From
Beyond Good and Evil
to
Before Good and Evil

By

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Dedication

To the memory of my father

Enayatollah Tajalli

and

To the love of my life

Deon and Denika

Certification

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of PhD in the Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University. This represents the original work and contribution of the author, except as acknowledged by general and specific references.

I hereby certify that this has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed:

Date:

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Abstract

Whereas a range of business and management scholars have argued that business is in an ethical crisis, Nietzsche makes it possible to see that it is ethics itself that is in crisis, and that only as the crisis in ethics is dealt with can ethics in specific areas such as business be addressed. Nihilism is the name that Nietzsche gives to the crisis in ethics. In response to nihilism, Nietzsche offers a revaluation of all values. This thesis will argue that Nietzsche's revaluation of all values fails in its own terms. Thus, while Nietzsche poses the question of the crisis of ethics and even the method (revaluation of all values), he does not proffer a way beyond nihilism.

Max Webers' image of the iron cage and organisational disenchantment allows Nietzsche's nihilism to be situated in an organisational context. The present thesis is developed by examining the way in which a range of religious existential philosophers respond to the crisis in ethics through their own permutations of a revaluation of all values. The religious existential philosophers are Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich and Emmanuel Levinas. The central question of the thesis is: do they provide a way beyond nihilism through their own form of a revaluation of all values? And if so, what is the implication for organisational existence?

Chapter Two gives an account of nihilism as articulated by Nietzsche, before presenting his revaluation of values, offering an ethics that he claims rests on no foundation. Nietzsche's project, however, as the chapter concludes, is ultimately doomed to failure.

Chapter Three examines the writings of Weber, whose revaluation seeks re-enchantment and a solution in terms of a combination of value and instrumental rationalities in ethical decision making, falling short of the demand for an ethics without a foundation.

Chapter Four considers Marcel's revaluation, which is founded on ontology and revival of God as the unconditional, and hence a relapse on the need for a foundation.

Chapter Five examines Tillich's onto-theologically-based revaluation, showing that, despite the introduction of notions such as "ultimate concern", it too is held hostage to the need for an absolute, albeit revelatory foundation.

Chapter Six demonstrates how, by giving primacy to ethics, taking it as first philosophy, Levinas' revaluation in terms of an ethics of responsibility, whilst re-enchanting a sense of the divine in the lived experience of individual, offers the promise of an ethics without a foundation.

In conclusion, I will discuss how Levinas, more adequately than other philosophers, is able to respond to Nietzsche, and opens up the space for the realisation that an ethics of management occurs when management understands itself in terms of ethics as an irreducible relationship to the otherness of the Other.

Contents

Abbreviations

Works by Nietzsche[1]

AC	*The Antichrist*
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*
DB	*Daybreak*
EH	*Ecce Homo*
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morals*
GS	*The Gay Science*
HH	*Human All too Human*
PhG	*Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*
TG	*The Twilight of Idols*
UM	*Untimely Meditations*
WP	*The Will to Power*
Z	*Thus Spake Zarathustra*

Works by Weber

ES	*Economy and Society*
FM	*From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*
GE	*General Economic History*
MS	*The Methodology of Social Sciences*
PE	*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
PV	*Politics as Vocation*
SP	*The Social Psychology of the World Religions*
SR	*The Sociology of Religion*
SV	*Science as a Vocation*
TSE	*The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*

Works by Marcel

BH	*Being and Having*
CF	*Creative Fidelity*
DW	*The Decline of Wisdom*
EB	*The Existential Background of Human Dignity*
HV	*Homo Viator*
MB-I	*The Mystery of Being: Reflection and Mystery (Volume I)*
MB-II	*The Mystery of Being: Faith and Reality (Volume II)*
MJ	*Metaphysical Journal*
MMS	*Man Against Mass Society*
PBW	*Gabriel Marcel's Perspectives on the Broken World*
PhE	*The Philosophy of Existentialism*

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[1] Unless stated otherwise, references to Nietzsche's works are to aphorisms and section numbers, not page numbers.

PI	*Presence and Immortality*
PM	*Problematic Man*
S	*Searchings*
TPR	*Theism and Personal Relations*
TS	*Thou Shall Not Die*
TW	*Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*

Works by Tillich

BR	*Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*
DY	*Dynamics of Faith*
EG	*The Escape from God*
EN	*The Eternal Now*
EPNM	*Existentialism, Psychotherapy, and the Nature of Man*
EPMA	*Ethical Principles of Moral Action*
LPJ	*Love, Power and Justice*
MB	*Morality and Beyond*
MSA	*My Search for Absolutes*
NB	*The New Being*
RS	*The Religious Situation*
SF	*The Shaking of the Foundations*
ThC	*Theology of Culture*
TPE	*The Protestant Era*
SHV	*Is a Science of Human Values Possible?*
SS	*The System of Sciences According to Objects and Methods*
ST-I	*Systematic Theology (Volume I)*
ST-II	*Systematic Theology (Volume II)*
ST-III	*Systematic Theology (Volume IIII)*
TCB	*The Courage To Be*
UC	*Ultimate Concern - Tillich in Dialogue*

Works by Levinas

AT	*Alterity and Transcendence*
BPW	*Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*
CPP	*Collected Philosophical Papers*
DF	*Difficult Freedom*
DG	*Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas*
EE	*Existence and Existents*
EI	*Ethics and Infinity*
GDT	*God, Death, and Time*
HO	*Humanism of the Other*
IRB	*Is it Righteous to Be?*
LR	*The Levinas Reader*
OB	*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*
OS	*Outside the Subject*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Every new wave of crisis in business and management has, at least partly, been attributed to the absence or failing of morality (Pfeffer and Fong 2002, Mintzberg 2004, Swanson 2005, Giacalone 2007), and has prompted management schools to address such crises by a call for more ethical forms of behaviour (Friedland 2009, Mintzberg 2009, Rubin and Dierdorff 2009, Wong 2009, Lau 2010, Waddock 2005).

But what if ethics itself is in a crisis? What if codes of ethics have been undermined in ways such that they have become detached from their foundations and from that which gave them meaning? This is the belief underlying the thought of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who argues that, in the wake of the death of God, it is not that specific values are absent, but that the meaning of value as both a concept and phenomenon has fragmented. The implications of the death of God are, to use a metaphor of Nietzsche's, such that this "earth has become unchained from its sun" (GS: 125). For Nietzsche, there is no sun and no light to give meaning to the concept of ethics itself – and with this, all specific ethical codes. The sense and significance of ethics as a discourse or field of study has been fragmented, and a decoupling of the language of ethics from its source has taken place. In the wake of the death of God, there is nothing left but the ruins of ethics, and at best those who are concerned with ethics are rummaging through its ruins.

From this perspective, business ethics is just another form of rummaging through the ruins of ethics. For example, it is often that talk of ethics in organisations is reduced to practices of compliance (Schwartz 2002, Wulf 2012), or that the way in which ethics is dealt with in business schools is by introducing students to a smorgasbord of ethical approaches: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, teleological ethics and so on (Fawson et al. 2015, Buchholz 2003). As will be made plain later, in the chapter on Nietzsche, he calls this kind of approach to teaching of and writing about ethics "perspectivism".

Perspectivism is itself a manifestation of the fragmentation of ethics. As such, from a Nietzschean perspective, it is a form of nihilism;[2] as are all those approaches in teaching and research of ethics that teach ethics as though there are different ethical systems which can simply be placed side by side with each other,[3] in a way that there is no foundation for grounding talk of ethics.

For Nietzsche, the death of God is the death of the possibility of a 'moral compass' through which everyday life in general, public life, and organisational life are given direction. For Nietzsche,[4] as it was for Plato at the dawn of philosophy and as it is for Max Weber, rationally-formulated rules and regulations are no substitute for the moral compass of ethics.[5] Rationally-formulated rules are just another manifestation of nihilism, of what Weber calls "disenchantment" (FM: p.350) and of what Paul Tillich calls "the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness" (TCB: p.155).

If Nietzsche's proposition concerning the death of God is taken seriously then, he argues that what he calls a "revaluation of all values" (EH: XIV.1) needs to be performed,[6] as the basis upon which a recovery of the purpose served by ethics in general can be performed. This is also the case in the particular context of business. The revaluation of all values, according to Nietzsche's view, will be the basis of talking not so much about ethics in business but about business in ethics.

The aim of the present thesis is to contribute to a revaluation of all values in the context of business and organisational life. It will do so, firstly, by describing Nietzsche's concept of nihilism and his attempt to perform a revaluation of all values. It will then place Nietzsche's views in an organisational context by examining the work of Max Weber. Weber shows how

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[2] This is because the world, which has, to quote Nietzsche himself, "countless meanings - Perspectivism" (WP: 481) - as a result of numerous interpretations, is a world that has no intrinsic meaning at all.

[3] However, the fact remains that ethical systems often do not arrive at the same conclusion or response to a given situation, highlighting a perspectival stance that each system takes.

[4] Sleinis (1999: p.67) writes that, although many influential intellectuals such as Hegel, Marx or Freud also point to the severe limitation and scope of the power of reason, "what makes Nietzsche special in this company is that his standpoint is more general and is not directly dependent on the vagaries of special theories in special areas…. His standpoint has an importance and robustness that the others lack because of its generality and relative freedom from domain specific assumptions."

[5] Plato considers it as a "a notable mark of bad breeding to have to make use of a justice imported from others, who thus become your masters", and considers this as a sign of "the lack of all true sense of values" (Plato: 405b). He further argues that, although the four virtues, of justice, wisdom, moderation, and courage, characterise a good society as well as a well-ordered individual (Plato: 441e), the rational part, whose quality is wisdom, needs to be in harmony with the other virtues and not overtake them (Plato: 442a).

[6] Nietzsche considers "re-evaluation of all values" as his "formula for mankind's greatest step towards coming to its senses" (EH: XIV.1).

instrumental or organisational rationality undermines itself and culminates in the "iron cage" of bureaucratic rationality. Max Weber's way of responding to organisational nihilism will be considered.

After having described Nietzsche's and Weber's depictions of nihilism and their respective responses, a series of existential theological responses will be considered. These thinkers will be divided into two camps. Firstly, there are those who acknowledge Nietzsche's pronouncement concerning the death of God but use it as a basis upon which to call for a re-articulation of God. They believe that once God has been recovered, ethics can be recovered. The second position is articulated by Levinas who, rather than seeing God as the basis of ethics, sees ethics as the occasion for the return of God. The first position will be represented by Gabriel Marcel and Paul Tillich, and the second is the unique perspective of Emmanuel Levinas. Unlike Nietzsche, Levinas does not attempt to go "beyond good and evil" but "before good and evil."

Existential thinkers have been chosen because so many of them respond to Nietzsche's call of the death of God. The religious existential thinkers have been selected because the author of the present work wishes to test the proposition that a re-enchantment of the Divine through a revaluation of all values is the basis for reconstructing the meaning of ethics and values in the wake of the death of God. It is contended in the present work that in the resurrection of God or belief in God that ethics and values become terms that are meaningful in providing a moral compass for everyday and organisational life.

Each of the religious existential philosophers acknowledge Nietzsche's cry concerning the death of God; however, unlike Nietzsche, who maintained that God was a fiction invented by the human being, the religious existentialists chosen all attempt to re-enchant the notion of a Divine source as the condition for an ethical way of life.

The logic of the present thesis is shaped by Nietzsche's notion of nihilism. Nihilism is defined by Nietzsche as a form of reflexive contradiction in which the highest values undermine themselves. The question arises from this definition: are each or any of the thinkers in the present thesis able to demonstrate a way of going beyond the reflexive contradiction at the heart of nihilism or do they get caught in it? This question will thus be posed to Nietzsche, Weber, Marcel, Tillich and Levinas in the present thesis.

Methodologically, the thesis will thus take the form of an imminent critique in which each of the authors' views will be examined reflexively and in their own terms. Nihilism, for Nietzsche, is both a tragedy and an opportunity; and he contends, paradoxically, that the acceptance and embracing of nihilism is a sign of our maturity, the realisation that values and meaning can never be founded on a foundation, and that, although the destruction and collapse of morality "has the potential for despair" and anxiety, "it is rich in hope because it clears the way for a revaluation of values" (Mitcheson 2013: p.72). Only when nihilism is embraced, when the resultant anxiety of meaninglessness is faced, could the challenge be remedied by means of a complete "revaluation of all values" (WP: 1059).

The central question of the thesis is: Do the philosophers studied here provide a way beyond nihilism through their own form of a revaluation of all values? To what extent are they successful in re-enchanting a sense of the divine in the context of Nietzsche's claim concerning the death of God? Furthermore, what are the potential implications of the conclusion arrived at in this thesis for business and organisational existence?

Therefore, let us at the outset restate the problem at hand, and justify our particular approach in attempting to find a response to the crisis of ethics; and only then offer a response to the crisis of the relationship between ethics and business.

Nihilism

Nietzsche and Weber distil the problem of ethics and anxiety of meaninglessness in terms of the notions of disenchantment and nihilism. Weber's analysis of the rise of modern Western capitalism[7] reveals that this system, once anchored in religious ethics, is now severed from its religious foundation, and fosters disenchantment of the world, substituting in place of this foundation the criteria of rationality and free-market economy. The modern person, according to Paul Tillich, "no longer possesses a world view in the sense of a body of assured convictions about God, the world, and himself" (TPE: p.192): his world is no longer governed by a single, grand metanarrative, which was once offered by religions capable of explaining the whole of social reality of life and offering meaning to the daily activity of individual, including his conduct in a business setting. When capitalism divests itself of its religious underpinning, it

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[7] It should be pointed out that Weber's thesis has been challenged by some on the basis that there were other factors, such as a higher literacy among the Protestants as compared with Catholics, that led to an increase in human capital and the rise of capitalism, rather than Protestant work ethics of asceticism. See Becker and Woessmann (2009).

plunges into the abyss of nihilism, because "without their religious basis, all purely moral demands", as Nietzsche argued, "must end in nihilism" (as quoted by Heller 1988: p.11).

Having formulated the problem of morality as that of nihilism, Nietzsche poignantly pointed out that it is not that we face a crisis of morality, but rather that morality itself is in crisis. Nietzsche contends that the underlying problem lies in the meaninglessness of morality itself; so discussions of the application of morality in a given setting, or ongoing attempts to formulate a more appropriate moral theory or the search for a more solid and sound foundation on which we could base our values and meaning, are nothing but sidestepping the real cause of the moral problem. It is not that our current moral values are in need of improvement, nor that we have not been able to devise the best method of differentiating between wrong and right, but rather that the whole notion of the duality of wrong and right is fallacious and arbitrary - a mere construct of human beings themselves. Nihilism has come about because our highest values devalued themselves so that the good and evil dichotomy no longer holds; and thus the remedy to this moral problem requires nothing short of a complete revaluation of our very notion of morality itself. For Nietzsche, the solution needs to be about finding a way to go "beyond good and evil" (BGE: 44).

The Religious Element

Marcel and Tillich are considered to be religious existentialists;[8] and the thoughts and writings of Levinas, though he "was never an existentialist", paralleled and contained a great deal of existentialism[9] (Bernasconi 2013: p.259, Michelman 2008: p.xix). The term religious existentialists perhaps best serves to differentiate such thinkers from atheistic existentialists such as Sartre, rather than one that identifies or categorises them based on a common train of thought.

A differentiating factor between religious and atheistic existentialists, however, is the fact that religious existentialists take into account a metaphysical and transcendental aspect within their ethical philosophies. "Since every economic system requires some form of religious

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[8] Sartre was the first to place Marcel in the camp of Religious Existentialists – see Sartre (1960: p.289). He is also considered as such by many others, see Rendtorf (2014) and Franke (2009).
Paul Tillich is widely known as a religious or Christian existentialist (Solomon 2005), and his "method of correlations explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers…." (Peters 1995: p.86).
[9] In distancing himself from existentialists, Levinas writes that he wants "to show that the relationship with the Other is as entirely different from what the existentialists propose." (TO: p.79). While the influence of Levinas' Jewish thoughts are often ignored, he is also properly considered by many as a religious thinker – see Gibbs (1992: pp.9-11). It has been claimed that Levinas' writings "bridges the philosophical and religious" (Bergo 2013: Pt.4.3).

legitimation (if often in our own day provided by forms of secular religion)" (Nelson 2010: p.177), as was argued by Weber, then the ethical problems and failings in this system may best be understood by considering this religious, metaphysical, non-conceptualisable, non-objectifiable, non-rational element; and the search for a response to address the problem may need to take into account the still-prevalent influence of religious motivation in the lives of individuals.[10] The failure of modern philosophy's attempts to provide a secular, rational, universal and self-sufficient substitute for religion and religious belief implies that such efforts,

> "for all their historical intelligibility and desirability … were self-deceived from the outset, and that those intellectuals who continue today to carry on likewise are engaged in a similarly self-deceived enterprise." (Gregory 2012: p.383).

There is no denying the fact that religion, especially in academic circles, is denounced and sidestepped as a potential factor contributing to an explanation of the ethical problems of modernity, or as an avenue to explore in search of a remedy:

> "Perhaps the baby of religion, once invented to cope with the unwanted and unintended effects of the Reformation, has been rashly thrown out with the bathwater of its past political perversions and social failures." (Gregory 2012: pp.383-384).

Existentialism and capitalism appear to share a common theme. In Weber's account, while capitalism was born out of religious fervour, it no longer is nourished by the religious ethics, but rather thrives on reason and rationality, which in turn foster dehumanisation and engender moral decline and anxiety. Existentialism was born and bred in the cradle of religion;[11] and Nietzsche, a forerunner of existentialism, reminds us of the dire consequence of the loss of our absolutes, the coming of nihilism, by pointing out that "he who no longer finds what is great in God, will find it nowhere. He must either deny or create it" (as quoted by Heller 1988: p.11).

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[10] After all, religion is considered "among the most powerful of all social forces and here as long as there have been human beings.… and showing no sign of going away" (Emmons and Paloutzian 2003).

[11] Kierkegaard is known as the father of existentialism and was a Christian.

Religious Existential Perspective

Religious Existential philosophy has never been recognised as having any great influence on management practice or education. Critiques

"would state that existentialism and management cannot be combined and that this approach is an indication of an ideological use of existentialism to justify management… and it seems impossible to unite the private search for existential and religious meaning with the requirements of having a specific work function in large organizations" (Rendtorff 2013: p.1438).

Although existentialism has had considerable influence on psychological theories and on the arts, it "has had relatively little direct influence within philosophy" (Burnham and Papandreopoulos 2014); and religious existentialism in particular has often been overlooked. For example, in analysing "the eight major theories of ethics", including existentialism and religion, Graham (2004), having seemingly misunderstood religious existentialism,[12] completely avoids it as an ethical theory worthy of consideration in its own right. Perhaps such a less than enthusiastic reception of existentialism is not helped by the refusal of one of the better-known religious existentialists, Marcel, to be labelled an existentialist,[13] or not helped by arguably the best-known existentialist and the father of atheistic existentialism, Sartre, "giving up his attempt to develop an ethics" and abandoning existentialism in favour of Marxism (Rendtorf 2014: pp.59-60). Often regarded as a passing fad of the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries,[14] existentialism has been considered to be a topic of conversation in Paris cafés by the elite that never really offered or found any practical or specific applications; and one that, in the present era where the emphasis is firmly placed on a rational, methodical, systematic and scientific approach to all matters, hardly gets a serious mention and which, despite the fact that it is fundamentally a theory of individual choice, conduct and responsibility, in the context of modern management is considered to be the antithesis of the dominant scientific management.[15]

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[12] Graham wrongly understands and considers Sartre's dictum "existence precedes essence" as "a succinct and memorable summation of what all existentialists, Christian and non-Christian, have in common". See Graham (2004: p.76). Such a position is flatly rejected by Gabriel Marcel. See Chapter 4.

[13] Marcel asserts that he is "generally … repelled by all labels and 'isms'" (TW: p.238), and more particularly he "refuses the association with Sartre" (Michelman 2008: p.222).

[14] For instance, it is suggested that "existentialism just is this bygone cultural movement rather than an identifiable philosophical position" (Crowell 2010).

[15] Scientific management, initially conceived by Fredrick Taylor, breaks down management activity into its isolated and separate components and roles, and by employing rational and scientific methods, attempts to redesign and reconfigure these activities in order to increase efficiency, productivity and calculability. As John Lawler points out, "An existentialist view of management and leadership would take a quite different approach, almost a contradictory one" (Lawler 2010: p.221).

As such, existential philosophy has remained on the sidelines of theoretical discussions on ethics, as a "not completely neglected but still [an] underutilised philosophy." (Ashman and Winstanley 2006: p.218).

Admittedly, it is very difficult or perhaps impossible to define existentialism, or to derive a coherent definition for existentialism. Sartre wrote that "the word [existentialism] is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all" (Sartre 1960: p.289); and Kauffman viewed existentialism as "not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy" (Kaufmann 1960: p.11). In any case, for the present purposes in this thesis, it could be said that existentialism is more of a disciplined method of thought than a philosophical system with well-defined and universal set of rules: it is "a philosophy to be lived" (Ashman and Winstanley 2006: p.229). By itself, existentialism does not offer any answer to the moral problem facing an individual, but it could enable the individual to chart a uniquely personal and meaningful resolution to that individual's existential problems.[16] Both strands of existentialism converge on the issue of individual freedom and choice, as for both, "truth is subjectivity".[17]

Atheistic existentialism attributes existence to this world by denying any metaphysical worlds beyond. This world is the only reality in which the individual subject needs to be the creator of his/her values and meanings. Religious existentialists, on the other hand, claim that our existence cannot be confined to this world alone, and in doing so attempt to open the discussion into a higher dimension. They contend that values and meaning need to be invested in something "transcendent", where access to such transcendent values and meaning requires a "leap of faith".[18] The individual still has the freedom to choose to take this leap, but such a choice is not on the basis of any rational or objective grounds; indeed, from a Levinasian perspective, the choice has already been made! Existentialism contends that the human being is beyond total comprehension, and that the individual human experience, including one's feelings, anxieties and other emotions - that is, the non-rational, illogical and non-objectifiable aspects of one's experience - needs to be taken into consideration in any serious attempt to consider and address human conduct and behaviour. Such dimensions of a human being are neither categorisable nor can they be captured within a system: they are resistant to abstraction and reduction by the mere fact of the uniqueness of each individual human being involved.

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[16] An existential problem or concern is one "that involves our whole existence" (MSA: chap.2 para.57).

[17] This is at the core of existentialism as articulated by Kierkegaard – See Kierkegaard (2009).

[18] Having delineated the three stages of aesthetics, ethical and religious, Kierkegaard believed that a "leap of faith" is required to move from the ethical to religious stage. See Kierkegaard (2009).

