sense similar to the Searlean Background, then it is non-intentional; and if it is non-intentional, then the bedrock, or hinge-beliefs, cannot be intentionally directed at objects, either abstract or physical.

But perhaps this teasing-out of the apparent inconsistency is to blur 'the Background' and 'hinges' in a way that seriously misrepresents both concepts as they were meant in their original discursive contexts? It is important to appreciate that Wittgenstein's and Searle's ways of doing philosophy are notably different¹ - so much so that using the concepts of the latter to explain the concepts of the former may very well be an unfortunate philosophical move doomed to fail. In other words: even the very act of putting 'Background' and 'hinges' together may rest on, or introduce new, confusions. However, a more sympathetic reading of Moyal-Sharrock's attempt to bring the two notions in a mutually-elucidating relation is also possible. We will offer such a reading in two steps: first, we will take on board a phenomenological critique of the Searlian concept of 'the Background', put forward by Matthew Ratcliffe; and second, we will briefly examine the notion of intentionality as such in order to see whether *any* kind of intentionality could potentially be applied to hinges.

¹ Newton Garver explains that this difference lies in that, while Searle attempts to 'assimilate philosophy to science',

...[for] Wittgenstein philosophy is nothing like science. Whereas science seeks to establish generalizations (empirical ones), philosophy seeks to break down generalizations (superficial grammatical ones). Whereas science proceeds by means of hypothesis and deductive explanation, philosophy works through the perspicuous presentation of imaginary examples and intermediate cases. Conceiving philosophy as grammar means that it is sometimes like pedagogy and sometimes like therapy, never like science. (Garver 1996: 151)

2 Matthew Ratcliffe's critique of Searle's 'Background'

We have seen that several features of the Searlian 'Background' correspond rather well to Wittgensteinian hinge-beliefs: their non-reflectiveness, non-propositionality, pre-epistemic nature, and their interrelatedness with patterns of action or 'ways of behaving'. In addition, Searle proposes an argument (1983: 195) against the understanding of 'external reality' as an intentional object which is somewhat similar to Wittgenstein's critique of Moore in *OC*; for example, 'external reality' cannot be an object of a hypothesis or a propositional belief (presumably expressible by 'External world exists', or 'There is an external reality', for example). But, despite this insight, Searle in later works still describes 'external realism' in markedly intellectualist terms. He writes of it as 'the *thesis* that there is a way that things are that is independent of all representations of how things are' (Searle 1995: 182). Critiquing this latter statement, Mathew Ratcliffe (2004: 157) rightfully points out that the claim that *Realism* is a 'thesis' entails a claim that realism is a propositional belief, unless the meaning of the word 'thesis' is broadened indefinitely, i.e. beyond any meaningful use. Searle's 'external realism' simply cannot be *both* a non-propositional, nonintentional Background and a 'thesis' at the same time (*ibid.*).

Ratcliffe makes a further point that, if *Realism* as the Background is a pre-intentional familiarity or a 'know-how', as Searle would have it, the term 'external' is not applicable either:

After all, Searle claims that the world's existence is taken for granted rather than inferred and it is intentional objects of which we ask whether *x* is external (really out there) or internal (merely in my mind). The Background of realism is a precondition for both possibilities and of the possibility for distinguishing between them. ... The very term 'external realism' is indicative of an intentional state that reaches out to something else. (Ratcliffe 2004: 159)

To read this phenomenological point with Wittgensteinian glasses, we must judge that adding 'external' to 'realism' is a clear manifestation of a 'Moorean fallacy' which Searle commits: it is a case of intellectualizing something pre-epistemic and non-intellectual into a 'thesis'. Such a formulation presupposes, or at least strongly

implies, an understanding of realism as something intentional (which it is not), just as denoting it as a 'thesis' implies something propositional (which it is not).

This doesn't mean that Ratcliffe argues that the Searlian concept of the Background is completely useless for philosophical elucidation. Instead, he suggests that a more consistent and illuminating understanding of the Background can be developed by combining certain elements of Searle's idea with a combination of Heideggerian and Merleau-Pontyan understanding of Being-in-the-world – a connection which Searle has always resisted to make (Ratcliffe 2004: 161-3). As we have seen in Chapter One, Ratcliffe's way of describing the pre-intentional background of all our intentional acts, the Being-in-the-world, is by bringing to the fore a Heideggerian understanding that 'careful phenomenological reflection does reveal a changeable sense of reality, which is associated with varying feelings of relatedness to the world' (Ratcliffe 2008: 60). Existence, or Being, is not simply a 'sum total of what we take to be the case' (ibid.), but can have varied senses which are related to *feelings* and their expressions. So, *Realism* – regarding the world, or universe, or oneself *and* the world, or 'physical objects' – not only that it is not propositional or intentional, it can also have varying phenomenological shades, dependent on whether one feels real, or less real, or unreal, or feels the '*world* of objects' to be more or less real, or similar. Moreover, we have seen in previous chapters that an even broader variety of such feelings should be noted. We can, in an existential sense, feel 'complete', or 'intensively alive', or 'cut off', or 'at home', or 'at one with life', or 'real', 'totally light, almost inexistent', or 'connected', or 'full of spirit', or feelingly *believe* 'that the universe is a miracle', or that 'everything is naked and without meaning', or 'that there is a depth to everything'. The unifying concept for these ways of feeling is, as we have seen, the concept of *existential feelings* (EFs), or 'non-conceptual feelings of the body, which constitute a background sense of belonging to the world and a sense of reality' (Ratcliffe 2008: 39). According to Ratcliffe, these nonpropositional and nonintentional feelings are never absent in human experiencing, since 'all experience is structured by some variant of existential feeling' (ibid. 39-40).