Existentialism has at times been portrayed as a pessimistic philosophy due to the presence of themes of despair and anxiety in the writing of some of its proponents;[19] as well as being criticised as a useless moral philosophy due to its emphasis on human subjectivity and the interpretive nature of human experience.[20] After all, how "can we dare abandon [scientific] methodology?", which is "the most careful observation possible along with responsible hypothesizing" available to us? (Brosio 1996: p.8). As will become clear during the course of the present study, existential philosophy does not dismiss science or rationality, and its emphasis on subjectivity should not be equated with relativity or anarchism; that is, existential thought and a moral approach does not mean that anything is allowed. As Nietzsche put it, "… there is no doubt that a 'thou shalt' still speaks to us too" (DB: pref.4); and Levinas emphasises the point by asserting that "there has to be a point that counts for itself…. there needs to be a cell that is in itself sober" (HO: p.49). Perhaps understandably, the reluctance of existential philosophers to offer a consistent account of existentialism, and their non-compliance to any stream or trend of thought, is itself the defining feature of existentialism. This is to say that attempts to define existentialism would go against the very purpose of the existential philosophies ((Oaklander, 1992: p. ix) as quoted by Webster 2003).

My investigation approaches the issue of ethics and anxiety in management from the perspective of religious existentialism.[21] In the first instance, religious existentialism may seem like an unlikely marriage or even an oxymoron; indeed, existentialism, by and large and thanks to the views of one of the better-known existentialists, Sartre,[22] is often associated with atheism or agnosticism. Furthermore, while existentialism revolts against any attempts at system building,[23] conventional religion provides a system of belief and offers the believer the path to salvation or attainment of meaning in life through instituting religious rituals, practices and daily routines. Thus, unlike religions, which call the believers to enter into a covenant with

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[19] In "Being and Nothingness" Sartre most famously underlines this theme, writing: "Man is a useless passion. It is meaningless that we live and it is meaningless that we die." The religious existentialists studied in this thesis also write about the themes of anxiety, angst or dread.

[20] In "Ethics of Ambiguity", prior to setting the argument in support of existentialism, Simone De Beauvoir writes: "it is also claimed that existentialism is a philosophy of the absurd and of despair. It encloses man in a sterile anguish, in an empty subjectivity." (Beauvoir 1949: p.10)

[21] Segal (2015: p.1) writes that "perhaps one of the reasons for the limited use of existentialism in management is the latter's claim to be a science or critical social science. In contrast to science, which deals with things that have the status of objects, existentialism deals with themes of existence."

[22] Flynn (2013) refers to Sartre as "arguably the best known philosopher of the twentieth century."

[23] According to Sell (1998: p.158), "The true existentialist lives his beliefs: to philosophical analysis, classification, and system-building he is intrinsically opposed"; and Emmanuel (1999: p.357) points out that "Nietzsche is also extremely critical of philosophical system building and the inherent tendency of metaphysics to still the movement of the flux."

God[24] and bind themselves to a formal and predefined set of norms and rules of conduct,[25] existentialism promotes the exact opposite, urging the individual not to follow any predetermined path, but rather to choose the path based on the given context and one's unique and subjective experience and interpretation. It could be said that, for all existentialists, religious or atheistic, the acceptance of formal religious belief can be a form of nonbeing: the sacrifice of one's own being and freedom to choose; and hence, the cause of existential anxiety of meaninglessness. In that sense, all existential philosophers share a suspicion of religious organisations; however, while many are dismissive of religion altogether, the religious existentialists have a different take on religious belief, in the sense of viewing it as "a strong affirmation to be", which comes about when "a man exists completely in his belief, making no compromises" (Rice 1960: p.140). In accommodating the power and influence of religious belief, we can observe that even a Christian theologian such as Paul Tillich, basing his philosophical work on existentialism, has no problem demythologising and de-emphasising the traditional notion of God.[26]

I contend that the consideration of the problem of ethics and anxiety of meaning in business and management through the lens of religious existentialism is warranted, not only because capitalism and religious existentialism cross paths at the juncture of religion, as pointed out earlier, but also because the rise of capitalism, according to Weber, brings about disenchantment and loss of freedom and meaning in life, themes that fall within the purview of existential philosophy and its efforts to redress them. In the context of Weber's theory of the birth of capitalism, it could even be said that existentialism is a reaction to the unintended consequences of the Protestant ethics,[27] namely dehumanisation, disenchantment, nihilism, and the resultant anxiety.

Religious existential ethics, as understood and argued in the present thesis, shares a great deal with its atheistic form, in the sense of attempting to go beyond deontology, teleology, or any attempts that aim at the creation of a decision-making process involving the selection of the

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[24] Such a covenant with God is found at least in the Abrahamic religions, those of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Baha'i Faith, for instance.

[25] Religion is considered "as an emotion-based rule system that provides a context or backdrop for the generation of solutions to life problems, particularly those in the moral realm" (quoted in Emmons 2000).

[26] Tillich defines religion and faith as the "ultimate concern", and God as the content of this concern. See Chapter 5.

[27] Rice (1960: p.136) writes that "the reaction against Protestantism [which was] led by such men as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche – are all a part of the development of existentialism." Further support for this is offered by Spillane and Martin (2005: p.94), claiming that "existentialism presents itself as the antithesis to the psychological conditions that have developed in modern industrial society on the basis of Protestant Ethics."

solution from among a number of potential alternatives. This is because "human reality is messy and ambiguous", hence we should come to expect that "moral decisions, unlike abstract ethical principles, are [also] ambivalent" (Bauman 1993: p.32), and as such not malleable to a predefined system or process.

To consider a religious existential approach to ethics is to recognise that ethical decision making stems from an individual's free choice, exercised in a concrete and particular situation as experienced by the individual decision maker, and sustained by a deeper dimension: what Marcel calls "ontological exigence", Tillich's "ultimate concern", or Levinas' "Infinity". Such dimensions should be recognisable without or in spite of positive religions. Importantly, however, where for Marcel and Tillich values arise in relationships, Levinas gives primacy to ethics, arguing that it is values and ethics that provide the context within which any relationship could take place. The outcome of such an ethics is anything but the application of some general and universal duties or obligations to the given situation, as is commonly taught and practiced in the field of business ethics today. An existential approach to ethics attempts to move beyond highlighting what is right or wrong and yet still influence the individual to live a moral life and act morally and responsibly within the business environment.

Conclusion

It is not enough to propagate a business ethics without taking into account the destruction of ethics as articulated by Nietzsche and Weber. Only by working through nihilism and organisational disenchantment can we hope to re-enchant and restore an ethics to the business and organisational environment. Managing as an ethical practice is dependent on this re-enchantment, for it is only through such a re-enchantment that organisations can go beyond the instrumental rationality described by Weber. To this end, an existential understanding of the foundation of ethics and meaning will be explored as the basis of a way of being for managing and organising.

As already stated, I undertake a reflexive investigation of the ethical philosophies of Marcel, Tillich and Levinas, in an attempt to gain a better and clearer understanding of a potential response to the challenge of nihilism and disenchantment articulated by Nietzsche and Weber, and the resultant ethical problems and anxiety of meaninglessness facing modernity in general and capitalism in particular. In other words, following the trail left by Nietzsche, I seek to explore the possibility of charting a path towards an overcoming of nihilism through a "revaluation of all values". This is an acknowledgement of the fact that our world "cannot be

understood without seeing the deep ways in which it is an unintended extension and continuation of late medieval and Reformation-era developments that are not dead and gone, but remain influential in the early twenty-first century" (Gregory 2012: p.383).

Crucially, revaluation of all values should not be taken as a re-construction of a new foundation, because if this was the case, we would not have moved forward but rather returned to the original problem of the impossibility of anchoring values and meaning in an absolute, immovable foundation. In other words, the problem of nihilism is coextensive with the proposed overcoming; hence, by overcoming nihilism we are not meant to arrive at a new stage beyond nihilism; rather, it is finding the courage to dwell within nihilism and muster the ability to do away with moral foundations altogether, and in doing so in effect go beyond the dichotomy of "good and evil".

I am mindful of the fact that existentialism and existential philosophy has often been criticised for affirming nihilism - the meaninglessness of life and the impossibility of grounding values and meaning in any immovable base - only to then project its own meaningful vision of the world; and in this process, in effect negating its own very argument. Justification and validity for such a criticism can be found when considering the existential philosophy of Tillich, and to a lesser degree that of Marcel; even Nietzsche himself does not escape this criticism. Levinas, on the other hand, appears to have managed to break free from this tendency of reverting to the safety of a foundation, and offers the promise of an ethics without foundation.

In short, the efforts of this thesis reveal that, if we cannot find ethics and meaning by going "beyond good and evil", as Nietzsche urged us to do, then perhaps we need to take Levinas' response to revaluation, by going "before good and evil" in search of them. Dwelling in the "before good and evil" region, however, is dwelling in uncertainty and anxiety.

Overview of Chapters

The first two chapters of this thesis capture the breakdown of ethics and value in terms of nihilism and disenchantment.

Chapter 2 is a study of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, who attributes moral nihilism to the 'death of God' phenomenon. Nietzsche asserts that, to overcome this problem, a "revaluation of all values" is necessary. I explore and critique Nietzsche's own solution in terms of this revaluation, and show the inadequacy of his naturalistic response. Nietzsche reveals the

pervasiveness of nihilism which in the context of organisations and management schools, indicates that the numerous attempts to piggyback ethics and meaning on a foundation only exacerbates the problem, leading to the loss of the language of ethics, as well as failing to address the existential anxiety brought about by nihilism. As I will also discuss in this chapter, Nietzsche's demand for revaluation of all values gets an added sense of significance, as he does not see the existential anxiety itself, but rather the loss or lack of meaning behind such anxiety, to be the real problem.

Chapter 3 is an examination of the works of Max Weber, which allows me to frame the problem of nihilism in terms of his notion of disenchantment of the organisational world, a consequence of the rise of modern capital system. I argue that Weber's solution, in terms of a compromise between the ethics of responsibility and ethics of conviction, is too limiting and should not be considered as an adequate response to the call for revaluation.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine the philosophies of Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich, and Emmanuel Levinas, respectively. All three philosophers embrace nihilism, and attempt to provide a response through a revaluation.

In Chapter 4, I show that Marcel's revaluation entails an attempt to open a space in which a relationship with God is re-established. Although Marcel offers a fresh understanding of what a human being is, and a deeper insight on ethics through his notion of intersubjectivity, I argue that his ontologically-based ethics relies too heavily on the Unconditional, or God, and hence, from a Nietzschean perspective, constitutes a relapse into nihilism.

Chapter 5 discusses the views of Tillich, a theologian, for whom the cause of nihilism is our estrangement from the ground of our being, or God. I argue that Tillich's re-interpretation of God as "the God above god", his theonomous ethics, and his onto-theologically-based revaluation, undermines itself, and should not be considered as a proper response to the challenge of nihilism.

Chapter 6 considers the radical approach Levinas takes towards revaluation. I demonstrate that Levinas' ethics of responsibility, premised on his idea that "ethics is first philosophy", that true human relationships emerge within the context of meaning, may be that frameless morality, that way of "being in relation" and "being for the other", that holds the promise of an adequate

revaluation; as, unlike the revaluations of the other religious existentialists, God, or the idea of Infinite, emerges out of the ethical relationship, and not vice versa.

Chapter 7 provides the conclusion to this thesis by surveying the range of revaluation attempts undertaken and the insights into the problem offered by the philosophers studied here. Whilst Nietzsche's call to revaluate was an attempt to go "beyond good and evil" in response to ethical nihilism, I find Levinas' revaluation, in the appeal to go "before good and evil" to ethics itself, to be the most appropriate response to nihilism. With this in mind, the conclusion discusses the implications such a view on ethics holds, promising to open a space allowing management practice to take place within an ethical context and to go beyond the anxiety of meaninglessness so prevalent in the workplace today. [28]

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[28] There is ample evidence that organisational settings play an important role in both meaning making and in creating anxiety (Linden and Muschalla 2007, Gabriel 1998, Choudhury 2013).

Chapter 2 - Friedrich Nietzsche: Revaluation of All Values

"Open your eyes! … We are going to be travelling beyond morality…" (BGE: 23)

Overview

Nietzsche, a genealogical critic and an in-depth explorer of morality (Fennell 1999, Leiter 1997), claims that "nobody up to now has examined the value of that most famous of all medicines which is called morality" (GS: 345), in order to realise the meaninglessness of morality itself and accept that we are not facing a crisis of particular moralities, but rather that morality itself is in crisis. Nietzsche subjects "moral valuations themselves to criticism" (WP: 399); and by challenging both the content and the authority of morality, shows morality "to be the central problem" (Zuckert 1983: p.49). In doing so, Nietzsche stands out as the philosopher who directly attacks the foundation, the very idea of morality, in order to present an alternative conception of ethical life (Robertson 2009, Parsons 1974).

As I demonstrate in this chapter, having revealed the incoherence of our morality, Nietzsche perhaps understood more clearly than any other philosopher the nature of the problems that this incoherence poses for moral philosophy and our culture (MacIntyre 1985), and by implication for business and organisational life. He claimed that "no morality could have any justification" (Schneewind 1983: p.529), and wondered if, instead of being inherently good, morality was our "curse" (WP: 33):

> "a poison, a narcotic so that the present lived at the expense of the future ... so that morality itself were to blame if man, as species, never reached his highest potential power and splendour" (GM: pref-6).

For Nietzsche, nihilism is a crisis in which the very foundations of morality become empty and meaningless; and to demonstrate this, he brings into question all absolutes, objectives and universal bases on which our morality rests. He argues that the solution to the problem of nihilism lies in the destruction of the old conception of morality in order to create a new stage for new values. To this end, he calls for a "revaluations of all values";[29] but, importantly, such a revaluation is not about replacement of one set of values with another, substituting one

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[29] Nietzsche's genealogical investigation led him to "call for revaluation of all values" (Prellwitz 2012: p.36), as he saw this "as the only antidote" against the rise of nihilism (Kranak 2014: p.1).

absolute or foundation with another, but rather is about discarding all values and their foundations, and instead finding the courage and a way to live where there are no foundations for our values.

In this chapter, I describe Nietzsche's formulation of the problem of nihilism, which he attributes to the death of God phenomenon. Nietzsche is critical of morality, claiming not only that it lacks any true foundation but also that it is harmful for human flourishing. I will outline the two possible stances Nietzsche believes one could take in response to nihilism: a passive one, where we succumb to the effects of nihilism; or an active one, where we embrace nihilism on the way to overcoming it. Taking an active response, according to Nietzsche, requires a "revaluation of all values". I add weight to the need for a revaluation by discussing another manifestation of nihilism in the form of anxiety of meaninglessness in organisations, their misdiagnosis of this anxiety, and their misplaced efforts to remove it.

The revaluation process has two phases. The destructive phase is about undermining the legitimacy of morality through genealogy, and revealing the myth of the assumption of its claim to have a natural basis, justifying the necessity to go "beyond good and evil" dichotomy. I will then outline the key elements of the constructive phase, Ubermensch, "will to power", eternal recurrence, amor fati, self-overcoming and life affirmation. Nietzsche here attempts to formulate a proper way of living a moral life, a way of living that requires enough "will to power" enabling us to take a life-affirming attitude towards our lives, which he also refers to as Dionysian.

In offering a critique of Nietzsche, I argue that he does not offer a viable solution to the crisis of nihilism, not only because many of his concepts do not yield a coherent solution to the problem, but because the reliance of his ethics on "will to power" signifies his failure to properly revaluate all values, in effect undermining his own solution. What is indispensable in his insightful critique of morality, however, and what I particularly intend the reader to take away from this chapter, is his undermining of "the tenet that all moralists endeavour to account for", namely that there is a "real foundation of morality" (BGE: 186). Such a position, I suggest, has not been taken by many authors in business and management studies, who, in attempting to address the crisis of ethics in organisations, ignore the Nietzschean insight regarding the pervasiveness of nihilism and his call for a revaluation of all values. Such a conclusion to this chapter will set the stage for the subsequent chapters, where I explore the philosophers who, in welcoming Nietzsche's diagnosis of the problem of ethics, take up his "revaluation of all

values" challenge. This is an acknowledgement that, before we can even write about business ethics, we need to confront the collapse of ethics itself.

The Advent of Nihilism

> "…. There will come a day when my name will recall the memory of something frightful, a crisis the like of which has never been known on earth..." (EH: XIV.1)

According to Nietzsche, our morality, and hence our culture, faces a crisis, because we have come to realise[30] that it is not based on any objective, universal or unconditional[31] value or meaning: that the whole edifice of morality has been a house of cards; that "… it is errors which, as the basis of all moral judgment, impel men to their moral actions" (DB: 103); that we are "being fooled and yet lack the power not to be fooled" (WP: 55); and "now that the shabby origin of these values is becoming clear, the universe seems to have lost value", "everything lacks meaning" (WP: 1), existence has no meaning, no goal or end. This "belief in unbelief" (GS: 347), and the uncertainty about standards of value and scepticism regarding morality, has led to total abandonment of any kind of moral standard, to indifference, disillusionment, despair, and to nihilism. Nietzsche's "God is dead" is a catchall phrase to signify the essence of this crisis of morality.

Death of God

Nietzsche came to attribute his diagnosis of the cultural crisis, namely nihilism, to "the most important of more recent events - that 'God is dead', that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief …" (GS: 343); and he foreshadowed the dire consequence of this event where "our social order will slowly melt away …"[32] (HH: 443). Our morality faces a crisis because we have come to realise that "there is no such thing as moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena" (BGE: 108): that all values are only perspectival and merely indicative of the personal view of the life we live, and are not based on any objective, rational or universal value or meaning.[33]

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[30] Nietzsche writes: "morality will be destroyed by the will to truth's becoming-conscious-of-itself: … the most terrible, most questionable drama but perhaps also the one most rich in hope ..." (GM: 3-27).

[31] Nietzsche considers these as "fundamental fictions" (WP: 574).

[32] In the aftermath of the death of God, we wonder "… how much must collapse now that this faith [Christianity] has been undermined because it was built upon this faith…. for example, the whole of our European morality", and Nietzsche warns of a "sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending …" (GS: 343).

[33] Cussen (2001) argues that, later on, the more "mature Nietzsche" came to realise that the crisis was much more serious than this, and that indeed his own attempts to undermine and destabilise morality was contributing to the crisis.

Once God is dead, the question arises as to why moral obligations should always be decisive and why one ought to act morally. As Dostoyevsky observed, "if God did not exist, everything would be permitted"; and Nietzsche's madman,[34] likening the death of God to the unchaining of "the earth from its sun", questioned the dire consequence of this loss: "is there still an above and below?" (GS: 125). With the death of God, goes the death of ethics.[35] This is the realisation that rules and regulations, the ordering of human life, are no longer given by nature or by God. While the "death of God" signifies that our traditional ground of morality's compelling character is gone, Nietzsche believed that the belief in the existence of God or an absolute had supplied a false foundation for our morality, rendering it an "unhealthy", "weak" and "harmful" morality.[36] As he notes, "the church sends all 'great men' to hell, it fights against all 'greatness of man'" (WP: 871); so the collapse of this morality would be a good outcome.

The realisation that our moral codes are not based on some underlying absolutes; and that there are no alternative values that we could now appeal to, and no basis from which we could create new values or provide new justification for the old ones, because "we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of thing that might be 'divine' or morality incarnate" (WP: 3); and the resultant sense of despair, meaninglessness and anxiety: all these are the immediate consequence of the death of God, and highlight the depth of the crisis of morality we grapple with.

Devaluation of Values

Nietzsche claims that nihilism has come about because our highest values devalue themselves. He writes: "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'Why?' finds no answer" (WP: 2). In the case of religious morality, the devaluation of our highest values such as "truth" and "honesty" came about because the "holy lie"[37] within morality, namely the belief in God or a moral world order, is crushed in favour of "truth" and "honesty".[38] To be a moral subject means being truthful; but to be truthful is to recognise that

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[34] In the parable of "The Madman", Nietzsche writes that it is a madman carrying a lantern in the day going to the market place crying "I seek God! I seek God!" and announcing that "God is dead" (GS: 125).

[35] In this connection, Walter Kaufman said: "Our values are lost. Who is to say what is up and what is down?" (Kaufmann 1974: p.97).

[36] Nietzsche's Zharathustra urges us to "go out of the way of all such absolutes; they are a poor sickly type, a populace type, they look at this life with ill-will…."; even love cannot be taken as absolute because "all great love does not seek love – it seeks more" (Z: IV.13).

[37] According to Nietzsche, the assertion that "God gave" our laws is the "holy lie" in any religion (AC: 57).

[38] Truthfulness as objective and unconditional, cultivated in us by religious morality for centuries, "eventually turned against morality; discovered its teleology, its partial perspective…"; and this recognition now "becomes a stimulant" (WP: 5), because in our unrelenting search and desire for truth, the pursuit of "truth at any price" (GS: 344), we come to discover that there is no truth and that our morality is based on an "untruth".

the whole account is false (Cussen 2001, Schutte 1984). Our accepted religious morality becomes its own undoing, as it is "dying of internal inconsistencies" (Kaufmann 1974: p.113). "Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive" (WP: 1) here, because if one moral interpretation, namely the religious one, is found to be false and baseless, it raises the suspicion that all other moral interpretations and value judgments are false too and are not based on any solid foundations.[39]

The devaluation of our highest values is to such an extent that we do not even know how to talk meaningfully about ethics and values in the first place. These values have been emptied of their transcendental significance and reduced to empty words[40] and meaningless concepts that can be measured and quantified. Indeed, measurement and quantification have come to take the place of values and become our standards, whereas values are needed because of an absence of standards.[41]

Problems with Morality

Nietzsche asserts his two fundamental objections to morality,[42] firstly that morality has been based on a false premise, namely the lie that it has a foundation, and secondly that it thwarts the development of human excellence (Leiter 2002, Robertson 2009), because it is life-denying and life-negating, in the sense that it is hostile to our basic human instincts and necessarily unrealisable in this world[43] (Leiter 2002, Reginster 2006). We deny this world of contradictions, multiplicity, imperfections, suffering and unpredictability, by inventing another world, one which is harmonious, perfect, constant and predictable. Thus, since ours is the apparent world, we come to believe in the existence of the real or "true world"; our world is conditional, so we look for "an unconditional world", "this world is a world of becoming" full of variations and nuances, but we long for consistency and come to believe that "there is a world of being". All

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[39] Nietzsche asks what "if God were *not* the truth and it were precisely this which is proved? if he were the vanity, the lust for power, the impatience, the terror, the enraptured and fearful delusion of men?" (DB: 93) [italics in original].

[40] This point has been noted in the context of business and management by George Soros, who says: "There is no consensus on moral values. Monetary values are much less confusing. Not only can they be measured, but we can feel reassured that they are appreciated by the people around us. They offer a certainty that social values lack."

[41] Take the notion of accountability in business, which is regarded as a performance objective that can readily be measured in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of processes (Solomon 2007). Here the value of accountability is reduced to being about fulfilling economic objectives, and is linked to corporate profitability and financial performance.

[42] For example (see DB: 103) and (see GS: 358).

[43] Thus Nietzsche entreats us to "remain true to the earth, and believe not those who speak unto you of super-earthly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not" (Z: prol.3).

of these, according to Nietzsche, are false conclusions,[44] based on "blind trust in reason: if A exists, then the opposite concept B must also exist" (WP: 579).

Perspectivism (Lack of Foundation)

Nietzsche sees nihilism as the consequence not only of the collapse of a religious absolute, namely God, but that of all absolutes on which values could be grounded: thus, not only "there are no moral facts" (TG: VI.1), but "there are no facts" at all (WP: 604). If there are no moral facts at all, nothing is in any way good or evil; hence, our value judgments become empty and meaningless. Nietzsche writes:

> "Judgments, judgments of value about life, for it or against it, can in the end never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they are worthy of consideration only as symptoms; in themselves such judgments are meaningless" (TG: II.2).

All moral judgments have this in common with religious judgments, that they believe in realities that do not exist (TG: VI.1). Moral judgments, Nietzsche argues, always depend on context, are always in relation with something else, and are not based on some truths or absolutes;[45] "thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their premises" (DB: 103). Morality is only an interpretation of certain phenomena, "more precisely a misinterpretation" (TG: VI.1).

The gravity of the problem of nihilism comes to the fore when we realise that nihilism cannot be overcome by simply finding or inventing a solid foundation on which to ground our values and meaning, by defining a new absolute basis for morality to fill the loss, because "only something which has no history can be defined" (GM: 2-13); yet there can be no such thing as something which has no history.[46]

Nietzsche challenges the possibility of any objective foundation that could underpin morality's claim to authority (Robertson 2009, Leiter 2002), on the grounds that "whatever has value in

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[44] Nietzsche blames the Philosopher for inventing "a world of reason" or true world, the religious person for inventing the divine and "anti-natural world", and the moral person for inventing the world of "good, perfect, just, holy"; all as a reaction to the natural world we live in (WP: 586).

[45] For Nietzsche, absolute values are an absurdity, because the value of morality needs to be measured not with itself but with something else, for example it's utility; but then the value of that utility needs to be measured and measured with something else, and such an argument can continue ad infinitum.

[46] Anything that has a history cannot be taken as the absolute, the standard, the starting point, because itself rests on other preceding elements. This claim is on par with what is known as the "species problem" in biology, particularly as conceived by Charles Darwin, namely the inability of the biologists to provide a definition for "species" because of the evolutionary nature of species. Every species is always evolving and has a history so it cannot have a definite and fixed definition for all times.

the world does not have value in itself, by its nature - nature is always valueless"(GS: 301); thus, although it is us who create our values, we cannot create objective values.[47] We cannot objectively judge or measure because we are part of the whole existence itself, "an interested party, even a bone of contention, and not impartial judges …" (TG: II.2). In order to properly judge or objectively value something, one needs to be outside of that thing itself. Our inability to separate ourselves from existence, to step outside of it, in order to provide a third-party perspective or impose a meaning and purpose on it, means that there can be no objective value. All values then are only perspectival and need to be viewed in a context (Starling 1997); they are merely indicative of the personal view of the life we live.

This is Nietzsche's perspectivism, in the sense that there is no single objective value, meaning, or viewpoint available to us to evaluate life. There is no independent standard of truth to serve as the measure of truth for us. Each person apprehends and interprets the world through her own perspective. Nietzsche writes: "In so far as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – 'Perspectivism.'" (WP: 481) [italics in original]. He warns us to "be wary of the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason', 'absolute spirituality', 'knowledge as such'…. There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival 'knowing'" (GM: 3-12) [italics in original].

Nietzsche also rejects the normative authority of morality by pointing out that the death of God and the decline in the religion has not brought about a corresponding decline of faith in the authority of religious morality and value. This indicates that this morality is independent of what underpins it, namely the belief in the existence of God, and hence does not derive its authority from an imperative or objective source.[48] He is also dismissive of the universality of moral values, because actions cannot be and are not similar, as "every action that has been done, has been done in an entirely unique and inimitable manner" (GS: 335). To claim, then, that under all circumstances an action should be done out of a sense of "duty" or "conscience", or in accordance with some categorical imperative, is a sign that we have "not advanced half a dozen paces in self-knowledge" (GS: 335). Concepts of duty, virtue, imperativeness, or universality of any kind, are "a source of danger" (AC: 11), rather than a solution for the

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[47] On the ground that "nature is always valueless", Nietzsche is also dismissive of the idea that values are intrinsic and unalterable.

[48] Nietzsche writes: "They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. … This morality is by no means self-evident …. Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole: nothing necessary remains in one's hands" (TG: VIII.5).

problem of nihilism.[49] Nietzsche is particularly dismissive of Kant's philosophy, considering him a "Nihilist, with his bowels of Christian dogmatism",[50] and claiming that Kant's "success is merely a theological success" and, like the rest of Western Philosophy, he is obsessed by the platonic idea of transcendence, the universal. Kant knows, or should know, that there can be no God, no absolute, yet he introduces a new God - Categorical Imperative. For this, Nietzsche believes that "Kant became an idiot!" (AC: 11).

Science cannot be taken as a foundation for morality either, because it rests on what is not scientific, as Nietzsche writes: "It is clear that science, too, rests on faith: there is no science without presuppositions" (GS: 344). Rationality should be dismissed as a foundation for morality, because, according to Nietzsche, rational thought is "only the final stage in a process rooted in 'instincts' and 'drives'" (Kirby 2003: p.15); indeed, he believes that "reason at any cost [is] a dangerous life-undermining force" (EH: IV.1), and our "faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism" (WP: 12). Nietzsche summarises his contention that we cannot invent or choose a new foundation for morality as follows:

> "[M]orality is neither rational nor absolute nor natural… the world has known many moral systems, each of which advances claims to universality; all moral systems are therefore particular, serving a specific purpose for their propagators or creators, and enforcing a certain regime that disciplines human beings for social life by narrowing our perspectives and limiting our horizons" (BGE: p.xvii) .

The failure of any project to provide rational vindication of morality shows that our morality "lacked any public - shared rational or justification" (MacIntyre 1985: p.48), and further underlines the crisis of nihilism, because the Nietzschean "death of God" comes to entail the annihilation of all values and principles (McNulty 2005) and not just the religious ones. This heralds the end of an existential certainty in the way in which everyday public and private life is ordered and structured. It is the end of a certainty in a set of scripts, conventions and institutions, which regulate the way in which people interact with each other.

Since Nietzsche could show that morality has no foundation and moral valuation is only "the consequence of an immoral valuation", he refutes morality, considering it to be "a special case

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[49] As Ross (2014) put it: "Nietzsche denounced the reality of universal truths because he saw the corruption that formed surrounding them".
[50] Nietzsche considers Kant a passive nihilist rather than an active one like himself.

of immorality" (WP: 401). Such a morality is reduced to nothing but a metaphor, an appearance, a perspective; and as such, it is bereft of any authoritative force to judge or be used for valuation.

Care should be taken here not to confuse Nietzsche's perspectivism with cultural relativism, because although everyone has a perspective,[51] for Nietzsche not all perspectives are equally valid; indeed, most are invalid, and he "does not subscribe to the position whereby each interpretation is simply true from within a particular perspective" (Mitcheson 2013: p.48).

Weakening Effect (Herd Mentality)

Nietzsche's second objection to morality is that moral values have the effect of leading us to devalue what is in fact essential to us, and instead to value what is not conducive to our flourishing. On this basis he argued that God was "the greatest danger" (Z: III.11), as He demanded indiscriminate submission of all to the same divine law. Morality is a "danger"[52] because it has the effect of producing average persons in favour of excellent ones, and by demanding an individual to act "without thinking of oneself as an individual" (DB: 9), forcing her to forego her individuality. Considering a person as "the strongest animal" (AC: 14), Nietzsche equates "morality" with the "taming" of a beast (TG: VI.2); and he suggests that morality, rather than improving man, weakens his will, "stands against all those instincts which work for the preservation and enhancement of life" (AC: 7), and makes him unsure and in need of company, enslaving him in the chains of rules of logic and rationality, which diminish his instinctual power of creativity: in short, it develops "the herd animal in man" (WP: 129). All moralities have a socialising or levelling effect, in the sense that they address themselves to all, "because they generalise where one ought not to generalise" (BGE: 198): they claim universal applicability, and take what is good for the average person as the standard and the reality,[53] making it into morality for all. Nietzsche, however, rejects this levelling effect,[54] because

> "'Good' is no longer good when one's neighbour takes it into his mouth. [And] how could there be a 'common good'! The term contradicts itself: anything that is common never has much value" (BGE: 43).

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[51] Nietzsche writes: "…whether an existence without explanation, without 'sense' does not just become 'nonsense'" and "in this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its perspective forms, and only in them" (GS: 374).

[52] Indeed, for Nietzsche, "morality itself was the danger of dangers" (GM: pref-6).

[53] This is despite the fact that "reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types and abundance of variation and change of forms" (TG: IV.6) in people.

[54] Nietzsche writes: "against formulating reality into morality I rebel" (WP: 685).

For Nietzsche, morality as well as "all the means by which one has so far attempted to make mankind moral were through and through immoral"; and to this end, both theologians and philosophers are guilty in their attempts to "improve" mankind (TG: VI). Nietzsche's refutation of universality and objectivity of morality is not because universality or objectivity of moral demands would be a bad feature per se, but rather that "to demand *one* morality for all is precisely to encroach upon the higher sort of human beings" (BGE: 228) [italics in original], that is, people with higher potential and capability. I will return to the concept of "higher man" later. Universality would be acceptable if the agents were similar, but people are quite different.[55]

The Nietzschean problem, his "greatest and most persistent problem", according to Kaufmann (1974: p.101), is how to defeat or escape nihilism, how to find a new sanction for our values and a new goal that could give meaning to our lives; because asserting the existence of an absolute, a god, would inhibit our ability to create a "healthy" and "strong" morality; and denying the existence of such absolute causes the collapse of all meaning and values in our lives, leading to nihilism.

Types of Nihilism

According to Nietzsche, there are two types of nihilism (Megill 1985), or there can be two types of response to nihilism, a passive and an active.

Passive Nihilism

Nietzsche predicts that most people become passive nihilists, in the sense that, rather than accepting the death of God and trying to overcome the resultant nihilism, they resign themselves with the realisation of the valuelessness of our old values, and "simply try to minimize the pain or seek comfort, physically, psychologically and socially" (Zuckert 1983: p.70). Nietzsche uses the metamorphism of the "Camel" to signify the submissive character of the passive nihilist.[56] The passive nihilist despairs because he longs to value something but in good faith cannot, because he believes that only objective values are worthy to be values. The passive nihilist is characterised by a weak "will", refuses to accept responsibility, and seeks escape in whatever offers the outward semblance of authority and objectivity rather than action. However, such

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[55] For Nietzsche, "a high civilisation is a pyramid" (AC: 57), which can only stand on a broad base of mediocre people, whose conduct can be regulated by morality; but this is not a place for an exceptional, "higher man".
[56] Nietzsche uses three metamorphoses, of the Camel, Lion and Child, to refer to passive nihilism, active nihilism, and a new beginning, respectively. Whereas the Camel signifies submissiveness, the Lion is the sign of courage and strength needed to pull down the old on the way to the new (Z: I.1).

hollow escapes are ways of "self-narcotisation"[57] (WP: 29). Nietzsche describes passive nihilists as the "last men", "the most contemptible", "the most despicable men" (Z: prol.5): incapable of self-realization through creation of their own values, they come to rely on values that have been created or defined for them.[58] In the absence of a god, passive nihilists look for another god, another absolute upon which they could build their values, because they want to avoid the pain, suffering and anxiety that goes with nihilism.

Active Nihilism

Active nihilism, on the other hand, is considered by Nietzsche as the appropriate attitude where, despite its danger, we take the demise of our "unhealthy" morality as a good thing because it opens the way for us to invent new meanings and create a strong type of morality, one which is not "decadent", harmful to life and anti-nature.[59] Nietzsche considers nihilism as a transition (Fennell 1999), an "intermediary period" (WP: 587); and calls himself a nihilist, viewing the advent of nihilism as a "necessary" stage, because we "must experience nihilism before we can find out what value [our] 'values' really had" (WP: pref.4) and then acquire new values. Once we "break up the good, and the tables of the good, then only [could Nietzsche] embark man on his high seas" (Z: III.12). To this extent, "nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking" (WP: 15).

The active nihilist does not seek escape from despair and meaninglessness of values; rather, s/he welcomes nihilism; and acknowledging the shallow foundation of values, sets out to tear down the remaining vestiges of these hollow value systems; because only when the old faith and its idols are dead can we look beyond nihilism for a new source of meaning. Nietzsche uses the metamorphosis of the "Lion"[60] for the active nihilist, to signify the strength needed to go beyond the safety of "thou shalt", the old foundation for values, and to seek the freedom to create new values for oneself. In that sense, active nihilism is a precursor to Nietzsche's "revaluation of all values" project: an attempt to address the crisis of nihilism by creating new values and new morality independent of any foundation.

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[57] Various forms of intoxication are given as examples of such an attitude - intoxication as music, as becoming an instrument of science, etc. (see WP: 29).

[58] "Last men" are the fruit of a cultural mediocrity, who are so concerned with their own comfort that they aspire to nothing; they are the result of our modern society (Leiter 1997, Higgins 2007). The "last men" are the antithesis of Nietzsche's Overman. They are "the most harmful kind of men because they secure their existence at the cost of Truth and at the cost of the Future"; they rob existence of its greater character by their weak and herd morality. ""The good - they cannot create; they are always the beginning of the end" (Z: III-12).

[59] All our current "values that have come to be worshipped are the exact opposite of the ones which would ensure man's prosperity" (EH: pref.2).

[60] See note [56]

Before discussing the "revaluation of all values", I turn to consider a consequence of the rise of nihilism, that of the existential anxiety of meaninglessness within the organisational context, in order to underscore the need for a revaluation of all values from a Nietzschean point of view.

Nihilism, Disenchantment and Anxiety of Meaninglessness

Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God and the collapse of our value structure was also the harbinger of the state of our modern time, characterised by Paul Tillich as an "age of anxiety" (TCB: p.35). Existential anxiety occurs where there is the lived experience of the collapse of the foundations of the conventions through which everyday sense making occurs. This collapse is expressed well by Rollo May, a student of Tillich, as existential anxiety or the anxiety of meaninglessness, in the following way:

> "The threats involved in [anxiety] are not threats that can be met on the basis of the assumptions of the culture but rather are threats to those underlying assumptions themselves… The threat is experienced as … a threat to basic assumptions which have been identified with the existence of the culture, and which the individual, as a participant in the culture, has identified with his own existence" (May 1996: p.238).

Anxiety is different to fear, because fear has a definite object or an identifiable source to be afraid of; so fear, no matter how frightful it may be, can be faced, analysed, endured, and by mustering enough courage, can be conquered. But the source of threat in the case of anxiety is not known, "the source of the threat is 'nothingness'",[61] or the experience of nihilism. In the face of anxiety, one feels helpless, loses direction, lacks intentionality, and feels unable to deal with the threat she is facing (TCB: pp.36-37).

As a major theme in existential philosophy, anxiety is considered interwoven with and part of being a human, and is viewed as a more primordial form of anxiety; indeed, it could be said that physiological or neurotic forms of anxiety stem from our failure to cope with our existential anxiety (Dorrien 2003: p.497).

For Nietzsche, nihilism is lived out in the "anxiety of emptiness and meaningless", because anyone "with the rare vision to see the general danger that 'man' himself *is degenerating* …. suffers from an anxiety that cannot be compared to any other" (BGE: 203) [italics in original];

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[61] Tillich points out that it is not sufficient to say that anxiety is the fear of unknown; rather, that anxiety is about the unknown, which is the nonbeing.

and, as will be seen in the next chapter, nihilism finds a close counterpart in Weber's depiction of "the fate of our times" as "characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and, above all, by the disenchantment of the world" (SV: p.155). Weber foresaw modernity as a disenchanted garden in which meaning has been supplanted by technical efficiency and mechanical routines; a condition Nietzsche diagnoses as a passive nihilistic response to the problem of meaning, a sign of failure to "bear the weight of such responsibility" for a revaluation of values; these are our real anxieties and gloom (BGE: 203). Nietzsche wrote that "the tremendous machinery of state" and organisation, with its emphasis on the division of labour, means that "no one any longer possesses the full responsibility"; indeed, such an organisation "overpowers the individual, so he repudiates responsibility (obedience, oath, etc.)" (WP: 718), and is inclined to adhere to rules and commands; he is thus dehumanised. Furthermore, although such a division of labour produces a "more useful kind of soul", albeit "an incomplete" one, for the organisation, since everything that one does in service of an organisation or state is "contrary to his nature" (WP: 718), anxiety begins to manifest itself. That is to say, such an inappropriate response, one that replaces God with another absolute in the form of rationality and avoids undertaking "a revaluation of values", further fuels anxiety.

Modern organisations take anxiety to be an emotion, and hence the antithesis of the rational and bureaucratic nature of organisations, adversely effecting its objectives; and so consider it best to be contained or eliminated (Gabriel 1998, James and Clark 2002). To this end, new foundations for meaning are erected and new rationally-based enchantments fabricated. However, the reliance on a rational foundation results in dehumanisation, through what Weber termed the "iron cage" effect, as well as disenchantment that results in fragmentation of value and meaning, both of which are facets of the anxiety of meaninglessness that plagues modernity and modern bureaucratic organisational life. The instrumentally-rational techniques employed in organisations have been shown to be "a root cause of employee concerns" and the resultant alienation of employees and deepening of anxiety (McHugh 1998) in the workplace; and it has been argued that the emphasis on bureaucratic structure[62] and organisational hierarchy, rather than helping to contain anxiety, is a systematic generator of anxiety, making the individual's responsibility highly ambiguous (Gabriel 1998). Indeed, the "dysfunctional effects of these [bureaucratic] structures" produce in individuals "the feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement" (O'Donohue and Nelson 2012: p.6).

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[62] Bureaucratic structures are often viewed as means of containment of anxiety and its effects, and rational means and techniques have come to be taken "as social defences against anxiety" (Stacey 2012: p.120).

Tillich holds that emptiness and the loss of meaning, as expressions of our anxiety, manifest themselves in terms of doubt (TCB: p.48). We attempt to remove doubt by creating meaning, by anchoring ourselves to something meaningful: we try to revive Nietzsche's dead god or create a new god to take its place; or as Weber demonstrates,[63] we try to make sense of our life processes by ever more justifying them and grounding them in reason and rationality; only to find out that, ironically, the more rationalised our efforts and approaches become, the deeper we sink in the anxiety of meaninglessness; and the greater an absolute foundation or a god we fabricate, the greater the impending disappointment at the collapse of this new god. "Naked absolute", Tillich writes, "produces 'naked anxiety' for it is the extinction of every finite self-affirmation, and not a possible object of fear and courage" (TCB: p.39).

Nietzsche, having criticised modernity for taking "reason as authority" (WP: 62), considers any attempt at grounding meaning on a foundation, including that of rationality, tantamount to the creation of a new god and indicative of our failure to fully grasp the problem of meaning in the first place; after all, it is "the faith in the categories of reason [which itself] is the cause of nihilism" (WP: 12). For Nietzsche, choosing a remedy to this problem itself is a sign of decadence and nihilism, because in choosing a remedy, "one chooses in fact that which hastens exhaustion" (WP: 44); so rational means, including conformism to rules and processes within organisations, "[working] blindly as an instrument of science" as Nietzsche put it, is nothing but to confuse the cause and effect. Attempts at removing anxiety, pessimism and nihilism are doomed to failure because these are the effects of an underlying condition. By offering a predetermined path, rules eliminate the need for taking responsibility for decisions and appear to alleviate anxiety; however, they in effect only mask the anxiety, and in the process take away our freedom and impair our very humanity. Sartre tells us that freedom is not a property or virtue one acquires; rather, one is freedom; and Kierkegaard reminds us that anxiety is the possibility of freedom,[64] freedom to create "one's self, willing to be one's self….One would have no anxiety if there were no possibility whatever" (May 1996: pp.38-39). To remove anxiety then, is to remove freedom, making oneself less of a human being.

An important point to stress here is that, for Nietzsche, it is not anxiety and suffering that is the problem of modernity; rather, it is meaningless anxiety and suffering. Suffering one can tolerate; meaningless suffering fosters existential anxiety. He writes: "Man, the bravest animal and most prone to suffer, does *not* deny suffering as such: he *wills* it, he even seeks it out,

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[63] See discussion in Chapter 3.
[64] "Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom" (Kierkegaard 1980: p.54).

provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering" (GM: 3-28) [italics in original]. Thus, rather than removing anxiety, we need to find ways to create meaning for it; indeed, revaluation without the presence of suffering is not possible. Nietzsche writes:

> "A revaluation of values is achieved only when there is a tension of new needs, of men with new needs, who suffer from the old values without attaining this consciousness" (WP: 1008).

Again, care should be taken here so that creation of meaning is not confused or mistaken with creation of some justification for anxiety, because creation of a justification itself is tantamount to creation of a god. For Nietzsche, the solution lies in a revaluation of values in organisational life, which calls for a complete change and an overhaul of the individual's perception of herself; the realisation of which is to lead the individual to an acceptance of anxiety without being overwhelmed by it.

Revaluation of all Values

> "A revaluation of all values: this question mark, so black, so huge that it casts a shadow over the man who sets it up" (TG: pref.).

Nietzsche asserts that to escape nihilism and overcome our morality without a "revaluation of all values" will produce the opposite effect, making the problem more acute (WP) by perpetuating passive nihilism and fostering "last men". This revaluation is his "formula for mankind's greatest step towards coming to its senses" (EH: XIV.1), in an attempt to thwart the pessimism about existence that flows from our existing moral valuation of things, by creating opposite valuations, "and to revalue, to reverse 'eternal values'" (BGE: 203). A radical revaluation of our traditional morality, Nietzsche argues, "will teach humans that their future is their *will*, that the future depends on their human will" (BGE: 203) [italics in original]. Revaluation of values, however is not a new thing: Christianity, for example, as Nietzsche points out, made a revaluation of ancient values. The Renaissance, on the other hand, was the revaluation of the Christian values back into essentially ancient values (Brobjer 2010): it was "an attempt with all available means, all instincts and all the resources of genius to bring about a triumph of the opposite values, the more noble values"[65] (AC: 61).