In Ratcliffe's interpretation, therefore, what is phenomenologically the most significant feature of the Background is its non-propositional and non-intentional 'feelingness', i.e. that it is structured by existential feelings. But we should note that to accept this corrected picture of the Background does not yet mean to answer the

question of the intentionality of hinge-beliefs. Ratcliffe talks, not about *beliefs*, but about the sense of reality as experienced in certain kinds of *feeling*. These are importantly different concepts, and, as we've seen throughout the present study, the two ways of investigation involved – the phenomenological reflection on felt experience on one hand, and the grammatical investigation of the meanings/uses of 'belief' on the other – are also somewhat different, although they can be very much related (contrary to our vision, as we've seen in Chapter Five (5.2.3), some scholars think they are incompatible). Given the categorical difference between 'feeling' and 'belief', we have to say that we are doing something different when attributing to feelings to what we are doing when attributing intentionality (or non-intentionality) to beliefs. What we want to elucidate a bit further below is the difference between saying that a *hinge*-belief is intentional (or non-intentional), and saying that a feeling is intentional (or non-intentional). This will help us to reflect on the possibility of intentionality of hinge-beliefs as such.

3 On different kinds of intentionality

In a broad and standard sense of 'intentionality' in philosophy, which is the sense in which we have so far used the term, 'intentionality' is an abstract term that stands for mental *directedness* and *aboutness* of what are considered to be very pervasive mental states: beliefs, desires, emotions, conscious thoughts, intentions, predictions, and so on. Throughout the thesis, we haven't analysed the distinction between these two aspects of intentionality, the directedness and aboutness, but it is possible and useful to tease out this difference. While aboutness is 'the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs' (Jacob 2010), directedness can also be more 'primitive', like in the case of one's fear of an approaching dog where the emotional feeling of fear is *directed* at the dog²; in the latter case, it doesn't make sense to say, or it is normally an over-intellectualization to say, that such fear is 'about the dog' and not merely 'of the dog'.

² I am accepting here the intentionalist understanding of *emotional* feelings which does not see these as mere colourings or add-ons (presumably non-intentional) but as '*feelings towards*', i.e. an 'unreflective extraspective emotional engagement with the world beyond the body' (Goldie 2004: 96). See Chapter One (1.2.3).

Nevertheless, some philosophers have strongly emphasised the aboutness aspect in their understanding of intentionality. Searle, for example, despite acknowledging that both prelinguistic children and many animals have intentional states, insists that all '[intentional] states *represent* objects and states of affairs in the same sense of "represent" that speech acts represent objects and states of affairs' (Searle 1983: 4). Although 'represent' for Searle does not mean 'represent in a linguistically structured manner' (it could be pictorial, for example), his notion of 'representation' and consequently of 'intentionality' is still highly intellectualized. This can be seen by the fact that, even when explaining how intentionality of the mind features in the ways the mind causes bodily action, for Searle, 'a representation of the goal of the action must exist throughout the motion and must play a continuing causal role in shaping the action' (Dreyfus 1993: 27).

However, in the post-Husserlian phenomenology, both Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's work (in somewhat different ways) broaden the meaning of intentionality to include nonrepresentationalist directedness. This is because 'phenomenological examination shows that in a wide variety of situations human beings relate to the world in an organized purposive manner without the constant accompaniment of a representational state which specifies what the action is aimed at accomplishing' (ibid.). While Hubert Dreyfus sees already in Heidegger's work a concept of intentionality which doesn't presuppose representational content³ (ibid. 18-20), it is usually Merleau-Ponty who is credited for introducing a 'much-needed shift from intentionality to motility, creating a distinctively bodily perspective for phenomenology' (Solomon 2009: 299). We don't need to resolve the titular question of who should be credited for this shift; our concern is, rather, to determine whether there is a workable suggestion of the meaning of 'intentionality' which will enable us to meaningfully ask the question of intentionality of Wittgensteinian hinge-beliefs, i.e.

³ Dreyfus (1993: 22) explains Heidegger's critique and reinterpretation of 'intentionality' in relation to Husserl's notion thus:

In his attempt to overthrow the subject/object account, Heidegger seeks to show (1) that intentionality without the experience of self-referential content is characteristic of the unimpeded mode of everyday activity, whereas Husserl's (and Searle's) mentalistic intentionality is a derivative mode that occurs only when there is some disturbance, and (2) that both these modes of intentionality presuppose being-in-the-world, a more fundamental form of intentionality that Heidegger calls originary transcendence, and that he claims is the condition of the possibility of both active and contemplative intentionality.

to ask this question in an elucidating and not confusing way. We will proceed from a distinctly *phenomenological* understanding of intentionality according to which intentionality is a feature of our conscious experiencing – only when regarding such intentionality as primary, will we then consider a possibility also of other, more derived senses of intentionality, while we will leave out the attempts at ‘naturalizing’ or reducing intentionality to neuroscientific or physicalist notions of directedness and/or representation altogether.⁴