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[65] However, to the disappointment of Nietzsche, the Renaissance was retarded by the Reformation, failed, and became "an event without meaning, a great futility!" (AC: 61).

It is important to note that revaluation, for Nietzsche, is neither about creation and substitution of a new set of values nor a new foundation for values.[66] As such, Nietzsche neither offered us new values nor attempted to do so as Kaufmann (1974: p.110) points out; rather, revaluation is about coming to value something where one valued nothing before. It is an attempt to found values on no foundation. Revaluation should be viewed as a war against our very conception of morality and moral valuation, a "war … against all the old concepts of 'true' and 'not true'" (AC: 13), against the prevalence of an artificial and unnatural dichotomy between good and evil, in order to pave the way for "a liberation from all moral values, in an affirmation of and trust in all that has hitherto been forbidden, despised and damned" (EH: VII.1).

Only when we have recognised how we have killed God, when the shabby foundation of the old value systems are exposed and destroyed, when we have realised that "it is of cardinal importance that one should abolish the true world" (WP: 583), sever any dependence on any notion of absolute and muster enough courage for "the creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred 'No' even to duty" (Z: I.1), could "the more noble values" be instituted "into the instincts … [and] … the possibility of a perfectly heavenly enchantment and spectacle …." (AC: 61) be revealed. That is why Nietzsche tried to accelerate the collapse of our morality, "in order to clear the ground for a comprehensive legislating of new values" (Eden 1987: p.416).

Nietzsche believes or hopes that, through revaluation of our values, "a countermovement finds expression, regarding both principle and task; a movement that in some future will take the place of this perfect nihilism" (WP: pref. 4). We need to bear in mind that revaluation of values cannot be a one-off activity, because this would mean finding a fixed or absolute point, which contradicts the purpose of revaluation. Rather, it is necessary to undergo a perpetual cycle of revaluation,[67] in order to perpetually create new values, because,

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[66] Zarathustra responds to those who ask him for moral instruction ("the way") by claiming that there is no way, thus suggesting that he cannot provide any general instructions about what must be done (Z: I.17); rather, insisting that "a virtue must be our invention; …[and] must spring out of our personal need" (AC: 11).

[67] Nietzsche writes: "Not to be dependent on any one person, not even the most beloved - every person is a prison, and a nook. Not to be dependent on a fatherland, not even the most suffering and needy - it is certainly easier to detach your heart from a victorious fatherland. Not to be dependent on pity, not even if it were for higher men into whose extraordinary suffering and helplessness we have accidentally seen. Not to be dependent on any science, not even one that would tempt us with the most precious discoveries, seemingly reserved just for us. Not to be dependent even on our own detachment, on the voluptuous faraway foreignness of the bird, who constantly flies up to ever greater heights so that it can see ever more beneath it-the danger of the flier. Not to be dependent on our own virtues, nor allow our wholeness to be sacrificed to some singularity about ourselves..." (BGE: 41).

"Whoever has a soul that craves to have experienced the whole range of values ... that one does not merely have but also acquires continually, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up" (GS: 382).

The destructive phase of revaluation precedes the constructive one because, "He who has to be a creator in good and evil - truly, he has first to be a destroyer, and break values" (Z: II.12). The destructive phase entails the "destruction of the world of being", the world that relies on absolutes; but this in turn is the ushering in of nihilism. For this reason, Nietzsche asserts that nihilism, as the consequence of this destruction, is a necessary "intermediary period" before new values could be instilled (WP: 585). He saw both the danger as well as the possibilities of nihilism, writing:

"I praise, I do not reproach, [nihilism's] arrival. I believe it is one of the greatest crises, a moment of the deepest self-reflection of humanity. Whether man recovers from it, whether he becomes master of this crisis, is a question of his strength!" (as quoted in Francis 2015: p.40).

Nietzsche begins the destructive phase by undertaking a genealogy of morals, in order to reveal their baseless foundation.

Genealogy of Morals

Nietzsche seeks to identify the beginning, the origin or "genealogy" of morals;[68] and in so doing provides a naturalistic debunking account of both the genesis of moral values and the structures holding them in place, as objective and authoritative (Robertson 2009); showing that our assumptions about our moral values are false, that these values have no inherent meaning in themselves, and that the absolute good taken to be behind our traditional morality is an arbitrary good based on historical events and accidents, so that "morality is nothing other (therefore no more!) than obedience to customs" (DB: 9).

Nietzsche argues that standards of good first emerged as direct reflections, as the self-assertion, self-characterization and self-affirmation of those with strong will or the ruling class; who rule because they possess the most power (Zuckert 1983). He refers to this class as the "noble" or "master", and claims that "creating values is truly the *master's privilege*" (BGE: 261) [italics

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[68] Nietzsche wrote that "the question concerning the origin of moral valuations is therefore a matter of the highest importance to me because it determines the future of mankind" (EH: VII.2).

in original]. For the masters, the "good" is the noble, strength and power, and the "bad" or "evil" is the weak, timid and cowardly. The "master-morality" then is born of strength, it is active, creative and life-affirming; whereas the morality of those with weak-will, the "slave-morality", is passive, defensive, reactive, born of resentment[69] and hatred towards their masters, life-negating, and is "a mere product of the denial of the [master-morality]"[70] (AC: 24). According to Nietzsche, the "masters" create values and the "slaves" negate these values, creating the opposite; resulting in the good and evil dichotomy. The slaves or common persons are unable to create their own values, hence they seek meaning for their lives by looking outside of themselves, outside of existence, they look to heaven, to reason and rationality and the like.[71] On this account, Nietzsche's Zarathustra[72] tells us that "verily, men have given unto themselves all their good and bad. Verily, they took it not, they found it not, it came not unto them as a voice from heaven" (Z: I.15). Our moral values, then, are purely conventional, purely human inventions, purely social products and manifestations of human drives and affects (Zuckert 1983, Robertson 2009); leading Nietzsche to conclude that moral claims are erroneous, because of the presuppositions underpinning and used to justify them.

Through his genealogy, Nietzsche unravels many of our assumptions about moral values, showing that our values do not have any inherent meaning: that values such as "good", "bad" or "evil" are not absolutes; rather, they are concepts that have had different meanings, even contradictory ones, over time and culture. Thus our task, a proper revaluation, needs to go beyond this artificial dichotomy of good and evil.

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[69] In equating slave morality with Christian morality, Nietzsche claims that genealogy demonstrates "the birth of Christianity out of the spirit of resentment" (EH: XI).

[70] Nietzsche criticises the belief system of the slaves because it is based on *the belief in the opposition of values* (BGE: 2) [italics in original], and operates "by dividing reality into a set of binary opposites" (Hatab 2008: p.107) because opposites are "easier to comprehend" (WP: 37); but this dualism of good and evil disrupts a healthy morality (Schutte 1984) because "between good and evil actions there is no difference in kind, but at the most one of degree" (HH: 107), and both are necessary for the development of personality and the whole culture (Brobjer 2003).

[71] According to Nietzsche, the tension between the two types of morality led to the "slave's revolt in morality" (GM: 1-10), where the morality of the slaves, "the common man" (GM: 1-4), became triumphant. This took place through the "will to power" of the slaves and by the force of numbers, and because of the slave-morality's "ability to give a meaning to suffering, the basic existential problem for 'man', both slave and master" (Leiter 2002).

[72] Nietzsche takes the name Zharathustra after the founder of Zoroastrianism, who has been attributed for founding the duality of good and evil. Nietzsche writes: "Zarathustra was the first to see in the struggle between good and evil the essential wheel in the working of things. The translation of morality into the metaphysical, as force, cause, end in itself, was his work…. Zarathustra created the most portentous error, morality, consequently he should also be the first to perceive that error…" (EH: XIV.3). Nietzsche's Zarathustra aims to undo what the original Zharathustra instituted.

Beyond Good and Evil

Whilst Nietzsche attacks the conception of morality we have had and employed till now, he does not claim that we could do away with morality altogether. He writes:

> "faith in morality is withdrawn - but why? Out of morality! Or how shall we call that which informs it - and us? … there is no doubt that a 'thou shalt' still speaks to us too".[73] (DB: pref.4)

The very idea of culture carries with it a value, and the assignment of value to life is a necessary condition for life (Fennell 1999, Higgins 2007, Scott 1998). Nietzsche admits that "no people could live without first valuing" (Z: I.15), and that our moral conception of the world so far has provided the justification and meaning for our existence and acted as "the great antidote against practical and theoretical nihilism" (WP: 4). Thus, "to give up false judgements" and abandon "measuring reality by the purely invented world" of valuation, would be "to give up life, to deny life". However, to recognise that our judgements[74] have been nothing but "an old infatuation"[75] and our valuations have no basis, as nothing is objectively "good" or "evil", that things are valuable because we value them,[76] allows us to resist the familiar yet false values and valuations in order to create our own values, and in doing so go "beyond good and evil" (BGE: 4).

Going "beyond good and evil", that is to say going beyond morality, is Nietzsche's attempt to found values on a more true and honest foundation; or stating this more accurately, it is to found values on no foundation at all - an ethics without a foundation. This means that values we create and judgements we make need to be from our own individual perspective: they need to be "judgements of taste in the sense that they are a celebration of subjectivity" (Scott 1998: p.70). Going beyond the rigidity of good and evil requires creativity: it is in a sense to become like an artist, and Nietzsche urges us not only "to learn from artists …" but "moreover be wiser than they. For this fine power of theirs usually ceases with them where art ceases and life begins; we, however, want to be the poets of our lives…" (GS: 299). An artist, through the power of

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[73] And in "Beyond Good and Evil" he writes: "But the strange fact is that everything on earth that exists or has existed by way of freedom, subtlety, daring, dance, and perfect sureness, whether it be in ideas, or in governance, or in oratory and rhetoric, in the arts as well as in manners, has developed only by virtue of the 'tyranny of such despotic laws'" (BGE: 188).

[74] Nietzsche calls these "synthetic a priori judgements", that is "judgements that are not verifiable by experience nor by definition, but known with certainty to be true" (BGE: 181).

[75] The idea that we thought we "had long known what was good and bad" was "an old infatuation" (Z: III.12).

[76] Thus the source of value lies in the valuing human beings.

his creativity, "guards against simple and sober methods and results", considering the perpetuation of his art of creation as "more important than the scientific devotion to truth …" (HH: 146). As artists in search of new creations, we should be able to go beyond our previously-held notions of good, go past what was once our masterpiece; this means to overcome ourselves.

Naturalistic View

"all that is good is instinctive … necessary" (TG: VIII.47).

Nietzsche's revaluation project stems from his naturalism; indeed, he aims for "naturalisation of morality", wanting "in place of 'moral values' purely naturalistic values" (WP: 462). He wants to "return man to nature" (WP: 462), because, for him, human beings are fundamentally animal,[77] one beside "many other animals, all at similar stages of development" (AC: 14). Thus, like other animals, ultimately it is our instincts, our predispositions, our subconscious instinctual drives, which shape our actions, and all our logics and valuations are essentially "physiological demands"[78] (BGE: 3). Therefore it is from nowhere, save from within and from the innermost impulses of our nature, our instincts and our character, that Nietzsche takes his moral ideal (Salter 1915, Starling 1997). Since "it is absurd to praise and censure nature and necessity" (HH: 107), all our valuations of actions lose their value and become false; and Nietzsche wants us to accept this "bitterest drop" and understand the complete irresponsibility of an individual for his actions and his nature. For Nietzsche, "an action in itself is perfectly devoid of value: it all depends on who performs it. One and the same 'crime' can be in one the greatest privilege, in another a stigma" (WP: 292). It is the personality and character, the inner impulses, which are the determining criteria of value, not rules and principles. Value judgements, then, are symptoms of the quality and disposition of the valuing subject.[79] On this basis, Nietzsche's moral ideal is radically different to that of many other moral philosophies, because, rather than being action-oriented, it is character- or person-oriented.

For Nietzsche, "all that is good is instinctive … necessary" and natural, but "almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached - turns, conversely, against the instincts of life…" and is an "anti-natural morality" (TG: V.2). He writes:

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[77] Thus "the more complete human beings", who Nietzsche believes we should become, are "also… the 'more complete beasts'" (BGE: 151).

[78] The modern version of such assertion is the idea that man is a machine governed by his genetic makeup.

[79] Nietzsche writes: "Moral judgments are therefore never to be taken literally: so understood, they are always merely absurd. Semiotically, however, they remain invaluable: they reveal, at least for those who can interpret them, the most valuable realities of cultures and inwardness…" (TG: VI.1).

"an admirable human being, a 'happy one,' instinctively must perform certain actions and avoid other actions; he carries these impulses in his body, and they determine his relations with the world and other human beings. In a formula: his virtue is the effect of his happiness" (TG: V.2).

On this account, any attempt at creation of morality,

"any improvement morality, including Christianity … , rationality at any price … without instinct, in opposition to the instincts - all this was a kind of disease, merely a disease ... To have to fight the instincts- that is the definition of decadence …" (TG: II.11).

This decadence, constitutes an attempt to change human nature; which cannot in the end succeed because the human being as an animal is not suited to live in a society, as a member of a "herd", regulated by customs and social abstractions, by morality; rather, the human being, according to Nietzsche, is or should be, the "*sovereign individual …*, like only to itself, having freed itself from the morality of custom, an autonomous, [supramoral] individual" (GM: 2-2) [italics in original].

Before I consider this supramoral[80] individual and how Nietzsche wants to cultivate this characteristically value-creating human being as the solution to nihilism, I briefly discuss his rather controversial concept of "order of rank", which underlines his naturalistic views and the degree of contempt he held for the levelling effect of traditional morality and herd mentality, in favour of the creation of supramoral individuals.

Order of Rank

"My philosophy aims at an ordering of rank" (WP: 287).

Nietzsche advocates an "order of rank" among people, asserting that such order "simply formulates the supreme law of life itself" and is necessary to the maintenance of society and to

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[80] Nietzsche identifies three stages of morality: "pre-moral", where the value (or non-value) of an action is inferred from its consequences; the "moral" stage, where the origin and not the consequence of an action determines its worth, so that the value of an action lies in the value of its intention. Having dismissed both the "pre-moral" and "moral" stages, Nietzsche suggests that we may now be on the threshold of a new stage in morality, what he calls the "ultra-moral" or "supramoral" stage, where the value of an action lies precisely "in that part of it that is *not intentional*" (BGE: 32) [italics in original].

the evolution of supramoral individuals (AC, BGE). There is nothing arbitrary about this "order of rank", as it is essentially the confirmation "of an order of nature" (AC: 57), which is a determining factor as to "whether an action is moral or immoral" (HH: 42), Since, for Nietzsche, morality is an inherently discriminatory activity based on one's interpretations and perspectives, a positive healthy morality comes from those occupying a higher order of rank in society. Thus, "masters" rule "not because they want to, but because they are" (AC: 57): they need not justify their actions as they are their own standard of goodness.

Nietzsche holds that, for human life to flourish, it is essential to maintain "the *order of rank* in the world" (BGE: 219) [italics in original], and indeed even to widen the differences of ranks, because the morality or "the ideas of the herd should rule in the herd – but not reach out beyond it" (WP: 287). Thus we could say that, for Nietzsche, while the traditional morality is viewed as unhealthy and harming the strong, the masters, it may be useful for the lower-type men, the herd. Nietzsche's objection to any universal form of morality is that it tends to break down this rank ordering in society and promote commonality and herd mentality, whereas what is important for him is not the "herd" but great individuals.

I now turn to consider such supramoral individual, Nietzsche's Ubermensch, and in considering such a figure we are in effect moving into the second or constructive phase of Nietzsche's "revaluation of all values" project.

Ubermensch

"… new kinds of philosophers and commanders will eventually be necessary..."

(BGE: 203)

Nietzsche's belief in order of rank means that, for him, our aim should not be the cultivation of lofty values and morals, a set of unshakable standards, but rather "the object of mankind should lie in its highest individuals",[81] in constantly striving "at the production of individual great men" (UM: p.161) and giving "rise to exceptional men" (BGE: 242), those who are the creator of their own values. He writes: "he will have discovered himself who speaks: 'This is my good and evil.'" (Z: III.11). Nietzsche uses numerous epithets, Ubermensch[82] (WP: 1027), "higher man" (BGE: 30, AC: 4, HH: 72), "new philosopher" (BGE: 44, GS: 289), "noble" person (BGE:

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[81] (See Introduction by Mrs Forester-Nietzsche as cited in Nietzsche 2016).
[82] Also translated as "superman" and "overman" (WP: 1060).

212, GS: 3) and "free spirits" (GS: 180, Z: II.8, EH: VI.1) to refer to such a person.[83] What is important and indisputable, however, is that each of these epithets "designates a type of man who has turned out very well" (EH: III.1) and is "the most thoroughly well-constituted type";[84] and it is this "higher man", not man in general,[85] who is meant to be the projection of what is best in us (Clark and Dawson 1996). Furthermore, although some commentators of Nietzsche have dismissed the Ubermensch as having any significance,[86] the numerous references in his writings to such a great individual, including those in his later works such as Ecce Homo and Anti-Christ, underline the importance of this concept in Nietzsche's philosophy; and the creation of such individuals comes to be an essential element of his mature view and his positive moral philosophy.[87] Such individuals "possess all the qualities of the modern soul, but are strong enough to transform them into pure health" (WP: 905); and as Fowler (1990) points out, they must become supremely objective in order to consider various perspectives as a precondition for the creation of their values. Nietzsche writes that perhaps such an individual,

"needs to have been a critic and a sceptic and a dogmatist and an historian, and in addition a poet and collector and traveller … and moralist and seer and ' free spirit' and nearly all things, so that he can traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and be able to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, …. But all these are only preconditions for his task: … to create values" (BGE: 211).

Ubermensch provides the justification for human existence, and in so doing provides us with an alternative ideal and becomes the fruit of revaluation and Nietzsche's solution for the nihilism of the modern world (Ansell-Pearson 2005, Schutte 1984, White 1988). Nietzsche writes: "The Overman, I have at heart, not man; not neighbour, not the poorest, not the sorriest,

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[83] For the purpose of my discussion here I accept Robertson (2009: p.77)'s claim that Nietzsche's various epithets, namely "free spirit", "higher man", "noble" person, and arguably also "Ubermensch (or overman)", all refer to this same "higher man"; even though Zarathustra seems to draw a distinction between "higher man" and "overman" by suggesting that the "higher man" is only "a rope stretched between the animal and overman" (Z: prol.4) but not telling us how this is so (Magill 1992). I agree with Kaufmann (1974) that any such distinctions are a misreading of Nietzsche and also reject the argument of Golomb (2006) that the "free spirit" is even a more ideal type than that of the Overman.

[84] (See Introduction by Mrs Forester-Nietzsche as cited in Nietzsche 2016).

[85] In comparison to a Higher man, Zarathustra considers an ordinary person "a laughing-stock, a thing of shame" (Z: prol.3).

[86] Daniel Conway asserts that Ubermensch is part of the "dreamy, utopian" Nietzsche; and for Dove (2008) the idea is not worthy of any serious consideration, it is fundamentally flawed, and was eventually abandoned by Nietzsche, as Cussen (2001) claims, and is "not viable in society" (Golomb 2006: p.22).

[87] Nietzsche makes it clear that his philosophy is aimed at breeding this type of individual and not directed to the common person. He writes: "Not to the people is Zarathustra to speak, but to companions! Zarathustra shall not be the herd's herdsman and hound! To lure many from the herd - for that have I come" (Z: prol.9).

not the best" (Z: IV.13). Ubermensch characterises an ideal kind of a person, one who stands out from the crowd, one who is life-affirming, who values his conduct because of the degree to which it emanates from his character; someone who has overcome the traditional morality and gone beyond the good and evil dichotomy of that morality to become a law unto himself, whose valuations arise from a sense of who he is rather than in conformity to some code of values defined for him.

In referring to such individuals as the "real" or "new philosophers",[88] Nietzsche makes a further distinction between them and other philosophers such as Kant and Hegel, who he considers as "philosophical workers" (BGE: 211), as they seek to ground ethics in an absolute foundation. The "real philosophers" on the other hand, Nietzsche argues,

> "are commanders and lawgivers. They say: 'This is the way it should be!' Only they decide mankind's Where to? And What for? … With creative hands they reach towards the future, and everything that is or has existed becomes their means, their tool, their hammer. Their 'knowing' is creating, their creating is law-giving…" (BGE: 211).

Nietzsche points out the expected task of these philosophers, asserting that "my demand of the philosopher is well known: that he [unlike the philosophers of the past] takes his stand beyond good and evil and treat the illusion of moral judgment as beneath him" (TG: VI.1). Clearly, Nietzsche's concern is with the type and character of people, not with the value of their acts; hence he speaks of the philosophers of the future not philosophies of the future, because philosophy offers a narrow interpretation, "always creates the world according to its own image" (BGE: 9), and like morality, is only a symptom of the underlying character.

Ubermensch, for Nietzsche, is the next stage in the evolution of man; but this time he hopes this evolution is not the result of "lucky accidents"[89] (AC: 4); and through his philosophy he wants to "show …all the steps to the overman" (Z: prol.9), to this characteristically higher human being. "The task", he writes, "is to bring to light what we must ever love and honour and what no subsequent enlightenment can take away: great individual human beings" (PhG: p.24).

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[88] According to Nietzsche, "new philosophers" have "appeared often enough in the past: but always as a happy accident, as an exception, never as deliberately willed" (AC: 3); but he now takes it upon himself to bring them back from oblivion in order for them to create values for the world.
[89] Unlike Darwinian evolution, which is influenced by environmental chance and fortune, Nietzsche hopes that his evolution of man towards a higher man is through self-overcoming rather than an accident.

Consideration of the notion of Ubermensch is in effect the recognition of being in an unchartered territory, of having embraced nihilism and being ready to overcome it; and calls for audacity, temerity and willingness on our part to experiment. Nietzsche gives a few examples of such value-creating individuals, including himself and Goethe among them, so as Clark and Dudrick (2007) to conclude that human beings in general are not considered among these value-creating people.[90] This again indicates that Nietzsche does not advocate dissolution of moral practice, at least for the majority of people, but rather intends a displacement of moral authority.

In brief, we could say that where religions and religious men look to the heaven (or another world) for meaning and salvation, and where our contemporary philosophies seek to found values in reason and rationality, Nietzsche turns to Ubermensch to create values and ethical rules for use by others;[91] and thus in effect they take the place of God (Schutte 1984, Brobjer 2003). Furthermore, although Jasper, a critic of the concept of Ubermensch, sees it as a failed attempt to avoid transcendence, writing that "the image of the superman as Nietzsche sees it remains indeterminate", he acknowledges that "the weight of his thought lies in the task he assigns" (as quoted by Mitcheson 2013: p.5). Nietzsche wants us to fix our hopes on these individuals, because he believes "we have no other choice" (BGE: 203).

Ubermensch-like individuals are meant to be the embodiment of a life-affirming, life-ascending individual capable of creating their own values by continuously overcoming their previously-held notion of values: that is to say, they need the ability to self-overcome.

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[90] Nietzsche clearly makes a distinction between the higher man and others, suggesting that the higher man on his way to great things should regard others "either as a means or as a postponement and an obstacle" (BGE: 273), because by reaching a dominant position can he then be of use and bounty to the others. Nietzsche writes: "It is we, who think and feel, that actually and unceasingly make something which did not before exist: the whole eternally increasing world of valuations, colours, weights, perspectives, gradations, affirmations and negations. This composition of ours is continually learnt, practised, and translated into flesh and actuality, and even into the commonplace, by the so called practical men (our actors, as we have said)" (GS: 301).

[91] It appears that Nietzsche's higher men perform two tasks, in that they are creator of their own values, but in doing so they also set the standards or values for use by others, presumably those in lower rank in society who are not capable of value creation of their own. In this connection, it is also worth noting that Nietzsche claims that, as part of the constitution of such a "higher man", "he handles the mediocre man with more delicate fingers than he applies to himself or to his equals…" (AC: 57), and he does this out of a sense of "duty"!

Self-Overcoming

> "Man is something that is to be surpassed." (Z: prol.3).

Nietzsche's solution to the crisis of nihilism lies in instilling new values into one's instincts, in an attempt "to return man to nature" (BGE: 230), fostering the "creation of a new human being" (Parsons 1974: p.73), the Ubermensch, a post-metaphysical and ultra-moral subject. Nietzsche contends that "all creatures have hitherto created something beyond themselves"; that is, they have been successful in self-overcoming, through evolutionary processes. Hence, he poses this challenge to us: "do you wish to return to the beast rather than surpass man?"[92] (Z: prol.3). Self-overcoming, then, is the mechanism or the process through which Nietzsche attempts to bring about Ubermensch, claiming that the human being is not an end but an open-endedness, a potential capable of overcoming himself on the way to becoming something more. Zarathustra asserts: "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal…" (Z: prol.4). To this end, new habits and modes of living are called for to pave the way towards the overcoming of our unhealthy morality; because as Schutte (1984) points out, there is an important linkage between overcoming morality and self-overcoming, in that, since human beings measure themselves by the standards of morality, to overcome morality requires the overcoming of one's present understanding of the self, that is, self-overcoming. Thus, rather than trying to overcome morality by attempting to create a new set of "healthy" morals, Nietzsche takes self-overcoming as the way to achieve the goal of overcoming morality; and this calls for honesty to see oneself as one is, and requires courage and a strong will.

It is through self-overcoming, Nietzsche writes, that "we … seek to become who we are, the new, the unique, the incomparable, making laws for ourselves and creating ourselves!" (GS: 335). The ideal of Ubermensch, then, need not remain an ideal, but rather it "becomes the greatest reality" once "at every moment man is overcome" (EH: IX.6).

The collapse of values and the realisation of the impossibility of founding values on a solid ground means that it is not ethics or values themselves that are important, but the practice of self-overcoming in the process of becoming. We can espouse the greatest values in the world, but if we are not able to overcome ourselves, the embodiment of these values amounts to very little. For Nietzsche, this overcoming of morality or the self-overcoming of morality is

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[92] For Nietzsche, "Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Ubermensch – a rope over an abyss" (Z: prol.4).

"the name for the long, clandestine work that was kept in reserve for the most subtle and honest (and also the most malicious) people of conscience today, living touchstones of the human heart" (BGE: 32).

Nietzsche maintains that it is only through self-affirmation carried out within the context of life-affirmation that we could self-overcome and go beyond nihilism.

Life-Affirmation / Dionysian

In rejecting the possibility of creating or instituting an absolute basis to take the place of God, and in his attempts to overcome nihilism, Nietzsche called into question our traditional and religious moral values, considering them as life-negating values.[93] Since "moral value judgments are ways of passing sentence, negations; morality is a way of turning one's back on the will to existence" (WP: 11). Any solution to the problem of nihilism, then, would need to create values that are the opposite of these life-negating values, that is, life affirming values: values that do not deny our existence. Thus "the overall goal of the revaluation of all values is to replace life-denying values with life-affirming values" (Sleinis 1994: p.xiv). Since, without life valuing is not possible, to value is to affirm existence, and in the context of existence to affirm the self. Thus the affirmation of existence is the condition for the affirmation of the self;[94] and when engaged in such an act of affirmation, it is the entirety of existence that is affirmed:

> "If we affirm one moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. For nothing is self-sufficient, neither in us ourselves nor in things; and if our soul has trembled with happiness and sounded like a harp string just once, all eternity was needed to produce this one event - and in this single moment of affirmation all eternity was called good, redeemed, justified, and affirmed" (WP: 1032).

Any value that denies our existence in effect undermines its very own foundation. Therefore, we must take the affirmation of life as the basis of all values; and Nietzsche's Ubermensch is one who embodies an affirmative stance towards life in the absence of absolute and transcendental values.

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[93] If without God or a metaphysical world our moral values lose their meaning, it must mean that these values cannot be realised under the condition of our life in this natural world: that is to say, these values repudiate life, they are not of this world; they are not natural.

[94] It is because of Nietzsche's concern with the affirmation of existence that he is often thought of as an existential philosopher (Kaufmann 1974).

Nietzsche believes that the eclipse of our nature-transcending God forces a more radical naturalistic and existential challenge on us.[95] We need to embrace the fact that our rationale for existence, our values and moralities, are our own creations, and try to see whether there can be meaning and value in natural life following the death of God; and create values and meaning in the context of the lived experience of nihilism, values that show that our lives are worth living despite its inherent meaninglessness, values that indicate our affirmation of life (Scott 1998). In other words, we need to provide a new justification and meaning for our existence, but one which is not based on the belief in the existence of some universal truth or an absolute "beyond".[96] Nietzsche considered the condemnation of suffering characterising the slave and herd mentality as the normative core of nihilism, and regarded the affirmation of life, what he called Dionysian[97] (Z), as his defining philosophical achievement, which forms the bedrock of his thinking; and we can understand Nietzsche only if we understand what the affirmation of life amounts to (Sokel 2005, Reginster 2006). This affirmation is about saying "yes to life even in its strangest and most painful episodes, the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustible vitality …. that is what I called Dionysian" (TG: IX.5). This entails a reversal of perspective and outlook on life, by not viewing existence from an individual's perspective, who must die, but rather from the perspective of the whole that lasts and creates forever.[98]

Self-affirmation of our life will produce life-enhancing and authoritative judgements; so if a person was fully integrated with his or her life-affirming instincts, out of this integration there would emerge an authentic basis for morality (Schutte 1984). Life-affirmation and the ability to accept things as they are leads Nietzsche to believe that it is possible to deal with the news of the death of God and thus seek to live "a reasonably pleasurable life" (Brodsky 1998: p.43). Nietzsche demands that human beings "above all learn to live" (UM: p.116), to deal with hatred, resentment and anxiety in their lives, and to love their fate[99] by learning "to hate something else" (UM: p.161) and become life-affirming. Indeed, the act of valuing, for Nietzsche, becomes

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[95] Nietzsche claims that religious concepts such as "'beyond' and 'real world' were invented in order to depreciate the only world that exists-in order that no goal, no aim or task might be left for our earthly reality" (EH: XIV.8); but insists that "'the world is perfect' so prompts … the instinct of the man who says yes to life" (AC: 57); and his Zarathustra teaches that "it is worthwhile living on the earth" (Z: IV.19) despite the apparent existence of suffering in the world. In short, Nietzsche's philosophy attempts to show that there is no need to invent an otherworld, a "beyond", in order to escape this suffering, because man "is counted as holy enough to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering" (WP: 1052).

[96] We are forced to choose "between passive nihilism or a new affirmative philosophy of nature" (Hatab 2008: p.106).

[97] For Nietzsche, a strong type of person looks for suffering, he writes: "*What makes one heroic?—* To approach at the same time one's highest suffering and one's highest hope" (GS: 268); and contrasting the Dionysian to the Religious/Christian attitude to life, writes: "Christianity is profoundly nihilistic whereas in the Dionysian symbol the most extreme extent of life affirmation are attained." (EH: IV.1)

[98] I am referring here to Nietzsche's doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence" (EH: IV.3).

[99] This is Nietzsche's doctrine of "amor-fati" which I will discuss later in this chapter.

valuable only when it affirms the self as an individual; and it is this affirmation that provides the rightness of our judgement. Self-affirmation is not self-identity; rather, it calls for honesty to see oneself as one is, and requires courage to self-overcome.

Since "all noble morality grows out of a triumphant [self-affirmation]" (GM: 1-10), the criterion of value, for Nietzsche, "is the degree to which an action is drawn from the depths of one's being, is life affirming and expressive of the 'will to power'" (Kirby 2003: p.18). To self-overcome, we need to self-affirm; but to affirm, we need a strong "will to power".

Will to Power

"This world is the will to power - and nothing besides!" (WP: 1067)

All of existence, Nietzsche asserts, is a struggle between different wills for the expression of power, as he writes: "Life itself appears to me as an instinct for growth … for power" (AC: 6); and for him the idea of "will to power" is at the core of the revaluation project[100] and is the creative and the driving force in the whole scheme of cosmic evolution:[101] it is the "unexhausted, procreating life-will" (Z: II.12); and if there is to be any further advance,[102] if a revaluation of values is to succeed, will to power must still make the inner impulsion (Salter 1915, Meerhaeghe 2006).

Nietzsche contends that it is the natural function of human beings to seek to maximise their power, because every "living being wants above all else to *release* its strength; life itself is the will to power" (BGE: 13) [italics in original]. The criteria of value, then, is the degree to which this function, that is, power maximisation, is attained: that is to say, "will to power" is the criterion for the rightness of an action, as Nietzsche writes: "What is good? Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man" (AC: 2). He claims that, "wherever the will to power begins to decline, in whatever form, there is always an accompanying decline physiologically, a decadence"; and that whenever it fails "there is disaster" (AC: 6), because with its decline we lose the ability to self-overcome, to destroy the old and create our own rationale for value and meaning, in effect ceasing or failing a revaluation of our values.

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[100] The concept of "will to power" is at the heart of Nietzsche's mature work (McGee 2004); indeed, he planned to write a book titled "The Will to Power" with the subtitle of "Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values", which he never managed to complete (Kranak 2014: p.143).

[101] Hence for Nietzsche, unlike Darwin, life is not about a struggle for survival, because "'will to existence': that will - does not exist!" (Z: II.12); and the motive force behind master-morality is "the struggle for power", whereas the motive force behind the slave-morality is "the struggle for existence" (GS: 349).

[102] The traditional moral valuation of "good and evil" is itself an expression of "an old Will to Power" (Z: I.12).

While various readings of Nietzsche's doctrine of "will to power" have been made, taking it either as "an empty metaphysical concept" (Geuss 1997: p.13) or conceiving power to always be on a physical level, I take "will to power" to have "more to do with mastering oneself than dominating others" (Starling 1997: p.2), and its greatest expression to be that of a genuine creativity, of many things and in particular of new values. As a creative force, "will to power" is meant to be understood not as "will to be" but "will to be more", the desire for growth, to be better and higher. However, to grow we must face resistance and obstacles, obstacles in the form of our life-negating morality and anxiety, and we need to overcome these through our "will to power".[103] In this sense, "will to power" would be a far cry from the mere desire to dominate or oppress others,[104] and is better understood as the will to create and shape for oneself what one needs in order to live fully, the will to drive for self-perfection, self-transformation and self-overcoming, to master oneself, and the ability to control the irrational impulses within oneself (Schutte 1984, Salter 1915, Sokel 2005).

Through revaluation, Nietzsche wants us to replace the "thou shalt" command of the absolute morality, which for him is a "will to nothingness",[105] with the "I will" command of the self through our "will to power"; because for Ubermensch-like individuals, "their creating is law-giving, their will to truth is - *will to power*" (BGE: 211) [italics in original]; and for them "the highest resistance is constantly overcome" (TG: VIII.38). The "will to power", then, is essentially the engine that propels one towards the Nietzchean moral imperative, to "become who you are" (GS: 270). He writes: "Active, successful natures act, not according to the dictum, 'Know thyself' but as if there hovered before them the commandment, 'will a self and thou shalt become a self'" (HH: 366). In this process, "no one can construct for you the bridge … , no one but you yourself alone" (UM: p.129).

However, to become who one is, one must not have "the remotest idea of what one is" (EH: II.9): that is to say, one's identity must not depend on a preconceived notion of an ideal identity, one formulated by reason and rationality or in conformity to any rules, needs or any other foundation.[106] In other words, there should not be any final goal or a destination to aim for. To

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[103] Nietzsche writes: "What is happiness? The feeling that power increases that resistance is overcome" (AC: 2).
[104] Indeed, most of the examples Nietzsche gave as people with strong "will to power", such as Goethe and himself, were evidently not powerful people in terms of having physical or political strength.
[105] The "will to nothingness" is the adoption of passive nihilism. See (AC: 18).
[106] Since "becoming does not aim at a final state, does not flow into 'being'", it is of equivalent value every moment, "in other words it has no value at all", because there is nothing against which its value could be measured. Without a final aim, the state of being, the possibility of anxiety is eliminated. For this reason, Nietzsche finds "philosophical pessimism among comical things" (WP: 708).

this end, Nietzsche introduces his concept of eternal recurrence as a tool of revaluation for those with strong "will to power".

Eternal Recurrence

Since nihilism is a product of the resentment and guilt of slave morality, to overcome nihilism one must not have any resentment against life and no regret about one's life, including one's past. We must affirm the past by turning it into an act of will (Cussen 2001). To this end, Nietzsche introduces his doctrine of "eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation that can ever be attained" (EH: IX.1), his heaviest thought and the centre piece of a new ethical ideal of "affirmation of life" (Reginster 2006, Sokel 2005, Dove 2008), as a direct opposition to the nihilistic negation and devaluation of life, and as a means to facilitate his revaluation project through raising the value of life (Kain 2007). Nietzsche is essentially urging us to live our life so as to become able to welcome its eternal return; so, rather than being a description of how the physical world really is, "eternal return" is first and foremost an ethical idea (Sokel 2005), describing an existential attitude we are required to adopt towards life, namely being able to affirm life.[107] Nietzsche writes:

> "Let us think this thought in its most terrible form: existence as it is, without meaning or aim, yet recurring inevitably without any finale of nothingness: 'the eternal recurrence'"(WP: 55).

If existence has no end and no final goal, affirming the doctrine of eternal return requires one to deny any after-life and religious salvation, and hence deny any supreme or other-worldly values, and instead affirm values we give to life ourselves. Thus by advocating such an affirmation of life, we are complying with a distinctive ethical imperative; that is, living our life in such a way as to be able to welcome its eternal recurrence[108] (Reginster 2006). On the other hand, if the prospect of re-living our life causes despair and anxiety, then we are negating

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[107] As Kain (2007) and Honig (1993) also point out, it simply does not matter whether or not this concept is true or not; what matters is the effect it can have on one's actions. Nietzsche writes: "If that thought acquired power over thee as thou art, it would transform thee, and perhaps crush thee; the question with regard to all and everything: 'Dost thou want this once more, and also for innumerable times?' would lie as the heaviest burden upon thy activity!" (GS: 341).

[108] The affirmation of eternal recurrence also means the recognition of the interconnectedness of the whole life (Dove 2008, Honig 1993).

life.[109] Nietzsche calls eternal recurrence "a pessimism that could result in that type of Dionysian yes-saying to the world as it is" (quoted by Kranak 2014: p.136), because to accept life as it is is to be able to affirm opposites[110] simultaneously: the dark and the light, pleasure and pain, the unbearable heaviness and lightness of being. It is to affirm both otherness and yourself and the other. It is to affirm both "positive" and "negative" dimensions of life and yourself. It is to be able to hold these contraries together. "Brave and creative men", Nietzsche writes, "never consider pleasure and pain as ultimate values - they are epiphenomena: one must desire both if one is to achieve anything" (WP: 579).

Nietzsche explains his idea of the eternal return as follows:

> "The heaviest weight - What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence -- even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" (GS: 341).

However, to accept eternal return of life, one must be capable of practicing love of life and love of fate, "amor fati".

Amor-Fati

"We love life, not because we are used to living but because we are used to loving." (Z: I.7)

Nietzsche argues that human beings cannot overcome nihilism and heal the resentment that drives them to a condition of alienation towards nature, unless they come to accept their finite

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[109] Clearly, eternal recurrence does not have any cosmological significance, and no sustained argument for the cosmological status can be found in any work published by Nietzsche (Brodsky 1998). The importance or useability of this concept seems to lie in the effect it could have on those who believe it. In other words, while we hold such a view, it should help us overcome the bitterness and resentment, and we may find ourselves transformed by the confrontation with this possibility and come to appreciate the action-guiding character of such a thought.

[110] Nietzsche writes: "I believe that it is precisely through the presence of opposites and the feelings they occasion that the great person, the bow with the great tension, develops" (WP: 967); and elsewhere he writes, "The false opposites in which the people, and consequently language, believes, have always been dangerous hindrances to the advance of truth" (WP: 699).

place in nature, to accept unconditionally the way they cannot help but live now, to accept things as they are and must be, to love their fate. Nietzsche writes:

> "My formula for greatness in man is amor fati: the fact that a man wishes nothing to be different, either in the future or in the past or for all eternity. Not just to endure necessity- or to merely pretend to endure … but to love it" (EH: II.10).

The two concepts, of eternal recurrence and amor fati, are connected, and regarded by Nietzsche as the only coherent way of moving beyond nihilism, in that amor fati is taken as an illustration of the sort of existential attitude characteristic of someone who accepts eternal return and is willing to live his or her life over and over again.[111] For eternal recurrence to work, for it to have the effect that it must have for Nietzsche, we must accept without qualification, we must love[112] every single moment of our lives, every single moment of suffering and anxiety. Of course, living in accordance with these concepts first requires a revaluation of all life-negating values (Brobjer 2010, Ansell-Pearson 2005, Reginster 2006).

Since "[a]round the inventors of new values revolves the world" (Z: I.12), it is only the value-creator Ubermenschs, through their strong will to power, who have the capacity to embrace the doctrine of eternal return (Rivera 2007, Leiter 2002, Kain 2007), and through their love for life fill the void created by nihilism with their own lives, who can evince a Dionysian or life-affirming attitude. There is no longer any need for a make-believe beyond, a taken for granted absolute or a God to justify their existence, because their existence itself becomes the measure of thought that can counter and replace various attempts in philosophy and religion to "'reform' lived experience by way of a rational, spiritual or moral 'transcendence' that purports to rectify an originally flawed condition" (Hatab 2008: p.108).

Nietzsche's view of the future was that, though the masses of people were being weakened by moralisation and democratisation, they will find the need for such Ubermensch "like their daily bread" (BGE: 242), so "this man of the future [. . .] *he must come one day*" (GM: 2-24) [italics in original].

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[111] Nietzsche wants us to ". . . cross to a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception or selection-it wants the eternal circulation-the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence-my formula for this is amor fati" (WP: 1041).

[112] We should accept an agapic interpretation of love in the notion of amor fati (Han-Pile 2009), in the sense that we should take amor fati to demand love not because we value life, rather that we come to value life as a result of our love for life.

Critique

While most commentators and scholars on Nietzsche agree that he is a superb critic of traditional morality, they have not been able to come up with a consensus view of what his revaluation[113] project offers as a replacement for this morality.[114] This is hardly surprising from a philosopher who does not want to worry about "the moral worth of our actions" (GS: 335) and considers it as naïve to say, "man ought to be such and such!" (TG: IV.6); that "a man as he *ought* to be: that sounds to us as insipid as 'a tree as it ought to be'" (WP: 332) [italics in original].

Nietzsche explicitly refused to develop a philosophical system, writing: "I mistrust all systematisers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity" (TG: I.26). Rather, as part of his revaluation project, he offered a number of ideals and views;[115] but since there are significant interpretative questions about how the various components of his revaluation, those of "will to power", "order of rank", eternal recurrence, amor fati, and Ubermensch, fit into his overall project,[116] any attempt to string his ideas and thoughts into a coherent whole proves difficult.[117]

Not only each component of his revaluation is open to criticism, but his entire project cannot pass scrutiny either. For instance, while dismissing all views and all other forms of morality as nothing but an interpretation, and asserting that there are no facts, Nietzsche in effect comes to

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[113] "Even the choice of translation of *Umwerthung*, into English as 'revaluation' or 'transvaluation'" has been a contentious one among scholars (Drochon 2010: p.3). I have used revaluation in place of transvaluation in the present thesis.

[114] MacIntyre (1985) considers Nietzsche's solution as frivolous; and Megill (1985: p.62) believes that his project never really seems to "proceed beyond [an] initial intuitional stage". Nietzsche's philosophy has been labelled in a variety of ways, Perfectionism, Fictionalism, Idealism, Personalism, Individualism, as well as of course Existentialism. He says very little about how those of us who are impressed by his criticisms should live our lives (Brodsky 1998), and does not offer any normative ethical theory by providing rules and maxims or providing a systematic guidance that would allow us to evaluate an action, unlike the moral imperatives of philosophers such as Kant or the moral dictates offered by religions. Brodsky (1998) and Dove (2008) suggest that Nietzsche's alternative form of ethical life must be understood in general terms, not as a rigidly defined moral project.

[115] Many of these ideals could perhaps best be described as a "thought experiment" (Han-Pile 2009: p.230) that may fail or succeed on its own. Thus his writings may and does at times appear to be self-contradictory, though Sokel (2005) likes to view them as "deliberate self-contradictions"; and indeed, some of his later works "differ substantially" from earlier ones (Clark and Dudrick 2007).

[116] Magill (1992), for instance, claims that the concepts of Ubermensch and the "will to power" on one hand, and eternal recurrence on the other, stand as entirely separate revelations, "unconnected by any perceptible chain of argument"; whereas Rivera (2007) and Kaufmann (1974) suggest that, out of the assimilation of the idea of eternal recurrence and Ubermensch, Nietzsche aims to provide his "perfect formula for life".