So, what does Merleau-Ponty’s notion of ‘motility’ consist in? He describes ‘motility’ to be a kind of intentionality which he calls ‘basic intentionality’ (*PP* 158-9) and which is manifested in ‘the action of the hand which is raised towards an object... [but] not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are, in anticipation, and which we haunt’ (*ibid.* 159). This intentionality is unreflective, thoughtless, bodily, and much more primitive and primary than reflective aboutness. It is closely related to our bodily *abilities* or know-how:

Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of ‘I think that’ but of ‘I can’ ... [It is] being-towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body. A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its ‘world’, and to move one’s body is to aim at things through it. ... Motility, then, is not, as it were, a handmaid of consciousness, transporting the body to that point in space of which we have formed a representation beforehand. ... Sight and movement are specific ways of entering into relationship with objects ... not by placing them all under the control of an ‘I think’, but by guiding them towards the intersensory unity of a ‘world’. (*PP* 159-61)

⁴ For attempts at explaining intentionality by reducing it to scientific explanation of primitive animal representing (indexical representation), see for example Dretske (1988), and, Murphy and Brown (2007). It is worth noting that, while phenomenological notion of intentionality is by no means anti-theoretical to scientific explanations of behaviour and brain processes, it is a categorially different notion from any reductive, physicalist explanation of intentionality. While the old philosophical rub regarding the unbridgeable difference between third and first person perspective can surely lead philosophers to misleading pictures and deceiving metaphysics (e.g. substance dualism), it is nevertheless relevant and poignant here: the phenomenological, experiential intentionality simply isn’t reducible to any features of physical objects (be it bodies, brains, or other) as observed from a third-person, scientific perspective.

We need to note at this point that Merleau-Ponty's broader notion of intentionality of which motility is a sub-category retains at least one important feature of the Husserlian use of 'intentionality': for Merleau-Ponty, as for Husserl, intentionality is *all-pervasive* in human experience. His remark that motility, or bodily intentionality, 'guides ... sight and movement ... towards the intersensory unity of the "world"' (*PP* 159) puts motility in some sense *prior to* our world-constitution. Even the 'fundamental, most primary experience (not "act") of world-constitution, [i.e.] ... the lived experience of the world as "already there" ...', Merleau-Ponty (following the later Husserl) also calls 'operative *intentionality*' (Moharty 2009: 74; *PP* xx) which is thought to be constituted by the network of motile acts.

This sounds somewhat at odds with Matthew Rattcliffe's interpretation of Merleau-Ponty with which we have stood in agreement all along, whose account of Being-in-the-world in many respects relies heavily on Merleau-Ponty's work. Did, then, Merleau-Ponty see even our ontologically most primary Being-in-the-world as 'operatively intentional' (ibid.), and not as a *non-intentional*, felt sense of reality, as Ratcliffe does? This problem might be more apparent than real, for two reasons. First, Merleau-Ponty's use of the word 'intentional' and its cognates in *Phenomenology of Perception*, although importantly shifted in its meaning from Husserl's concept, still retains at least one important shade of Husserlian meaning: Merleau-Ponty, just like Husserl, still uses 'intentionality' as constitutive of the mental as experiential, i.e. as pervasive of all human experience. But it is arguable that in this way the word 'intentionality' is implausibly broadened and loses its usefulness in phenomenological elucidation. If we want to preserve some phenomenological 'directedness' and 'aboutness' as important variants of the meaning of 'intentionality', 'operative intentionality' seems to fall out of bounds of the 'intentional' altogether. And this is what was effectively done by Ratcliffe and others who distinguish between *non-intentional* sense of reality as constitutive of our Being-in-the-world, and *intentional* beliefs, desires, emotions, and so on, the latter being ontologically posterior to the non-intentional 'sense of reality'.

And second, Ratcliffe's account of existential feelings builds on Merleau-Ponty's contrast between two perspectives on the body: the *lived body* with which we feel, think and orient ourselves in the world, as opposed to the body, or a certain part of the body, as an object of feeling or thought (*PP* 84-102). Having a focused feeling of

pain in the thumb on our left foot after we incidentally bump it into a chair is an example of the latter. On the other hand, the lived body *in its totality* cannot be an object of experience because of its all-encompassing nature. One way of expressing this is by saying that existential feelings are ways of experiencing, not parts of the body or the embodied self alone, but also the world and the *relation* between the two, ‘the three aspects being inextricable’ (Ratcliffe 2008: 37). It is the totality of our Being-in-the-world that is co-constituted by the non-intentional existential feeling, and not this or that bodily act.

With such a view of ‘the lived body’ in mind, we can read Merleau-Ponty in a way that the lived body – or ‘the feeling body’ as Ratcliffe calls it (2008: 106-7) – is understood as ‘a framework through which world-experience is structured’, so that the body ‘can play an experiential role without being an object of experience’ (Ratcliffe, *ibid.*). And here, the feeling body which undergirds or makes possible any ‘directedness’ or intentionality for us is not itself an intentional object or experience. Other passages of *Phenomenology of Perception* confirm that this is how Merleau-Ponty, in essence, understands it:

The reflex, in so far it opens itself to the meaning of the situation, and perception; in so far as it does not first of all posit an object of knowledge and is an intention of our whole being, are modalities of a *pre-objective view* which is what we call being-in-the-world. ... [This pre-objective being-in-the-world] determines, infinitely more than they do, what our reflexes and perceptions will be able to aim at in the world, the area of our possible operations, the scope of our life ... It is because it is a pre-objective view that being-in-the-world can be distinguished from every third person process, from every modality of the *res extensa*, as from every *cogitatio*, from every first person form of knowledge – and that it can effect the union of the ‘psychic’ and the ‘physiological’. (*PP* 92)