[117] Even if Nietzsche was offering a coherent ethical theory, he himself did not expect it to be understood for many centuries to come, he wrote: "if this embryo [ie. human being] were given several centuries and more, there might finally evolve out of it a marvellous plant, with a smell equally marvellous, on account of which our old earth might be more pleasant to live in than it has been hitherto. We moderns are just beginning to form the chain of a very powerful, future sentiment, link by link, we hardly know what we are doing" (GS: 337).

undermine his own revaluation project as nothing but another interpretation rather than a solution; leading Fowler (1990) to ask if it is "likely that Nietzsche himself would have so badly misunderstood [perspectivism's] implications?", even though it may be argued that Nietzsche had anticipated such an objection, as he does not claim that his interpretation is any better or worse than any other one. In relation to "will to power", Nietzsche writes that granted this "too is just interpreting - and you'll be eager to raise that objection, won't you? - then, all the better" (BGE: 22). Gabriel Marcel, a philosopher I will study in Chapter Four, in supporting such a self-undermining, writes:

"when, like Nietzsche, one does attempt to reconcile the intention of the philosopher and that picture of the world, one can only succeed in doing so by a systematic discrediting and devaluation of intelligibility and truth as such; but in discrediting these, one is undermining oneself, for, after all, every philosophy, in so far as it can be properly called a philosophy at all, must claim to be true" (MB-I: p.27).

Making "will to power" the engine and "the basis on which a revaluation of all values would be possible", taking it as the yardstick for ethics and values, and the criteria for the rightness of an action, is not the escape from reliance on "an otherworldly conception" (Joullié 2012) that Nietzsche had aimed for. Nietzsche's revaluation comes full circle to rely on the god of "will to power" as the foundation for values.

Furthermore, Nietzsche presents Ubermensch as a universal and absolute ideal for all; but this universalisation and absolutism of our morals was exactly what he objected to.[118] As mentioned earlier, Jasper sees Ubermensch as Nietzsche's failed attempt to avoid transcendence, because it comes to be the ideal and the fruit of revaluation, which is what Nietzsche wanted to avoid to start with. Nietzsche's revaluation project has also led to the charge of value anti-realism: that is, the denial of the objectivity of moral values is levelled against Nietzsche (Leiter 2002), the implication of which is known as the "authority problem";[119] and hence the lack of any objective justification for Nietzsche's claim that we should alter our evaluative commitments or pursue the revaluation through to completion.

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[118] The idea is considered by some as incoherent and inconsistent and an inherent flaw in Nietzsche's existential philosophy (Cussen 2001, Golomb 2006), and not viable in a society.
[119] Robertson (2009: p.67) points out that the authority problem "threatens the structural coherence of his whole revaluative project", because if Nietzsche rejects as erroneous the kinds of objectivity by which morality claims itself authoritative and justified, he would also deprive his own positive ideal of a legitimate claim to objectivity and hence justification.

If we take Nietzsche's aim to be the breeding of Ubermensch, who are able to create values and are supposed to "teach man … and make preparation for collective attempts in rearing and educating", we need to ask for whom they will create these values. This is because the values they create "must be almost poison to a very diverse and inferior type [of human beings]" (BGE: 30).

The concept of eternal recurrence is just that, a concept, a hypothesis, an ideal that Nietzsche's Zarathustra seems to pull out of thin air without providing any reason or argument in its support. By itself, eternal recurrence is essentially a description of the way things are and cannot serve as any form of moral imperative (Dove 2008). Eternal recurrence, Nietzsche's "highest formula of a life affirmation" (EH: IX.1), seems useful to kill any sense of creativity in man by suggesting a deterministic view of life.[120] Any moral hold that the acceptance of eternal return may have appears to be the result of a "threat", namely that the same thing will eternally return, and hence the resultant act contradicts what we would take to be a genuine moral act.[121]

Amor fati, or loving our fate, is not up to us, because we cannot start or stop loving at will. This is on par with Nietzsche's assertion that "a thought comes when 'it' wants to, and not when 'I' want it to" (BGE: 17). Of course, we could try to do this, or alternatively deceive ourselves into thinking that we love our fate. Amor fati may be desirable in the sense that it saves us from the feeling of bitterness and resentment, "but is loving fate the right thing to do when it comes to morally challenging situations?" (Han-Pile 2009: p.246).

Nietzsche has also been accused of committing "genetic fallacy",[122] and by founding his entire philosophy on physiological and instinctual drives, his rejection of free will and his theory of "order of rank", which bars any transformation of types,[123] comes in conflict with his injunction

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[120] The concept sounds very much like that of reincarnation and Karma in Hindu or Buddhist religions, and there is really no need for a social experiment to see the effects of such doctrine because such effects are already evident in a country like India, where the Chandala (untouchables) are essentially ruled for centuries by the higher caste (ie. Brahmins) as they believe that this is their fate, their karma.
Zharathustra, realising the implication of this doctrine, namely that with such "recurrence" all the problems, deficiencies, misery, sickness and even "the small man" also have to return, exclaims: "Ah, Disgust! Disgust! Disgust! …. sighed and shuddered" (Z: III.13).
[121] Namely, that a moral act is not stemmed from any form of coercion or threat.
[122] That is to say, even if our morals have evolved in the manner Nietzsche describes in his genealogy, we cannot conclude that they are false or irrational. The origin of a belief has little if anything to do with its truth.
[123] Thus those of us predisposed to excellence should be able to bootstrap ourselves from our current dire nihilistic condition, unaided by any external and hence unnatural influence, whether such influence is the result of a religion or the philosophies of another man, including Nietzsche. On the other hand, those of us who are of the lower-type and do not have the right natural predisposition to excellence cannot be transformed through any form of breeding or education.

"to become who you are" through "will to power", depriving most people[124] of the possibility of achieving the ideal of a life-affirming moral agent through any educational system. Nietzsche writes:

> "at the bottom of everyone, of course, way 'down there', there is something obstinately unteachable, a granite-like spiritual Fatum, predetermined decisions and answers to selected, predetermined questions. In addressing any significant problem an unchangeable 'That-is-I' has its say" (BGE: 231).

It could also be asked whether Nietzsche's views are reasonable. [125] Clearly, he is sceptical that any attempt, secular or otherwise, to "furnish the rational ground of morality" and reveal "the *real* foundation of morality" (BGE: 186) [italics in original] would succeed (Robertson 2009); and goes on to claim that his formula for greatness, the idea of eternal recurrence, transcends reason and is not in conflict with it (Schutte 1984). He demands that we accept his view of universe, and does not provide arguments or facts in support of this demand.[126] The ideal of "the Overman came unto [Nietzsche] as a shadow" (EH: IX.8); and if his insights "appear as follies, and under certain circumstances as crimes" to us, Nietzsche offers a simple explanation: we "are not constituted or destined to hear" his insights![127] (BGE: 30).

In brief, it could be said that Nietzsche's revaluation fails under the weight of numerous inconsistencies, and his reliance on "will to power" in particular is a failure of the project to do away with any foundation.

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[124] After all, one must also have the right instinctual predisposition to be or become such a person, as Nietzsche writes: "… not once did I ever dream of what was growing within me - until suddenly all my capacities were ripe and one day burst forth in all the perfection of their highest bloom. I cannot remember ever having exerted myself, I can point to no trace of struggle in my life; …. To 'want' something, to 'strive' after something to have an 'aim' or a 'wish' in my mind - I know none of this from experience" (EH: II.9). For Nietzsche himself, the ability to become such a person was essentially his birth right. He writes: "…. when I was seven years old, I already knew that no human word would ever reach me..." (EH: II.10).

[125] It should be pointed out that, in my critique of Nietzsche, I have refrained from pointing out many of his controversial statements and views on women, the Jews, Christians, the acceptance of human exploitation as a fact of nature, and the need for "slavery in one sense or another" (BGE: 257), to name a few. If we were to heed Nietzsche's own advice, that it is the philosopher and not the philosophy which is of value, then on the account of a long list of such statements and views, which can only be described as the ignorant and narrow-minded views of the bygone ages, we would have to dismiss Nietzsche as a philosopher worthy of serious consideration in our search for a viable ethical alternative for our modern age.

[126] Suffice to say that it appeared to him as "a revelation"; "You hear - you do not seek; you take - and do not ask who gives: a thought suddenly flashes up like lightning, it comes as a necessity, without hesitation - I have never had any choice in the matter" (EH: IX.3).

[127] This is problematic for Nietzsche, because religious ideas and ideals so vehemently opposed and attacked by Nietzsche, including the existence of a transcendent God taken as the absolute source of meaning and arbiter of morality, are also meant to be taken to be above the realm of reason.

Nihilism, Perspectivism and the Foundation of Business Ethics

While many authors in management studies have recognised that there is a crisis in ethics at management schools (Waddock 2005, Bernardi 2007, Edward L. Felton 2005, Schwartz 2002, Anand et al. 2005, Giacalone 2007), the fact that there remains a "heterogeneity in the field of business ethics, with no over-arching philosophical view to encompass the whole field" (Byrne 2002) is an indication that they have not recognised the fundamental nature of this crisis. Rather than trying to understand the nature of the crisis, most authors have attempted to re-graph ethics back into management curricula, and occupied themselves with the notion of moral principles, "moral responsibility and reconciliation of ... personal freedom with the rights and needs of others" (Nicolaides 2014: p.187), or concern themselves with the shortcomings of moral theories.[128] To this end, Nicolaides (2014: p.188) finds it "surprising" that Nietzsche is "omitted from literature dealing with the concept of business ethics"; and Starling (1997: p.2) writes that "the most glaring gap in the ever-growing literature of business ethics is the neglect of Friedrich Nietzsche". This may explain why, despite the numerous attempts and a diversity of responses given to arrest the ethical failing, including those in business and management, the pattern of ethical collapse is consistent and unethical violations continue unabated (Fernando and Chowdhury 2010, Jennings 2006).

All these attempts assume that we know what ethics is, such that they can be re-graphed back into management theory and practice; but in fact, business ethics has lost "the deeper meta-ethical considerations", that are "what constitutes the ethical basis of our decision-making in the first place" (Schley 2002: p.253). It has been suggested that "business ethics has piggybacked itself" on the post-Enlightenment moral tradition (Starling 1997: p.9), and in appealing to various types of moral theories, "almost every major philosophical approach has been enlisted" (Green and Donovan 2010: p.25). These approaches range from deontological, where moral decisions are duty-bound,[129] to teleological, in which a rational decision is arrived at based on the anticipated consequence of the action,[130] to virtue ethics, where the moral character of the agent rather than the moral act is the focus. Attempts to rectify the problems

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[128] And, having identified such shortcomings, various means are suggested to overcome them, for example Thompson (2010) offers a tool to manage complex ethical situations, Simola (2010) a problem-solving program, Walker (2008) and Gray (2008) seek tighter regulations, and Anand et al. (2005), Schwartz (2002), Weber (2006), Asgari and Mitschow (2002) suggest codes of ethics, to name a few.

[129] For instance, Categorical Imperative as postulated by Kant.

[130] For instance, Utilitarianism spearheaded by John Stuart Mill.

associated with any of the current approaches have resulted in various hybrid theories,[131] including some that have injected a dose of existentialism into the mix (Jackson 2005, Agarwal and Malloy 2000) or call for incorporation of a religious tradition in business ethics (Martin Calkins 2000, Rossouw 1994). Consistency, generalizability, and providing an "unassailable criteria",[132] are viewed as important features of most ethical theories or solutions offered, so that the individual could follow a series of activities or processes to derive the appropriate ethical decision.[133] Ethical theories, then, are taken as tools (Thompson 2010), programs (Simola 2010), codes (Anand et al. 2005, Schwartz 2002) or rules (Walker 2008, Gray 2008), that can articulate grounds, guide conduct, and justify and facilitate good decisions (Audi 2010: p.61). As Richard DeGeorge wrote, the "mastery of ethical theory provides the necessary tools to engage intelligently in personal and social analysis of moral issues" (cited in Derry and Green 1989: p.521). In other words, morality is taken as the standard of right and wrong, good and evil, and ethical theory as the means to differentiate between the two. This is despite the fact that moral theories often do not arrive at the same moral conclusion, and "frequently offer radically different guidance", rendering them "unhelpful" and harmful (Green and Donovan 2010: p.26). This fact underlines the point Nietzsche makes about the discriminatory and perspectival nature of morality, and "demonstrate[s] the absolute homogeneity of all events and the application of moral distinction as conditioned by perspective" (WP: 272); confirming his claim that morality does not and cannot be based on any solid, objective foundation. Nietzsche would claim that business ethics is lost in what he calls perspectivism, which is itself a form of nihilism; because each theory, code, program, method and approach employed in business ethics comes to establish values and meanings through the prism of its own logic, but viewed from outside of that logic and perspective, each approach is based on nothing but an arbitrary foundation. The result is a plethora of values and a variety of foundations to choose from, as we see in the field of business ethics today. Such a fragmentation of value, however, is a testimony to the absence of any inherent, independent, or in-itself foundation that could be relied upon. It points to nihilism, and explains the tensions and interminable conflict between ethical theories (Derry and Green 1989, Schneewind 1983). Rather than acknowledge the perspective nature of morality, embrace nihilism, and look for a revaluation, management

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[131] For example, British philosopher Derek Parfit claims that he has almost reconciled every theory of morality, Kantian (duty based), Bentham (utilitarian), and Scanlon (contractualism), into what he calls a "Triple Theory". See Parfit (2011: Vol. 1 & 2).
Another example is Iain King's attempt at reconciling deontology, virtue-based ethics, and consequentialism. See King (2008).
[132] (Alastair McIntyre in 'After Virtue' (AV 8-9; cf. 38), as quoted by Schneewind 1983: p.526).
[133] We strive for "consistency and generalisability...": consistency, so that we make the same ethical decision every time in cases which are similar; and generalisability so "that we are willing to prescribe that others should choose in ways similar to ours" (Elliott 2007: p.55).

theorists often "fudge [their] way through significant theoretical issues" and "fundamental differences between theories" (Derry and Green 1989: p.532).

Modern bureaucratic organisations have come to take ethical rationalism as the foundation for ethics (Nicolaides 2014), adopting scientific language and techniques, those of calculation, quantification and measurement, as tools of ethical decision making.[134] In doing so, however, they have reduced and lost value and meaning to that which can be measured, in effect reducing these, the very dimensions of life that cannot be measured, to meaninglessness, and thus encouraging the festering of nihilism. Furthermore, just as in science, where instruments are taken as objective and value-free and used to get access to truth, and where the refinement of instruments is viewed to be a way of revealing the truth more accurately, morality is used as an instrument, and tinkering with this instrument is now considered the way out of our moral crisis. However, the instrument generates its own criteria of correctness, so that truth becomes a matter of correctness.

Such an adoption of scientific techniques[135] could be seen in the inability of business to talk meaningfully about dimensions of being such as ethics and values that cannot be quantified. When values are devalued in such a way and become mere conventions and slogans, ethics and ethics education become a matter of deciding what values we should teach;[136] and morality then will come "to seem temporary, to be jettisoned at will, and as much subject to whim and fashion..." (Smith 2009: p.1); and when skills, competencies, conceptual models, analytical tools and techniques that are easily measurable and, on their own, morally neutral, are elevated to the status of "ends" rather than "means", with too little regard to the values that should direct them, our interpersonal relationships become a matter of exercising these skills, bereft of any human emotional engagement.

In business and organisations, often the loss of value is concealed with mission statements with their vacuous and obligatory pronouncements about excellence, where values in effect become mere conventions and no longer command our engagement and passion; because, as Nietzsche asserts, "The aim is lacking; 'why?'" (WP: 2). There is no goal, and there is no answer to the question "why"; indeed, the "why" question is not even asked. Why be accountable? Why do

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[134] Many consider "moral nihilism … indefensible" and "the search for some overarching set of universal moral values …vital" (O'Sullivan 2012); so various foundations are chosen to fill the void.

[135] Nietzsche writes: "It is not the victory of science that distinguishes our nineteenth century, but the victory of scientific method over science" (WP: 466).

[136] For this reason, Fennell (1999: p.405) writes that, "if nihilism is true, then it is senseless and cowardly to teach one's students that there are grounds for moral judgments."

business? Why manage? Or why ethics? In the absence of "any real sense of value, the smooth running of the system becomes the highest goal. People turn into willing functionaries" (Smith 2000), fail to take responsibility, and allow Nietzsche's "herd" mentality and herd virtues to dominate. When an individual human being is measured and valued for what he does, the function he performs and the level of his productivity, or according to what he possesses rather than who he is, that human being is objectified, reduced and abstracted, and human value and meaning is quantified, managed and treated as numbers that can be measured, controlled, analysed, and manipulated through scientific and technical methods. Such a "tranquillised acceptance of the technological approach is the real danger..." (Blake et al. 2000: p.13); and characteristic of Nietzsche's passive nihilism.

Until we have come to terms with the pervasiveness of nihilism and with the possibility that we have chosen values that only have an arbitrary basis, talking about business ethics or any other kinds of ethics is empty and meaningless, and our continuous perseverance in the old ways of tackling the moral crisis in business and management is only a testimony to our weakness of will and a sign of our "decadence".

Conclusion

"Mankind can only now begin to hope again…." (EH: XIV.1)

In this chapter, I argued that Nietzsche's revaluation of all values project was his attempt to attack and destroy the very notion of value, in order to construct a new conception of morality. To this end, I surveyed the various components that go into his revaluation project.

Nietzsche's deconstruction of our traditional morality shows that, with the "death of God" and the crumbling away of the once secure and absolute foundations of ethics, goes the death of ethics itself, ushering in the reign of meaninglessness and nihilism. In asserting that "the 'conscious world' cannot serve as the starting point for values" (WP: 707), Nietzsche jolts us into the realisation that we cannot simply re-graph ethics back into business, private and public life; rather, we need to undertake what he has called a revaluation of the very notion of value itself. Only once we have deconstructed the very notion of ethics itself and realised that there are no grounds and no foundations for moral judgement, could we leave behind our very notion of morality and move "beyond good and evil" dichotomy of this morality, adopt an affirmative approach to our lives, and through our "will to power", become the author of our own values. In this context, what Nietzsche offers us is that it is not ethics or values themselves that need to

be adopted, learned or taught, but the practice of self-overcoming that is crucial to being a person.

Nietzsche's own positive ethical project is aimed at breeding life-affirming individuals, those who do not need ethics to figure out what is right or wrong as every situation demonstrates to them what needs to be done. Admittedly, however, Nietzsche's solution to the problem of nihilism, his own revaluation of all values, gets trapped in the universalisation and absolutism that he himself so vehemently tried to avoid, and fails under the weight of numerous inconsistencies.[137]

In conclusion, it could be said that, while Nietzsche may not solve the crisis of ethics, he does point to the challenge of ethics that not only faces business and management schools but pervades society as a whole today. He accustoms us to what Max Weber calls an "inconvenient fact",[138] the crisis of nihilism, where values are reduced to empty words. Furthermore, if Nietzsche taught us one thing, it is how to embrace the experience of nihilism and the possibility of creating out of the experience of nihilism. This is the task if we want to talk meaningfully about ethics and deal with the anxiety of meaninglessness prevalent in organisational life.

In Chapter Three, I turn to Max Weber, who, like Nietzsche, believed in the failure of the Enlightenment[139] and who "followed Nietzsche… in claiming that modern culture is nihilistic and that nihilism and disenchantment posed a serious existential and moral threat" (Turner 2011: p.79), in particular within modern bureaucratic organisations.

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[137] Nietzsche's solution, as well as many concepts offered by him, have simply been questioned by many commentators as unpalatable and unacceptable for our age. Nietzsche seems to have anticipated this himself, writing that "My time has not yet come either; some are born posthumously. One day institutions will be needed in which men will live and teach as I understand living and teaching; maybe also that by that time chairs will be founded for the interpretation of Zarathustra" (EH: III.1).

[138] Weber believes that "the primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize 'inconvenient' facts…" (FM: p.147).

[139] According to Starling (1997: p.6), "it was clear to Nietzsche that the Enlightenment project had failed. Nihilism had spread across Europe"; and his revaluation was an attempt to undermine the post-Enlightenment moral tradition.

Chapter 3 - Max Weber: a Disenchanted World

"The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations."   (SV: p.155)

Overview

To further illuminate the nature of the crisis of ethics in business vis-à-vis the crisis of nihilism, an analysis of the historical genesis and character of nihilism in the context of organisations seems an appropriate starting point, because "our past is sedimented in our present", as Charles Taylor points out, "and we are doomed to misidentify ourselves, as long as we can't do justice to where we come from" (Taylor 2007: p.29). To this end, I turn to the German sociologist Max Weber, who analysed and explored the birth of modernity by identifying religion, that most enchanted domain of human activity, as a prime factor in the emergence and shaping of the modern organisational order. Weber drew inspiration from the philosophy of Nietzsche[140] (Turner 2011, Gronow 1988, MacKinnon 2001), and there are affinities between some of his key concepts and those of Nietzsche.[141] Having accepted Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism,[142] Weber sounded the warning regarding the impending dire consequences of the Enlightenment, the dominance of scientific technique and rationality, and the spread of "disenchantment" and meaninglessness in all spheres of human activity. The final stage of this movement is what Nietzsche had already captured in his "God is dead" phrase, an age where individuals are unhinged from the foundation of their meaning making, and come to put more trust in impersonal techniques than in their own personal lived experience. They have turned into Nietzsche's "last men", incapable of and even unwilling to break free from the grip of techniques. Weber writes:

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[140] Weber wrote that "The honesty of a contemporary scholar . . . can be measured by the position he takes vis-a-vis Nietzsche and Marx. Whoever fails to acknowledge that he could not carry out the most important part of his own work without the work done by both … deceives himself and others. The intellectual world in which we live is a world which to a large extent bears the imprint of Marx and Nietzsche." (cited in Edles 2005: p.159).

[141] For example, Weber's depiction of the power of "charismatic" leaders, with their ability to transcend the cold of rationality and bureaucracy, bears many similarities to Nietzsche's notion of the Übermensch. Gronow (1988: p.320) wrote that Weber's "solution to the challenge of our times was … motivated by his reading of Nietzsche", and Nietzchean nihilism finds "its counterpart in Weber's analysis of rationalization and disenchantment" (Turner 2011: p.78).

[142] According to Hennis, "Weber accepted without any reservations Nietzsche's diagnosis of the time; God is dead. He treated it as the 'basic fact' that we are fated to live in a 'godless time, without prophets.'" (Wilhem Hennis from Traces of Nietzsche in Weber, pp.157-159 quoted by McCarthy 1997: p.309).

"After Nietzsche's devastating criticism of those 'last men' who 'invented happiness,' I may leave aside altogether the naive optimism in which science - that is, the technique of mastering life which rests upon science - has been celebrated as the way to happiness" (SV: p.143).

Weber argues that rationality, pushed to its limits, yields irrationality, and that approaching human activities through a preoccupation with and overemphasis on scientific, technical and rational modes of operation results in the elimination of feelings, passions, imaginations and belief as central to making meaning. Such a preoccupation traps individuals in the "iron cage of rationality", turning them into functionaries, mere cogs in the bureaucratic machinery of organisations and society, and ushers in "the disenchantment of the world".[143] Weber was concerned with the decline of what he called "the cultivated man as a well-rounded personality in favour of the technical expert"; and for him, "the ascendency of the expert", the rational and methodical specialist, was another evidence of the tight grip of rationality and "the diminished chances of freedom" for human beings (FM: p.73). As Schneider (1993: p.ix) put it:

"Max Weber saw history as having departed a deeply enchanted past en route to a disenchanted future - a journey that would gradually strip the natural world both of its magical properties and of its capacity for meaning."

In this chapter, I describe Weber's account of the Reformation and Protestant work ethics,[144] showing their unintended historical consequences, namely the rationalisation of the market place and the rise of the Spirit of Capitalism, which acted as the engine to disenchant the world. I want to show that, in Weber's account, rationalisation, which was fuelled by religious fervour, came to take the place of religion as the foundation of values and meaning, but in the process resulted in the creation of the "iron cage" of rationality and disenchantment that engendered Nietzsche's nihilism. Having briefly examined the ethical ramifications of the "iron cage" and disenchantment, namely dehumanisation and value fragmentation, I will turn to Weber's "revaluation of all values" response to nihilism, through a dialectic of enchantment and re-enchantment. I conclude the chapter by arguing that, whilst Weber offers new insights to the problem of value, in particular within the organisational context, his solution in terms of

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[143] Weber borrowed this phrase from Friedrich Schiller, who used the term to refer to the "de-divinisation" of nature. A related concept, of "de-mystification", is also used by Karl Marx - see Asprem (2014: p.17).
[144] Kolko (1959: p.21) writes that it is impossible to understand Weber's philosophy without examination of and understanding the role of Protestant Ethics. "This concept is the keystone of Weberian philosophy as a whole…", and the unity and validity of his entire "system is inextricably contingent on the validity of the notion of the Ethic."

"radical moral relativism",[145] embodied in his ideal of the "cultivated man", and his reliance on science and rationality as a value-neutral activity to clarify and serve moral values, values that one is to take as ultimate, does not adequately address the crisis of nihilism, as it is trapped within its reliance on a foundation, and in that sense is a failed attempt at revaluation of values.

The Spirit of Capitalism

In his account of "the transition to modernity",[146] Weber insisted that modern capitalism is more than the exchange of goods and services; rather, at its heart it is a state of mind, something intangible; and by successfully establishing "the existence of an affinity between economic rationalism and certain types of rigoristic ethical religion" (SR: p.94), he demonstrated that the spirit of Western modern culture, including capitalism, is founded on "rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the [religious] calling"[147] (PE: p.122), where the rationalisation and systematisation of the method of production in business was sanctioned by the ethics of ascetic Protestantism (SR: p.42). In short, he showed that the spread of capitalism had a religious[148] and spiritual foundation, and that "the impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money, of the greatest possible amount of money, has in itself nothing to do with capitalism" (PE: p.xxxi). Weber came to view the Reformation movement in general, and Protestant ethics in particular, as the most important but not the sole contributor to the rise of modern capitalism. He argued that, in doing so, the protestant ethics,

> "fostered a fundamental rejection of sacramental magic as a mechanism for aiding salvation and promoted the evolution of a transcendental and intellectualized religion in which numinous forces were removed from the sphere of everyday life" (Walsham 2008: p.498).

Protestantism attempted to rid the Christian faith from the dross of superstition, of magic[149] and of irrationality, characteristics of the medieval era, in order to promote a more pure, humble

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[145] The phrase is used by Slavnic (2004) to refer to Weber's proposed ethics, namely a compromise between political responsibility and adherence to one's highest ideals, between "ethics of responsibility" and "ethics of conviction".

[146] See Gane (2002: p.44).

[147] Weber defines "calling" as "the idea that the highest form of moral obligation of the individual is to fulfil his duty in worldly affairs" (PE: p.xii).

[148] It is instructive to note that Weber contrasts Oriental religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, which he classifies as contemplative or mystic religions, and ascetic religions of the Occident such as Christianity.

[149] As Thomas explains, in the pre-modern world, sacraments, rituals and prayers were means of access to divine assistance, and in times of need or disasters were invoked by the clergy or the faithful. "The medieval Church thus appeared as a vast reservoir of magical [and supernatural] power, capable of being deployed for a variety of secular purposes" (Thomas 1971: pp.32 & 40 & 45).

and worldly way of living and liberate the laity from the yoke of the manipulative clergy of the time,[150] in order to bring salvation within the power and grasp of the individual himself; after all, "God helps those who help themselves", so it should be expected that "the Calvinist… himself creates his own salvation" (PE: p.69).

Salvation and Predestination

What was most important for the pre-modern Christian was the assurance and achievement of ones' salvation and ones' life destiny in the hereafter.[151] Weber contends that salvation through human mediation is a form of magic, in the sense that it implies that humans can exert influence and alter the will of God in the same way that magicians or sorcerers of bygone ages used to change the will of the gods by offering sacrifices or by performing certain rituals.[152] Equating religiously and magically-motivated actions, Weber argues that such actions, at least in their elementary form, are rational, as they often follow a methodical and determined path; and since the primary ends of such "actions are predominantly economic", they should not be set apart from purposive or instrumental actions (SR: p.45). However, while these actions are means to a predetermined end, and whether they are religious or magical, the relation between the cause and effect of such actions is irrational. For instance, when prayers are said, perhaps using prayer beads, to effect or beseech healing for a sick person, an irrational causality is followed by a rational, systematic, methodical and ritualistic action; or to the case of a rainmaker who performs magic by following rational dance routines to bring about rain, an irrational expected outcome.

Religion and magic, however, started to run into difficulty, as frequently prayers were not answered nor did any rain come down from the clouds. Not only did the religious believer need

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[150] The Protestants repudiated "all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin" and rebelled against practices such as "indulgences…one of the most fundamental evils of the Church", where the church provided remission of the punishment of sins through prescription of certain conditions or considered the practice of confession to be a "means to a periodical discharge of the emotional sense of sin" (PE: pp.61-62). Gregory writes that "Reformed and radical Protestant reformers in particular,… ridiculed Catholic sacramentality as unbiblical superstition and idolatry in service of ecclesiastical power" (Gregory 2012: p.45); and Walsham (2008: p.505) offers a detailed account of Protestants' attempts to purge "'magic' from the pure metal of the Christian 'religion' and prune away the 'superstitious' popish and pagan accretions that had sprung up around it." The Protestants condemned "Catholicism as a form of witchcraft, sorcery, and magic…" and moved to abolish "purgatory and a soteriology". In contrasting Protestantism and Catholicism, Hansen (2001: p.105) notes that "Catholicism has the stronger mystical component, whereas Protestantism largely disavows mysticism and monastic orders. Protestantism has no priests who serve as mediators between God and humanity….".

[151] Weber writes that the Calvanist doctrine of "predestination: that only some human beings are chosen to be saved from damnation, the choice being predetermined by God" brought about "a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness" to the life of individual believer (PE: p.xii-xiii).

[152] According to Weber, it was the priest who offered salvation and dispensed "atonement, hope of grace, certainty of forgiveness". The priest, in that sense, was "a magician who performed the miracle of transubstantiation, and who held the key to eternal life in his hand" (PE: p.71). It could also be said that both "magician and priest … give counsel for behaviour fit to remove suffering" (Edles 2005: p.184).

to be reassured of his salvation,[153] increasingly he came to realise that an omnipotent "transcendental unitary god cannot be reconciled with the imperfection of the world that he has created and rules over" (ES: p.519): it could neither account for the unequal distribution of wealth nor could it convincingly explain why bad things happened to good people. The tension between the human condition in the world and religious assumptions, and one's anxious concern for his ultimate fate in this life and salvation in the next, led to attempts to find a rational and consistent explanation for these problems, culminating in the concept of predestination (MacKinnon 2001). After all, if the omnipotent God is the perfect creator, His creation must have been made perfect from start and in no need of improvement. The destiny of the individual person must also have been known and predetermined by Him from start. God the all-knowing does not have second thoughts, so such destiny cannot be subject to change by God nor can it be subject to change and alteration by the free will or the doing of the individual at a later stage, because the individual cannot override the will of God. The notion of "Predestination strikes Weber as pivotal in the history of reason, because its determinism is the abject denial of reason and freedom" (MacKinnon 2001: p.330). Reason advocates predestination, which is the destruction of moral choice and ethical responsibility, but paradoxically this is also the elimination of the need and the annihilation of the very possibility of reason itself.

Religious Calling and Asceticism

The notion of predestination[154] found currency among many Christian sects; however, the question raised was, who among the believers were predestined for salvation and for heaven? In an age in which the after-life was the most important issue, the most important questions for the believer were, "Am I one of the elect? ... And how can I be sure of this state of grace?" (PE: p.65). The believer needed reassurance, as he was plagued by 'salvation anxiety'.

In Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism, Weber argues that Protestants came to believe that, although one has no say in one's destiny, to be a chosen one of God surely one would be acting like a chosen one; hence, the more closely and thoroughly one did the bidding of God the more evidently he was a chosen one of God.[155] Faith in one's salvation then needed to be

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[153] It may be of interest to note that, according to Weber, in Oriental religions (eg. Hinduism, Buddhism) the believer was considered to be a "vessel" of God, but in the Occidental religions (eg. Christianity, Islam) came to be regarded as "instrument" in the hand of God; so whereas Oriental religions take a mystical approach towards God and salvation, and see the fulfilment of this in a contemplative flight from the world, the Occidental religions take a worldly action-oriented approach for salvation and, rather than fleeing from the world, seek to tame what is wicked in the world. (see FM: chp. III & p.284).

[154] Predestination is a doctrine of Calvinism.

[155] Of course, one also needed to have faith in being among the chosen. One needed to be confident of salvation, otherwise one was failing in faith.

proved more concretely and by more objective means, it "had to be proved by its objective results in order to provide a firm foundation for the *certitudo salutis* [assurance of grace]" (PE: p.68).

Protestants' response to the providential determinism, then, was not the passivity of oriental religions, but hard work to please God. One's work and vocation came to be taken as one's calling, one's life-task; and demonstrable excellence in vocation was the 'ought' – the ethical imperative that impelled the Protestant. Work, taken as one's calling, was the avenue to glorify God, and the harder and more productive one worked the more one glorified Him. "Only the glory of God and one's own duty, not human vanity, is the motive for the Puritans" (PE: p.251); but within such work ethic also laid "the salvation of the soul and that alone was the centre of [one's] life and work" (PE: p.48).

On the other hand, Christian asceticism in the Middle Ages demanded and had a definitely methodical and rational character, "with the purpose of [freeing] man from the power of irrational impulses and his dependence on the world and on nature." It trained the Christian to bring his natural impulses under control by objectively working in the service of God and thereby assuring "the salvation of his soul" (PE: p.72). This meant that the Christian "in quest of salvation has been primarily preoccupied by attitudes of the here and now" (FM: p.278); and his everyday conduct was rationally elevated to the status of vocation and became "the locus of proving one's state of grace" (FM: p.291). Asceticism, self-denial and hard work came to be taken as the signs and hallmark of the elect ones of God,[156] and "a man without a calling" lacked "the systematic, methodical character which is … demanded by worldly asceticism" (PE: p.107). To do his calling, this "loveless fulfilment of duty" (PE: p.243) and worldly obligations, the Protestant strove to do more and devise ever more efficient and hence more rationalised ways of doing his job. Thus, the religious calling, at least in the West, ended up propagating Christian asceticism in general and Protestant ethics in particular, culminating in the rise of the spirit of Capitalism, which I discuss next.

The Rise of Capitalism

The paradox in Weber's thesis on Protestant Ethics lies in the fact that asceticism, in search of other-worldly good, resulted in a contradictory and unintended outcome, as its rational ascetic character led to the very accumulation of wealth, economic success and the achievement of

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[156] Weber contends that such an attitude also stemmed from the mistrust and suspicion that Calvin had for pure feelings and emotions of an individual.

this-worldly good and wealth that it had rejected[157] (PE: p.116). Another great irony, as pointed out by Taylor, is that "what was seen as an unfailing mark of Godliness, and thus very much worth pursuing, somehow comes to infiltrate the very essence of Godliness, becomes gradually indistinguishable from it" (Taylor 2007: p.244). In the overall historical context of the making of modernity in the Reformation era, it could be claimed that "incompatible, deeply held, concretely expressed religious convictions paved a path to a secular society" (Gregory 2012: p.2), Importantly, in this process, rational and methodical ways of living "have been characterised by irrational presuppositions" (FM: p.281): that is to say, salvation and being numbered as an elect, which "have been accepted simply as 'given' … have been incorporated into such ways of life" (SP: p.281), and rational means were employed to achieve such non-rational ends.

The Protestant notion of calling, Weber writes, "projects religious behaviour into the day-to-day world" (PE: p.xii), and its ascetic attitude toward life has functioned as a potent impetus for social change. A significant by-product of this attitude was the rise of modern Capitalism as we know it today, with its signature features of efficiency, calculability, controllability, and productivity, underlying the mode of production and consumption. Since these features could be improved by employing an ever more rational approach to work, the more thorough fulfilment of one's calling came to be dependent on a more rational way of doing things. Weber asserts that Capitalism should not be understood in terms of accumulation of more wealth, though this of course is a consequence of Capitalism; rather, it should be understood as the employment and engagement of rational and systematic ways to increase efficiency and productivity towards achieving such a goal.[158]

However, over time, as Weber argues, the acquisition of wealth itself came to be considered as one's religious calling and a means to or at least a strong indication of one's salvation: it became the end itself. As he put it: "the intensity of the search for the Kingdom of God commenced gradually to pass over into sober economic virtue; the religious roots died out slowly, giving way to utilitarian worldliness" (PE: p.119). Since wealth could be accumulated in far more efficient ways through rational behaviour rather than the traditional ways, these rational ways came to gain "an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men". Capitalism

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[157] Weber writes that "asceticism was the power 'which ever seeks the good but ever creates evil'" (PE: p.116).
[158] According to Weber, "the essence of the spirit of modern capitalism" is the "regular reproduction of capital, involving its continual investment and reinvestment for the end of economic efficiency", which is "associated with an outlook of a very specific kind: the continual accumulation of wealth for its own sake, rather than for the material rewards that it can serve to bring" (PE: p.ix).

then no longer needed the ascetic foundation, as it came to rest on rational processes alone. "The spirit of religious asceticism … escaped from the cage" of capitalism (PE: p.124).

Protestant ethics, a religious belief system of values, intended to provide the path to eternal salvation for the individual, ended up creating a bureaucratic world.[159] In other words, in pursuit of one's calling, motivated by the moral obligation to perform one's duties, it was economic interests and the efficient means of accumulating capital that took the place of this vocation, and rational actions geared toward the efficient pursuit of goals came to take the place of the goal itself.[160] Ethics as one's calling, stripped of its spiritual and religious foundation, was transformed into ethics of Capitalism, moral-making was supplanted by money-making, one's religious calling, the right thing to do, an end in itself, a value-rational action,[161] ended up being replaced by the means of achieving it, that is, by an instrumental rational action. "The Puritan strove to build The City on a Hill, and erected instead fortresses of finance" (MacKinnon 2001: p.345). This is the case of Protestant Ethics being a "vanishing mediator" between an ascetic way of living and capitalism.

Protestant Ethics as a 'Vanishing Mediator'

Protestantism attempted "a regeneration of religious value or end-orientation" as practiced in monasteries, and provided the impetus for the spread of the otherworldly (or innerworldly) focus of the monk (Jameson 1973); but since the ascetic way of living of the monk was characterised by highly rationalised practices,[162] Protestantism, rather than engendering an ethic of resignation, facilitated the spread of rationalisation in all aspects of life. As Weber summarised this process: "the Reformation took rational Christian asceticism and its methodical habits out of the monasteries and placed them in the service of active life in the world" (PE: p.196). Once "Protestantism has accomplished the task of allowing a rationalisation of innerworldly life to take place, it has no further reason for being and

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[159] The irony here is that "the march of bureaucracy has destroyed structures of domination which had no rational character" (FM: p.244), namely the religious belief system.

[160] This is because the Puritan was "against the irrational use of wealth" not "the rational acquisition" of it. Asceticism "looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing" and grace, hence the rational, restless, continuous, systematic work came to be regarded as "the highest means to asceticism" (PE: pp.115-116).

[161] Weber defines a value-rational action as follows: "…value-rational action always involves 'commands' or 'demands' which, in the actor's opinion, are always binding on him. It is only in cases where human action is motivated by the fulfilment of such unconditional demands that it will be called value-rational" (ES: p.25).

[162] Weber writes: "In that epoch the monk is the first human being who lives rationally, who works methodically and by rational means toward a goal, namely the future life. Only for him did the clock strike, only for him were the hours of the day divided-for prayer. The economic life of the monastic communities was also rational" (GE: p.365).

disappears from the historical scene" (Jameson 1973). That is to say, Protestantism, or the whole institution of religion that provided a framework within which rationalisation could take place, no longer was needed nor relevant and could be abandoned. The ascetic way of living brought about the spirit of Capitalism, but in this process the mediator itself, the religious ethics and one's religious calling, disappeared. Today, writes Weber, the "victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations" and on rationality, no longer needs the support of religious asceticism or one's devotion to one's religious calling, and indeed "the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs" (PE: p.124).

Rationalisation

For Weber, rationalisation[163] is a historical drive towards a world in which "one can, in principle, master all things by calculation" (SV: p.139). Rationality could have many different meanings; but in particular, Weber uses this concept to refer to and distinguish between two types of rationality, value and instrumental.[164] "Value rationality" is a teleological way of looking and dealing with things governed by firmly held beliefs. Value is taken for its own sake, and one's action towards such an absolute value is made independent of consequences. Instrumental or purposive rationality, on the other hand, is a means-end rationality, where determination of the course of action is made based on calculations of available means and consideration of potential alternatives, evaluation of relative importance of various ends, and other relevant elements in achieving the desired outcome. An instrumental rational course of action, for instance, may even involve changing ends, motivated by calculations of means. It could also be said that instrumental rationality is related to "scientific-technical rationalism", whereas value rationality is related to "ethical rationalism" (Asprem 2014: p.21).

Weber's account of the genesis of the Spirit of Capitalism revealed how reason and rationality came to become autonomous and dominant in the lives of people, relegating ethics to the status

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[163] Talcott Parsons explains that "rationalization comprises first the intellectual clarification, specification and systematization of ideas" (Hansen 2001: p.105), replacing traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behaviour in society, with abstraction, generalisation, objectification, and use of rational means.

[164] Weber offers a taxonomy of action, writing that "Social action, like all action, may be oriented in four ways. It may be: (1) instrumentally rational … (2) value-rational … (3) affectual (especially emotional)… (4) traditional…" (ES: pp.24-25). In addition, Weber speaks of "formal rationality… to designate the extent of qualitative calculation ….", as well as "substantive rationality …[as] the degree to which the provisioning … is shaped …under some criterion … of ultimate values" (ES: p.85). It should be noted that there does not appear to be a consensus on the meaning of rationality within Weber's corpus, so much so that Brubaker claims that "sixteen apparent meanings of 'rational' can be culled from … Weber's characterization of modern capitalism and ascetic Protestantism" - as quoted by (as quoted by Wallace 1990: p.199). Asprem also writes that "a very real ambiguity and lack of thematic unity in Weber's work is that, with basis in different aspects of Weber's writings, several disenchantment theses, several theories of rationalisation, and several partially conflicting accounts of the causes, processes…are articulated" (Asprem 2014: p.20).

of an option and a derivative, and how an instrumental rational way of life was born in pursuit of a value rational, an absolute and taken for granted goal, namely religious salvation. A parallel for this transfiguration of value rationality into instrumental rationality could also be noted in the philosophy of Kant, where the categorical imperative, relying on reason as the ultimate source of determination of the good or the right, ends up degenerating into hypothetical imperative. According to Grosby (2013: p.302), "we are in Weber's debt for recognizing that rationalization of religious belief is but part of a wider process of the rationalization of many other spheres of life…"; which is a characteristic feature of modernity, where each sphere is governed by its own set of values.

Value Spheres

Whereas in the pre-modern era one's religious beliefs and convictions were the ultimate and dominant factors underpinning and regulating one's conduct, such considerations have now become "internal to the 'rationality' of each sphere" (Taylor 2007: p.2): that is to say, each sphere of human activity, each value sphere,[165] whether religion,[166] education,[167] law,[168] aesthetic,[169] family,[170] ethics[171] or others,[172] is "rationalized in terms of very different ultimate values and ends, and what is rational from one point of view may well be irrational from another" (PE: p.xxxviii). Within each sphere, human beings operate within the already established rules, principles and ultimate values for that sphere, values which increasingly are the product of self-rationalisation.[173] Such a fragmentation of values is indicative of Nietzschean perspectivism, highlighting the absence of any underlying absolute or foundation for values, often forcing the individual "to choose values from conflicting and ultimately irreconcilable value-spheres" (Gane 1997: p.549). Ethical problems arise due to incompatibility and interminable clash of these value spheres. Grosby (2013), for instance, argues that, in the sphere of economy, a bureaucratic official or a manager does not face ethical dilemmas in carrying out his or her activities and duties, because this person suspends his own personal ethics and values while operating within the organisational rules and bounds already defined for him, "without scorn and bias" (PV: p.95).

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[165] A "value sphere" is a domain of human activity that is defined by its own inherent ultimate values. Value sphere is also the domain of the Weberian "cultural being", endowed "with the capacity and the will to deliberately take a position on the world and ascribe a meaning to it" (Weber as quoted in Oakes 2003: p.28).