So, our bodily-intentional acts, such as moving of the eyes and the head in the direction of the passing ball, standing up and extending our arm to fetch an apple, or stretching our limbs in the morning in order to move more easily and start the day, are all in Merleau-Pontyan picture intimately related to the ‘pre-objective world-constitution’ – however, as individual episodes of intentional experience, these are

phenomenologically *not prior* to the very sense of reality (although our body and the history of its movements, and much else besides, may be said to have *causally* contributed to the bodily states when we have these or that existential feelings; but that is quite another matter).⁵

So, if on the one hand we accept that the nonintentional Background (conceived in a more Ratcliffe-Merleau-Pontyan rather than in the Searlian way) is a sensible and useful category, what shades of phenomenological intentionality, on the other hand, could we meaningfully acknowledge? It would seem that we can still talk about different 'levels' of intentionality. While not suggesting any meaningful or value-laden 'hierarchy' between these levels, we can conceive intentionality as spanning from the bodily-motility to intellectual, reflective aboutness. It seems, on the basis of everyday language and phenomenological investigation, that we can speak of at least four such levels. On the 'bodily' end of the spectrum, we have

- 1.) the most basic motility or 'animal' directedness towards objects in our environment (or parts of our own body) which is non-reflective, nonrepresentational and non-epistemic (for example, automatic taking-hold of a towel in the familiar, home bathroom);

And, on the other end of the spectrum, we can talk about

- 2.) the sophisticated, intellectual kind of intentionality: a reflective 'aboutness' which involves symbolic representation and conceptual structured thought (for

⁵ One way of arguing that the sense of reality is ontologically prior to bodily-intentional acts is to examine the phenomenology of psychiatric illness, such as severe depression, Capgras and Cotard delusions (c.f. Ratcliffe 2008: 61-65; 139-211). People who suffer from any of these conditions are, for the most part, still moving around in space and experience bodily, non-representational intentional acts, but can have drastic changes in the sense of reality, or lose it altogether. Consider the account of Rennee from Sechehaye's *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl* of when she has returned 'back to reality':

Instead of infinite space, unreal, where everything was cut off, naked and isolated, I saw Reality, marvellous Reality, for the first time. The people whom we encountered were no longer automatons, phantoms, revolving around, gesticulating without meaning; they were men and women with their own individual characteristics, their own individuality. It was the same with things. They were useful things, having sense, capable of giving pleasure. Here was an automobile to take me to hospital, cushions I could rest on. With the astonishment that one views a miracle, I devoured with my eyes everything that happened. 'This is it,' I kept repeating, and I was actually saying, 'This is it – Reality'. (Sechehaye 1970: 105-6; taken from Ratcliffe 2008: 65)

example, 'I believe that the black towel which I got for my birthday was still in the bathroom yesterday afternoon').

Somewhere in the middle between these two we can think of

3.) many desires, as well as some – most basic – emotional feelings which J.P. Sartre called *spontaneous consciousness*: the ones which are clearly *directed* but may be completely 'unreflective' and where our consciousness is totally 'possessed' by the attention to its objects (Sartre 1948: 57). A similar category in contemporary literature are John Deigh's *pre-conceptual* and 'primal affectively-toned responses' (Deigh 1994: 840; see also Wynn 2005), such as fear of the immediately approaching dog (an extension of the towel example could be something like a reaction of disgust at a very dirty towel offered to one after showering).

And, somewhere in-between the bare motility (1.) and a propositional thought (2.), but still having more representational content than the primal affective desires (3.), may be

4.) the complex emotional feelings which are heavily conceptually structured and 'thoroughly permeated by judgements' (Salomon 2009: 300). (for example, 'I feel a combination of refined comfort and pleasant satisfaction using this soft, thick towel, and knowing it is very durable').

Again, this is not to suggest that these four levels or kinds of intentionality are radically separate categories without any intermediate kinds. There is a continuity between 'lower' and 'higher' kinds of intentionality, despite our perception sometimes (or, a learned way of thinking?) of the supposedly great difference between the 'mental' and the 'bodily' in our experience.⁶ This is, then, a broadened *phenomenological* concept of intentionality which will suffice for us.

⁶ A neuroscientist might naturally suggest relating this movement from bodily to intellectual intentionality to the movement from the 'animal' or 'old' brain to the more and more 'human' brain or the 'frontal lobe'. But we need not presuppose any strict mind-to-brain correlations here, since phenomenological and scientific investigation of our thought process are categorially different (although they can be *complementary* in providing two interacting ways of understanding).

4 Intentionality of hinges – a wrong question?

Equipped with this phenomenological concept of intentionality, are we now in any better position to answer the question whether hinge-beliefs are intentional or not? We can begin considering this question more carefully by calling in mind the relevant features of hinges: the certainty of hinge-beliefs or hinges is a special kind of belief-*attitude*: non-propositional, ‘automatic and unconscious trust’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 192), completely and utterly indubitable, groundless, and manifested in our *actions*. ‘My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend, e.g. “Take that chair over there”, “Shut the door”, etc.’ (OC 7). So, the certainty which is characteristic for such beliefs is *manifested* in our very basic, automatic, unreflective and unhesitating bodily orientation in our environment. In other words: the certainty of hinges is closely related to ‘motility’ or the bodily-intentional acts towards objects in space which ‘is not a matter of “I think that” but of “I can”’ (PP 159).

However, this doesn’t yet mean that it makes sense to talk of intentionality of hinge-*beliefs*. There are several obstacles for this. Given that we accept that we can talk of different kinds of hinges which Moyal-Sharrock classifies as linguistic, personal, local, and universal, let’s reflect on the question of supposed intentionality of the two of these sub-kinds of hinges, the personal and universal. Take the personal hinge-sentence ‘Here is a hand’, Wittgenstein’s prime example (OC 1). It would simply be something like a categorial mistake to say that this grammatical remark expresses a specific bodily-intentional act. Remember that hinge-sentences like ‘Here is a hand’ can only be voiced ‘posthumously’, e.g. ‘for heuristic purposes’ (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 193). The actual bodily-intentional acts in which one is engaged in the ‘stream of life’, so to speak, while utterly trusting and unreflectively relying on ‘Here is a hand’, may be extremely varied: for example, gesturing ‘come here’ with the hand to another person, writing a letter, stretching a hand toward a tennis ball which I am catching, feeling the warmth of a heater, etc. Remember also that, when an utterance ‘Here is a hand’ is actually uttered in any non-heuristic language-game, it is a *propositional* and dubitable statement under special conditions and *not* a voicing of a hinge-belief. In relation to the question of intentionality of hinges, then, this

means the following: although we can meaningfully say that objective certainty is intimately related to motility, the intentionality of bodily-intentional acts *is not* intentionality of hinges *as beliefs*. It doesn't make any sense to talk of anything like a one-to-one correlation between hinges and bodily-intentional acts: the latter is a phenomenological category while the former is not. Bodily motility is, therefore, not to be equated, or even related in any simple way, with a presumed intentionality of hinges.

If we consider an example of a *universal* hinge, 'There are physical objects', this becomes even clearer. If we take this hinge-remark to voice the unquestioning reliance on the 'realness' of the world of physical objects in which we live and move – and, if it is a voicing of a hinge-belief, this is the way it should be taken – we are talking (broadly) about the Background of *Realism*. But then, if realism is not a propositional-intentional belief but rather a *felt* sense of reality which is experienced in various ways, we may indeed doubt whether it makes any sense to say that the hinge-belief 'There are physical objects' is intentional. What is the object of its supposed directedness? Surely not this or that highly particular physical object itself – that would be the motility, mentioned above in relation to 'Here is a hand', for which we've seen it doesn't help to establish any link to a supposed intentionality of hinge-beliefs. Is it abstract idea of the 'physical object'? Or the 'world of objects' as a whole? If, *phenomenologically* speaking, what is 'behind' a hinge-sentence 'There are physical objects' are nonintentional, existential feelings, then no conscious propositional thought can constitute the *hinge*-belief 'There are physical objects'. There is no 'experience of hinge-belief' of which it would make sense to talk here. However, there are experiences which involve the felt sense of reality, which we can become aware, communicate, and phenomenologically reflect upon; and it may be said that these experiences are in some way *related* to what we posthumously recognize as a hinge-belief 'There are physical objects'.

Another, interesting possibility of interpretation does open up here, however, due to there being different types of existential feelings possible. Imagine two quite different situations. In the first, 'There are physical objects' is, as we have assumed above, a heuristic voicing of the utter, taken-for-granted, automatic trust, i.e., a voicing of a 'default attitude ... [which] shows itself in the absence of mistrust.... a background,..., unconscious certainty... not a conscious experience' (Moyal-

Sharrock 2007: 62-63). In the second situation, however, imagine that 'There are physical objects' is a sudden, genuine expression of wonder at the existence of the world (which happens not to be a formless mass but 'full of physical objects'). Here, 'the existence of physical objects' is, momentarily at least, not completely taken-for-granted, but utterly remarkable – an experience of a similar sort, let's say, to the one Wittgenstein describes in the *Lectures of Ethics* by uttering 'What a miracle that anything should exist', or 'How extraordinary that the world exists' (LE 8). Such experience cannot be described as 'taken-for-granted', 'automatic', or even 'unreflective', since it can pull one strongly to reflection on what *otherwise* appears to be taken-for-granted state of affairs (is there anything that is more taken-for-granted than the existence of the world?).

What we can say when reflecting on these two different meanings of 'There are physical objects' is that we are talking, first, about two different types of existential feeling: in the first case, a very 'everyday' feeling of Realness of the world as the Background, and in the second case, a less everyday feeling of extraordinariness, or miraculousness, of existence. Accordingly, only in the first case we can say that 'There are physical objects' is a voicing of a hinge-belief, but not in the second, since the same sentence in the second case doesn't voice (posthumously) an unconscious, taken-for-granted trust, but rather expresses a genuine and conscious appreciation of the existence of objects which is *otherwise*, in the context of the 'everyday' way of being, taken for granted. Furthermore and importantly, neither can we talk in the second case of scientific empirical *proposition* being expressed. In short: what opens up here is a clear possibility of expressions of existential feelings which are *not* related to hinge-beliefs. Of course, this is exactly what we have been presupposing throughout our thesis, but especially from the Fourth to Sixth chapter. There we posit a kind of belief-attitude which is neither scientific nor hinge-certainty, but *existential/religious* believing, which is how we understand Christian beliefs about God. And for this kind of beliefs, the question of intentionality must be addressed differently separately from our current examination of the intentionality of hinge-beliefs, and this difference has much to do with hinge-beliefs being held with an unconscious, utter and indubitable trust, while religious/existential beliefs being held by trust which does not exclude doubt or 'conscious believing'.

But that is a slight detour from our current topic, which is the problem of intentionality of hinge-beliefs and the important, categorial difference between feelings and beliefs. A comment made by Searle comes close to a point that we were trying to flesh out in this subsection. In the introduction of his book *Intentionality* where several conceptual clarifications are made before laying out the main arguments for his understanding of intentionality, Searle – contrary to Husserl – feels it is important to point out that ‘Intentionality is not the same as consciousness’ (Searle 1983: 2) and explains this thus:

Many conscious states are not Intentional, e.g., a sudden sense of elation, and many Intentional states are not conscious, e.g., I have many beliefs that I am not thinking about at present and I may never have thought of. For example, I believe that my paternal grandfather spent his entire life inside the continental United States but until this moment I never consciously formulated or considered that belief. Such unconscious beliefs, by the way, need not be instances of any kind of repression, Freudian or otherwise; they are just beliefs one has that one normally doesn’t think about. (Searle 1983: 2)

This point is in agreement with Rodney Needham’s (Wittgensteinian) point that we mentioned in Chapter Three (3.4): there is no discernible, identifiable feeling of ‘believing’ (the English language, despite having a lot of important use for ‘believe’ and its cognates, does not allow us to speak of a ‘belief-ful feeling’, or anything similar) (Needham 1972: 94). We might, of course, talk of ‘feeling absolutely certain’ about something, but this a far cry from implying that believing, let alone ‘hinge-believing’, is a phenomenological category. Rather, it is because both feelings and ‘being certain’ are sometimes manifest in a certain ‘tone of voice’ or a body posture that we *talk* of ‘feeling absolutely certain’ (OC 30); but, as Wittgenstein writes, neither ‘knowing’ nor ‘being certain’ are ‘states of consciousness’, i.e. none of these concepts describe our experiencing (OC 144-146; *RPP II* 45, 258). Needham insightfully points out that ‘some feeling’ may be in ‘*some sort of connection with* [belief] ...in the sense that an emotional character could be regarded as a component in the notion of belief; but so vague and perhaps sporadic a feeling could not serve as a criterion by which to discriminate belief from other inner states’ (ibid. 98).

In this simple but important insight lies the clue for the resolution of our question regarding the intentionality of hinge-beliefs. Our conclusion is, first, that it makes no sense to talk of a *phenomenological* intentionality of hinge-beliefs. This is not to say, of course, that beliefs in general are not, or cannot be, intentional, since there is no need to claim a monopoly over the philosophical uses of 'intentional' and 'nonintentional' and restrict it only to phenomenological use, or to conscious experiences. We consider both scientific and religious beliefs to be intentional. But it is important to appreciate that, when talking of intentionality of beliefs, we are not talking about phenomenological kind of intentionality. At best, the intentionality of (any kind of) beliefs may be *indirectly* related to phenomenological intentionality and derived from it.

For example, when most of us speak of intentionality of a propositional belief that 'US has over 300 million population', this is in some ways related to our (past or present) conscious sense-perceptual experiences and (past or present) conscious thoughts entertained on this subject (not only having *heard* people asserting this, or heaving *read* or *seen* it on the internet [e.g., Wikipedia] or on TV, but probably also having given it some reflective *thought* [however minimal], etc.). But here, of course, conscious and reflective experiences which involve plenty of phenomenological directedness and 'aboutness' are giving us 'a foothold' for calling this belief 'intentional'. This is quite different from the situation we have with the unconscious, unreflective and indubitable trust, characteristic of hinge-beliefs. There it is often the basic motility (also phenomenological) that is 'behind', or related to, the alleged intentionality of hinge-beliefs, but the relation between such experiences and hinge-beliefs seems very indirect and remote. And, if Ratcliffe's understanding of *Realism* as a 'sense of reality' is appropriate – and we suggest it is – then *non-intentional* feelings are as good candidates for 'having connections' with hinge-beliefs as are the bodily-intentional experiences, if not better. Sure, in case of some local and personal hinges – for ex. 'London is the Capital city of the UK', and other similar, 'conditioned' hinges (Moyal Sharrock 2007: 117) – there can be traceable past conscious experiences of learning what was once new information. But, while in such cases intellectual and reflective-conscious thoughts were involved 'in the making' of such hinge-beliefs, it is exactly in the radical difference between such intentional beliefs having been once held in a dubitable/propositional way, and the hinge-beliefs where

the learned thing was 'hardened into the Background' and came to be held as indubitable/nonpropositional, that their *hinge-ness* lies! This being the case, the intentionality of the former *propositional* belief 'London is the Capital city of the UK' – for some of us, this learning has happened in later rather than early childhood – cannot contribute much, if anything, to the alleged intentionality of the subsequent hinge-belief which can be voiced by the same sentence. Ergo: there is no good 'foothold' in intentional experiencing for considering hinges as intentional.

This reflection seems to have led us to the following conclusions: while beliefs are not intentional in a phenomenological sense, many beliefs can be intentional in a *derived* sense (e.g. scientific beliefs, existential/religious beliefs). And, since the most hinge-beliefs have very indirect and weak connections with intentional experiencing, and many hinge-beliefs *may* more easily be related to non-intentional 'sense of reality' or the Background – albeit in complex ways – than to any intentional experience, it doesn't make much sense to talk of either intentionality or non-intentionality of hinge-beliefs. In other words: the adjectives 'intentional' or 'non-intentional' don't seem to be neatly applicable to hinges, at least not in a non-arbitrary or elucidating way.

5 A cross-methodological encounter

One important issue which underlies the difficulty of relating the felt sense of reality with hinge-beliefs is that, while both 'belief' and 'feeling' are psychological concepts, there is an important difference between these two categories: feelings are an aspect of our experiencing (a *phenomenological* category) while beliefs are not. The latter are, in fact, a fairly complex category which we described as *socio-psychological* (Chapter Three 3.4). In other words: the suggestion that beliefs are not phenomenological category doesn't mean either that *hinge*-beliefs have nothing to do with the ways we experience the world and ourselves, or that social relations and statuses have nothing to do with feelings. For example, any drawing of conceptual boundaries is also a social process, including the boundaries between the concepts for different feelings – such as ours of the distinction between emotional and existential feelings (Chapter One 1.3.1-1.3.2). But despite all this, there is 'a world of categorical difference' between 'feelings' and 'beliefs' in terms of how these concepts

are related to our experiencing on the one hand, and to our sociality, acting and thinking on the other.

Only with this in mind can we fruitfully relate grammatical investigation of hinge-remarks and of 'belief' on the one hand, and phenomenological investigation of existential feelings on the other, which we hope we've done in this study. And, while for the most part, we've concentrated on religiously-relevant, remarkable existential feelings and beliefs about God, there could be a similar line of cross-methodological investigation without theological import as well, investigation of the relation between more everyday existential feelings and hinge-beliefs. Not only can we interpret the universal hinges like 'Physical objects exist' or 'Things don't systematically disappear when we're not looking' as expressions of *Realism* which, as we have seen, should be understood as a non-intentional Background that is constituted by existential feeling. Something similar could be said also about local and personal hinges like 'I am sitting on a chair' or 'Here is a hand'. While the 'voicings' of hinges are not *the same* thing as expressions of existential feelings, we can nevertheless see some connections. But, trying to make these connections manifest philosophically is a risky, 'cross-methodological', endeavour, involving a combination of the two somewhat different and established traditions of philosophical reflection, the grammatical investigation meanings and the phenomenological elucidation of our felt experiencing. Despite this difference, we suggest that phenomenological elucidation and grammatical investigation can fruitfully meet – as they do, we hope, in the present thesis. We are not alone in this task: the project of constructively relating Wittgensteinian and phenomenological investigation already has a tradition of its own: for example, in the works of Hubert Dreyfus (1991) and Stephen Mulhall (1990), both of whom, in different ways, see Wittgenstein's grammatical investigation, and phenomenological elucidation – in their case, especially Heidegger's phenomenological elucidation of 'the meaning of being' (Heidegger 1996: 3) – as deeply complementary (c.f. Dreyfus 1991: 144-157; Mulhall 1990: 120, 136-139). Another example is the earlier work of Nicholas Gier (1981).

But not all philosophers from within either the phenomenological or Wittgensteinian tradition share this sympathy to relate or even combine the ways of both. Just take the two contemporary philosophers with whom we have engaged most extensively in this thesis: Matthew Ratcliffe and Daniele Moyal-Sharrock. Ratcliffe explicitly opts for

phenomenological *rather than* grammatical investigation (Ratcliffe 2008: 177). Moyal-Sharrock, on the other hand, in her exploration of hinge-certainty barely scratches the question of relating hinge-certainty with the phenomenological questions (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 53, 55) and doesn't engage with phenomenological tradition of philosophical thought; on two occasions, she only very briefly and *very unfavourably* compares, first, Heidegger's (ibid. 5), and then Husserl's (ibid. 156) philosophical method with Wittgenstein's (not mentioning Merleau-Ponty at all).

This may be seen as somewhat unfortunate and perhaps even odd. Consider the following two remarks by Ratcliffe and Moyal-Sharrock, respectively. According to Ratcliffe, '[to] have a sense of reality is not to posit something in thought; it is an orientation that one takes for granted before positing anything' (Ratcliffe 2008: 65); and, according to Moyal-Sharrock, 'Hinge certainty is not the product of an attentive or conscious attitude towards a hypothesis,... it is a kind of trust or belief *in...* the default attitude ... [which] shows itself in the absence of mistrust.... [it is a] background,..., unconscious certainty... not a conscious experience' (Moyal-Sharrock 2007: 62-63). The similarity of their descriptions of existential feelings (Ratcliffe) and hinge certainty (Moyal-Sharrock) is at times striking. It is fair to mention that Ratcliffe, at least, is familiar with *On Certainty* and voices explicit reservations about the appropriateness of the category of 'hinge-propositions'. Noting that Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* speaks of '*Angeln... Sätze*' (OC 341), Ratcliffe is (rightfully) suspect whether these *Sätze* could be meant as *propositions* in any usual sense: 'It is ... arguable that Wittgenstein is not discussing "propositions" in any familiar sense of the term and that his framework propositions [or hinges] might add up to what I refer to as the sense of reality' (Ratcliffe 2008: 177). But, while he clearly sees the connections between the concept of '*Angeln... Sätze*', i.e. hinge-sentences, and his own concept of 'sense of reality', Ratcliffe is reluctant to stress or even mention them, let alone investigate them further. This is for two reasons: first, because Wittgenstein's grammatical investigation of hinges, which treats them as rules of grammar, 'is somewhat removed from phenomenological reflection upon the sense of reality' (ibid.). And second:

assuming that the background to explicit conviction and doubt has anything remotely like a propositional form, [Wittgenstein] fails to make clear the

difference between taking something to be the case, regardless of the way in which we do so, and having a sense of what it is to be the case. (ibid. 178)

It would seem, however, that neither of these two problems is insoluble. If we accept Moyal-Sharrock's suggestion that hinge-beliefs are *non-propositional* and unreflective certainties, this largely removes the latter obstacle for Ratcliffe to engage 'existential feelings' with 'hinge-beliefs'. And also – relating to Ratcliffe's first issue with grammatical investigation – it is hoped that our study, although concerned with special types of existential feelings and religious beliefs, goes some way to remove the impression that grammatical investigation and phenomenological elucidation somehow exclude one another, or that these have to compete for the sole legitimacy as philosophical method. They can be complementary, provided that our awareness of the difference between the natures of these two modes of philosophical investigation remains salient.

APPENDIX II

A tabular representation of the categories of mystical experience according to M. Daniels's '5x5 model' (taken from Daniels (2003)).

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Table 1. Categories of Mystical Experience (The "5 x 5" Model)

	MODE OF EXPERIENCE				
	HOT NUMINOUS	DIALOGIC	WARM SYNERGIC	UNITIVE	COOL NONDUAL
THE REAL AS (OR IN)					
Experience of the Real	Presence	Communication	Co-operation	Communion / Union	Identity
Relationship of the Real	Wholly Other	Other as Initiator	Other as Friend	Other as One with self	Not Other
Sense or feeling	Numinosity	Voices / Visions	Touch / Taste / Sharing	Oneness together	Pure Being
View	Sacredness and Reality of the Divine	Divine intervention in human affairs	Personal relationship with the Divine	Oneness with the Divine	"Godhead": Ultimate Absolute Divine Being
HT GOD(S)					
OH or	"I felt overwhelmed by God's Majesty"	"God spoke to me"	"I was filled with God's love"	"I was united with God"	"I am That I am"
TO DIVINE					
U BEING(S)	Sense of Divine presence	Divine visions and voices; Prophecy	Divine Father & Mother; Julian of Norwich, <i>blakki</i>	Spiritual marriage: St Teresa of Avila	Meister Eckhart; Shankara
View	The natural world as frightening or wondrous	Nature as revelatory	Personal relationship with Nature	Oneness of and with Nature	Nature as manifestation or outpouring of Self / Spirit
TA NATURE					
LE or	"I experienced a meaning presence in the woods"	"The babbling stream talks to me of mysterious things"	"I felt I was a child of Nature"	"I saw that the world was all one life and meaning"	"I am all the World"
XL COSMOS					
Examples	Ghosts, spirits and fairies; Enchantment; Mana	Communication with nature spirits, animals, plants, etc.	Romantic poets	Cosmic consciousness; Panentheic (Zachner)	One Taste (Wilber); <i>Upanishads</i>
View	Group or person(s) as object(s) of special power	Group or person(s) as initiator	Close bond between people(s)	Intimate connection with the Being of another person	There is no distinction between self and other
FW SOCIAL					
AW BEING					
RE or	"I felt the seething energy of the crowd"	"I was suddenly swept up and transformed"	"I felt a sense of kinship with all people"	"I felt that our souls touched in that moment"	"I AM you and you ARE me - we arise as One"
EM COMMUNITY					
Examples	Nuremberg Rallies; Charismatic leaders	Revivalism; Direct transmission from guru	Empathy; Fellow-feeling; Emotional connection	Communion (Welwood); Inter-being	One Taste (Wilber) ?; Not recommended (Welwood)
View	Psyche as wondrous, dynamic and powerful	Psyche (the unconscious) as revelatory	Self in touch with larger creative potentials of Mind	Oneness with Mind	Mind as clear, self-luminous reality
PE PSYCHE					
ER or	"I felt an extraordinary surge of energy"	"I saw mysterious signs and portents"	"The solution suddenly came to me"	"I was totally absorbed in the focus of my meditation"	"All is enlightenment"
IE MIND					
Examples	Kundalini awakenings; Ecstatic states	Illuminations; Vision quest; Oracular knowledge	Creative inspiration; Muse; Imagination; Rich fantasy	Flow; Contemplation; <i>savitakpa samadhi</i>	<i>Rigpur</i> ; One Taste (Wilber)
View	The self has a powerful Guardian Spirit	Deeper Self as source of wisdom and guidance	"Heart" or "Soul" as spiritual ground	Oneness with Heart or Soul	The Transcendent Witness
CE SELF/SOUL					
OI or	"I was aware of someone watching over me"	"I was warned by an inner sense"	"I felt in touch with my Heart (Soul)"	"I was united with mine own Heart (Soul)"	"A blissful, silent, empty unknowing"
OL MONAD					
Examples	Guardian Angel; Daemon; Ancestors	Inner voice; Insight; Intuition; Sixth sense	Inner spirit; Emotional and spiritual richness	Boundless compassion and loving-kindness; <i>metta</i>	Void, <i>sunyata</i> , Causal (Wilber), PCE (Forman)

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