[166] In the sphere of religion itself, rationalisation has led to the codification of moral principles into law, resulting in demystification and expulsion of magic, mystery and superstition, and the rejection of various forms of rituals. Weber's analysis of Protestant ethics shows how religious activities were devalued in favour of ordinary activities of the world, because emphasis came to be placed on rational ways to achieve salvation or to "tackle the senselessness of suffering and of the world" (FM: p.64), in which many evil and other unpleasant realities confronted the individual. Weber traces the genesis of this movement not just in Protestantism but as far back as Judaism, where "the magical defence against demons was confronted with that of the purely ethical Torah and with the confession of sins as genuine means of control" of evil. See Anthony J. Carroll (2011: p.117).

[167] Rationalisation can be seen in the processes employed by the educational institutions to affect "education of the masses", which Gabriel Marcel considers as a contradiction in terms, arguing that "What is educable is only an individual, or more exactly a person" (MMS: p.10). Hansen (2001: p.106) also writes that academe "has steadily become more bureaucratic and hierarchical", in which all the components of rationalisation could readily be identified. The result has been a failure to rear "a well-rounded personality in favour of the technical expert, who, from the human point of view, is crippled" (FM: p.73).

[168] Rationalisation leads to a growing body of rules and regulations, culminating in the principle of the rule of law (Hansen 2001), where the individual is expected to follow the rules rather than use reason to devise her own rules.

[169] Music, for instance, is "based on underlying systematized principles of melody and harmony", the result of rational developments made in this field in the 16th century (Edles 2005: p.160).

[170] The family unit has not escaped rationalisation, as it has increasingly become subject to planning, to birth control and the determination and selection of a baby's sex. A newborn is no longer viewed as a miracle of life, a gift from heaven, but rather the outcome of a well-planned and thought-out parental design.

On the positive side, rationalisation creates standardisation and interchangeability both of machines and of people, resulting in increased efficiency and productivity of goods and services. Weber does not see this aspect of Capitalism as the problem of modernity; his concern is that "rational action transforms the very goal it is intended to serve" (Gronow 1988: p.329); so that once rationalisation becomes the basis of human interactions, values, emotions and traditions give way to formal and impersonal rational practices, and human relationships come to be defined in terms of calculable and predictable processes.[174] A relationship based on calculability, efficiency or controllability, however, to use Marcel's terminology, can only be an I-It relation,[175] a relation with an object; so rationalisation as a foundation in effect destroys ethics and strips humans from the ultimate meaning of their lives and their relationships.[176] In other words, rationalisation of our values devalues these values, reducing "questions of meaning and value.... to scientific (instrumental) questions of technique and purpose" (Gane 2002: p.23). Reason undermines itself, fostering nihilism, which "is the inevitable consequence of [this] self-destruction of reason" (Behnegar 2003: p.86). Before considering this irrationality of rationality and its unintended consequences further, more needs to be said about "ultimate values".

Ultimate Values

Each value sphere is defined in terms of its own ultimate value, a deliberately chosen value that is held to be absolute, even though such "absolute values are always irrational" (TSE: p.117). Ultimate values act as "principles that claim the unconditional validity of categorical

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[171] Where truth, goodness and beauty were once the inseparable qualities of the divine, collectively and mutually enriching and illuminating the life of human beings, increasingly the modern world has come to be characterised by the separation of these qualities, a consequence of the shift of emphasis towards reasoning and rationality, where scientific methods and practices are taken as the most appropriate way to access truth. Indeed, truth itself has become synonymous with reason and rationality, dominating and overshadowing the other two qualities. "Truth and reason are discerned to be of greatest consequence with goodness and beauty perceived to be extraneous elements or compartmentalized as a part of one's religious ideology or personal choice (Bellah et al. 1985)" (quoted by Goodman and Marcelli 2010: p.564).

[172] However, "Weber seems certain that there are precisely six such spheres, and no less confident as to what they are: religion, the economy, politics, aesthetics, the erotic (die Erotik) and intellectualism" (Oakes 2003: p.28).

[173] Jackall defines self-rationalisation as "the systematic application of functional rationality to the self to attain certain individual ends" (Jackall 2009: p.63), which entails self-objectification and self-abnegation and the "stripping away of all natural impulses" (Jackall 2009: p.119).

[174] As Weber argued, "the man who, *par excellence*, lived a rational life in the religious sense was, and remained, alone the monk"; but his ascetic way of living, a highly rationalised way of living, "served to drive him farther away from everyday life, because the holiest task was definitely to surpass all worldly morality" (PE: p.74); and as Edles and Appelrouth (2009: p.159) point out, such a rational way of living, for Weber, refers to "an ongoing process in which social interaction and institutions become increasingly governed by methodical procedures and calculable rules", but in this process "values, traditions, and emotions were being displaced in favour of formal and impersonal bureaucratic practices."

[175] Gabriel Marcel contrasts the I-It, a relation with an object, with I-Thou, a relation with other human being. Martin Buber also describes these relations in a very similar way.

[176] Hansen (2001: p.108) writes that "the problem of meaning … [is] directly related to rationalization…".

imperatives" (Oakes 2003: p.28-29), and provide the rationale for conduct. Such an ideal is "value rational", because it is accepted as an act of faith or belief rather than through some rational deduction, and "whether the person expressing these value judgments should adhere to these ultimate standards is his personal affair; it involves will and conscience, not empirical knowledge" (MS: p.54). Ultimate values, however, are not necessarily fixed perpetually, but rather, they are subject to change. Indeed, "the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us" (MS: p.57).

Weber argues that "the more the value to which action is elevated to the status of an absolute value, the more 'irrational' in this sense the corresponding action is"[177] (TSE: p.117). That is to say, although it is not rational to pursue an ultimate and irrational value, "an action may be rational with reference to the means employed" to achieve such an absolute (FM: p.56). This is so because, according to Weber, the more unconditionally a person is committed to a value for its own sake, the more he overlooks the potential consequences of his action and the less he takes into consideration the influence of the means employed towards achieving the end value. This points to the irrationality of rationality.

Irrationality[178] of Rationality

Rational systems are unreasonable systems, as they are based on irrational propositions; so it is "fate, and certainly not 'science,' [that] holds sway over these" systems (SV: p.148). The "requirement to acknowledge and believe in reason or logic [is] as superstitious as belief in religious commandments and taboos" (Bernstein 1999: p.325), because "the rationality of ends, the reasons why goals are desired, is not itself susceptible to rational proof" (Tenbruck 1980: p.335). After all, reason cannot be used to justify and validate the rationality of reason itself through self-reflexivity.

As we saw earlier, Weber's account of Protestant ethics reveals this bankruptcy of reason and its irrationality, by showing how the rational actions of the Protestants were based on religious propositions which, by very definition, were accepted as an act of faith, on belief, and hence against rationality. Weber writes: "The various great ways of leading a rational and methodical

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[177] From the point of view of "the instrumentally rational action", "value-rationality is always irrational" (ES: p.26).

[178] It is instructive to draw the distinction between irrational and non-rational, even though Weber hardly uses the term "non-rational". Irrational refers to miscalculation or the failure to think or act according to rational thinking. By non-rational, however, we refer to the non-calculative, that is, where thinking is made according to non-rational criteria, such as emotions or faith.

life have been characterized by irrational presuppositions, which have been accepted simply as 'given'…" (FM: p.281). The irrational belief in providential determinism was eventually uprooted by the power of reason, only to end up in the creation of the materialistic determinism of Capitalism, where everything could be predicted and determined by the power of reason. "Reason won the battle but lost the war" (MacKinnon 2001: p.332). Reason gave human beings the power to free themselves from the bonds of determinism only to be trapped in the determinism of reason itself. Freedom led to determinism.[179] The Protestant ascetic way of living revealed the conflict between rational means and non-rational end of salvation, "between the rational claim and reality, between the rational ethic and partly rational and partly irrational values", which resulted in devaluation[180] of the world. As Weber put it, the need for salvation responded "to this devaluation by becoming more other worldly…." (FM: p.357); so that, ironically, the higher the rationalisation and systematisation of the means, the greater the rejection of "all genuine substantive value considerations" (Gronow 1988: p.325), and hence the higher the irrationality of the methods employed in pursuit of the intended outcome. The highly rationalised methods of production eliminate the need for calculation and the freedom to rationalise, because "a planned economy oriented to want satisfaction must"[181] not allow the individual to risk any reduction in efficiency and production that may result from the individual's autonomy.[182] For Weber, this is the "unavoidable element of irrationality in economic systems", where, if an economic system is carried out in a highly rationalised way, "it must further accept the inevitable reduction in formal, calculatory rationality…" (ES: p.111). The Protestant, by the power of reason and free will, attempted to rid himself of the unknown and the mysterious in order to give more meaning to his life, only to fall into the prison of reason and discover that reason is "irrational because it creates the capitalist condition of its own negation" (MacKinnon 2001: p.329). In relentlessly deconstructing other sources of value-creation, reason ended up undermining its own legitimacy along with that of "all [other] evaluative perspectives" (Kim 2012: Pt.4.2). Thus the triumph of reason in dislodging religion

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[179] Gronow (1988: p.320) contends that "the development of modern capitalism results in loss of freedom" once capitalism, elevated by the ethical calling of the Puritan, becomes institutionalised through emphasis on rational and methodical conduct of life and detached from the religious calling. Weber himself points to the outcome of this rationalisation process, writing that "The Puritan wanted to work for a calling; we are forced to do so" (PE: p.123).

[180] This devaluation comes about because all religions demand "that the course of the world be somehow meaningful, at least in so far as it touches upon the interest of men" (FM: p.352). The world as a place of sins, suffering, guilt and misery is considered worthless and hence devalued when "judged in the light of the religious postulate of a divine meaning of existence"(FM: pp.356-357).

[181] Weber defines "planned economy" as the satisfaction of wants, which results from economic action oriented systematically to an established substantive order, whether agreed or imposed, as opposed to "market economy", which is based on profit-making or self-interest (ES: p.109).

[182] Thus "autonomy in the direction of organized productive units would have to be greatly reduced or, in the extreme case, eliminated" (ES: p.110).

as a foundation for ethics and meaning "was not the florescence but the destruction of reason" itself (MacKinnon 2001: p.336).

For Weber, rationalisation had two major consequences, namely the "iron cage" of rationality, and disenchantment, both of which contribute to Nietzschean nihilism. I turn to explore these two consequences and their effects on ethics in more detail.

Iron Cage of Rationality

The predominance of instrumental rationality over value rationality, the ability to determine the path towards one's ends and goals through calculation, techniques and other rational means in an efficient manner, which "dramatically enhances individual freedom" by allowing the individual to realise his/her goals[183] and free herself from the shackles of supernatural and non-rational forces, had a dark side, as the same operative rational forces ushered in the potential to curtail individual freedom by enslaving the individual within the predictable path opened up by this rational and technical order. Weber explains:

> "For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force". (PE: p.123)

Expressing Baxter's view, Weber further writes that, "the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.' But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage" (PE: p.123). Weber warns that such a cage forces the individual into role conformity, turning him into "a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march" (FM: p.228). The individual trapped in this cage, having lost her "creativity and individuality" (Edles 2005: p.162), and unable and unwilling to deviate from the safety and efficiency offered by the rationality of the system, distances herself from any non-rational, incalculable elements such as ones' own feelings and emotions, as increasingly her behaviour comes to be "determined by rational considerations rather than by affective motives" (Ven 2011). Standardisation, a hallmark of the rationalisation process, rather than liberating, leads to transmutation of

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[183] See Kim (2012).

individual freedom and conformism to rules.[184] The individual is effectively relieved of determining the right choice, his needs and values are disregarded, and he is persuaded or feels compelled to "use existing rules, regulations, and structures that either predetermine the optimum methods or help [him] discover them" (Ritzer 2013b: p.43).

The concluding remarks of Weber on the effects of the Protestant Ethics are of this crisis of modernity, where we are "born into this mechanism" (PE: p.123), within which "we live a uniform [life and] try to measure and control in order to get things done" (Taylor 2007: p.59). All the while, our lives, choices and values are being determined and constrained by this "iron cage" of rationality, where the rational way of thinking and being is so pervasive that it has come to take the place of those features that make human beings human; and in doing so has transformed human beings into "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart" (PE: p.124), engendering dehumanisation.

Dehumanisation Effect

The iron cage of rationality cripples the individuals' freedom and autonomy, and brings about dehumanisation of relationships, causing the disappearance of ethics. The individual, enslaved in this cage, turns into "a single cog", losing her uniqueness and particularity in the process of abstraction[185] and objectification within this rule-driven cage. This process of abstraction strips "persons and things of their auratic particularity, and thereby transforms questions of value into *reflective* ones concerning the status and character of rules (reasons) for action", leaving a gap in contemporary ethical thought (Smith 2003b). The loss of human uniqueness and identity is the reduction of human beings to rational processes, so that rational systems in effect "serve to deny the basic humanity, the human reason of the people who work within or are served by them", culminating in the complete loss of human freedom and meaning in the world; which is why "rational systems are dehumanizing systems" (Ritzer 2013b: p.44).

Weber paints a bleak picture of dehumanised relationships, where love, empathy, and human emotions are weeded out in rationalised relations that maximise consistency, objectivity, and efficiency. The "[r]ational economic relationship", Weber asserts, "always brings about

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[184] We could see examples of this effect in modern times, where instrumental rationality "is institutionalized in such large-scale structures as the bureaucracy, modern law, and the capitalist economy" to such an extent that the "choice of means to ends is determined by these larger structures and their rules and laws" (Ritzer 2013b: p.46).
[185] According to Smith (2003b: p.489), this process of abstraction has become "the dominant mode of cognition in modernity".

depersonalization, and it is impossible to control a cosmos of objectively rationalized activities by appealing charity to particular individuals" (SR: p.217). He further writes:

> "Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is 'dehumanized,' the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is appraised as its special virtue by capitalism" (ES: p.975).

In a rationalised world, no genuine dialogue could take place between individuals, because when everything is objectified and determined, when feelings and emotions are taken out of relations and dismissed as unreliable, no room is left for any genuine intersubjective relation.[186] Detached reason makes "one's lived ethic … eerily insignificant in the process of rational inquiry" (Goodman and Marcelli 2010: p.571), and the more rational, calculable and objectified ethics becomes, the more impersonal the relationship will be.

Disenchantment[187]

Weber is aware that, despite their predominance, science and rationality are concerned with facts: they cannot provide norms that guide our personal conduct, hence they are unable to provide an answer to the only questions that really matter to us: "What shall we do and how shall we live?" (SV: p.143). Indeed, their dominance in our lives, with their inherent objectivity and impersonality of approach to all matters, "their indifference to difference, has created a 'cold' and empty world" (Edles 2005: p.162), a disenchanted world. Weber is clear that such a disenchanted world is "[n]ot summer's bloom … but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness" (PV: p.128). Weber's concept of "disenchantment"[188] finds a corollary in Nietzsche's notion of "death of God",[189] "a condition or cause of nihilism" (Bernstein 1999: p.8). Weber writes:

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[186] To use Gabriel Marcel's argument, an intersubjective relationship cannot take place with objects because the elements of love and hope are necessary. See chapter 4. Emmanuel Levinas also believes that intersubjective relation can only take place with a "Face", and objects or animals are not considered to have a "Face". See chapter 6.

[187] The German word used by Weber is "Entzauberung", and it is to mean "losing its magic", rather than its poor translation, which would indicate disillusionment.

[188] For Weber, "a direct product of rationalization was *die Entzauberung der Welt* or the disenchantment of the world" (Hansen 2001: p.105). It is also instructive to note that Tenbruck (1980: p.322) proposed the following: "The rationalization process will refer to the overall sequence, the development up to the Protestant ethic will be known as disenchantment, and the condensation and continuation of disenchantment will be called modernization."

[189] Gould (2011) describes disenchantment as "an imprecise if less dramatic corollary" to Nietzsche's notion of the "death of God".

"The tension between religion and intellectual knowledge definitely comes to the fore wherever rational, empirical knowledge has consistently worked through to the disenchantment of the world and its transformation into a causal mechanism" (FM: p.350).

For Weber, disenchantment is at the heart of the rationalised modernity,[190] where the natural world and all areas of human experience come to be more knowable, calculable and less mysterious (Jenkins 2000, Gellner 1974: p.189); but paradoxically, this corresponds with the rise of meaninglessness[191] and value relativity. Since capitalism, secured on rational rules and regulations, no longer needed the support of religious beliefs, the religious values and ethics needed at the birth of capitalism began to fade away. When economic success and hard work became the most important signs and the assurance of salvation, when "it is conduct rather than magic that 'decides man's fate'" (Asprem 2014: p.23), there was no need for the power of God to operate through various sacraments. The increased rationalisation of the mode of work, the ever increasing reliance on technical modes of thinking and operating, meant the expunction of irrationality, of everything individual or human (Gane 2002: p.44), resulting in a decline in faith and belief, the abandonment of signs and "the rejection of sacramental magic as a road to salvation" (PE: p.178). A movement that was germinated in religious belief came to leave no room for religious rites and rituals and no longer found any need for ceremonies, no place for sacraments,[192] myth, mystery, dreams and superstitions, because not only were all these considered to be contrary to science and reason and hence an impediment to progress, they were also considered as useless, even blasphemous.[193] In the Nietzschean sense, the highest values, the religious beliefs, devalue themselves through the power of reason, fostering disenchantment, which is a manifestation of nihilism. Even individual spontaneity of drives, passions, feelings and sentiments needs to make way for the unemotional and calculating reason, because science[194] and rationality could provide the certainty and reliability that these could not offer.[195]

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[190] Tenbruck (1980: p.322) writes that "religious disenchantment provides the spirit from which capitalism unfolds in its role as the rationalizing force of modernity."

[191] As human conduct and "practices become more rational and orderly, the objects (and subjects) of practice become increasingly meaningless" (Bernstein 1999: p.8).

[192] Gregory writes that "the Protestant denial of sacramentality … contributed unintentionally and indirectly to post-Enlightenment disenchantment" (Gregory 2012: p.43).

[193] They are blasphemous because they arrogate "power to us, and hence 'plucking' it 'away from the glory of God's righteousness'" (Taylor 2007: p.79).

[194] Weber writes that "science belongs as a link and motive force" to the "process of disenchantment" (SV: p.139).

[195] Weber refers to this as "the problem of theodicy", where the rational compulsion of religions comes from "the need to possess a rational answer to the problem of theodicy" (Tenbruck 1980: p.334).

The "secularization and the decline of magic",[196] as well as "the increasing scale, scope, and power of the formal means-ends rationalities", are the two distinct aspects of disenchantment (Jenkins 2000: p.12); and both of them, "one theological (the decline of magic) the other social (organisation of society in accordance with instrumental rationality) - are deeply intertwined" (Asprem 2014: p.22). Modern capitalistic society is "a coldly efficient world virtually devoid of magic" (Ritzer 1999: p.69); and in such a society, all components of rationalisation are inimical to magic and mystery.[197]

Weber's disenchantment of the world marks "a break between medieval and modern temporalities" (Gould 2011: p.42). The pre-modern world was an enchanted world, "a great magical garden" in which beliefs in gods and supernatural forces governed the daily life of the individual: the sacred influenced and regulated the functioning of society, it was "the world of spirits, demons, moral forces which our predecessors acknowledged" (Taylor 2007: p.29). The understanding and experiences of an individual in this enchanted world were based on the belief that "there is more to life than the material, the visible or the explainable" (Jenkins 2000: p.29), and that one's life was beyond reason and reasonable, and one's knowledge of the world was not the same as the world itself. In the modern disenchanted world, on the other hand, every effect needs and finds a rational causal explanation; so that the overarching meaning of the world and of people's lives, once given through their hold on spiritual forces, begins to dissipate. God, magic and myth give way to logic and knowledge. There is no longer a need to appeal to other-worldly forces, because "principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play" (SV: p.139); and there are no longer any mysteries in the world, though there are still many unknowns and many yet to be known. However, these will be revealed and demystified through the power of science and rationality, through technical means and calculations. In a disenchanted world, magic is eliminated from the world[198] because "one need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits" (SV: p.139).

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[196] It should be pointed out that the rejection of magic and the sacred, at least initially, came about, not because they were found to be untrue or without power, but because they were ungodly, superfluous for one's salvation and even an impediment to enter God's kingdom. The path to salvation came to be seen as clear, unambiguous, routine and logical, discernible and discoverable by the power of one's intellect and rationality.

[197] For instance, magic and mystery are by definition unpredictable and not subject to external control; they are also often very inefficient ways to get things done, and as a consequence unproductive.

[198] According to Hansen (2001: p.107), there is "a small misunderstanding by Weber on the topic of magic. Magic is never actually eliminated from the world; it is only marginalized. It is removed from the conscious attention of cultural elites. The bureaucratic institutions of government, industry, and academe now ignore it, but it is still found in popular and low culture."

With the removal of the means of enchantment from our lives, the moral and spiritual meaning making offered by these as "immediate reality" (Taylor 2007) also disappeared. Empiricism and positivism took the place of the unreliable personal perception, feelings and intuitions in determination of what is good, as the natural world and scientific world came to be preferable to the social world because they could be understood and explained through the rational faculty of the individual without the aid or the need of reference to the transcendent or supernatural.[199] For this reason, Bernstein argues that "disenchantment is the extirpation of what is subjective" (Bernstein 1999: p.88).

The subduing of the influence of magic, the spiritual forces including the belief in God, the signature characteristics of disenchantment, came about because scientific investigation of the natural world revealed a reality devoid of ultimate meaning, purpose or value: no God and no beyond, and therefore disenchanted. In such a demystified world, "spirituality has been supplanted by secularism, spontaneity has been replaced by bureaucratization, and the imagination has been subordinated to instrumental reason" (Saler 2006: p.692). The break with traditions, with religion and with what was once held to be sacred and holy, is the unmooring of the individuals' life from the beliefs that were once taken as essential in providing the necessary moral guidance,[200] and signals the end of obedience to orders and forces outside of one's own self, ushering in the rise of pure subjectivity and individualism. Weber contends that,

> "ascetic Protestantism completely eliminated magic and the outer-worldly quest for salvation, of which the highest form was intellectualist, contemplative 'illumination'. It alone created the religious motivations for seeking salvation primarily through the devotion in one's worldly 'vocation'" (SR: p.269).[201]

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[199] It may be of note to point out here that Weber's study of sociology of religions both in the East and the West led him to conclude that the response to the disenchantment of the world and the debunking of the element of magic from people's lives took two different paths. In the East, disenchantment resulted in the rise of mysticism, as characterised in Oriental religions; whereas in the West, the response was the elevated reliance on the power of science and techniques and the rationalisation of all spheres of human activity. Weber writes: "The unity of the primitive image of the world, in which everything was concrete magic, has tended to split into rational cognition and mastery of nature, on the one hand, and into 'mystic' experiences, on the other. The inexpressible contents of such experiences remain the only possible 'beyond,' added to the mechanism of a world robbed of gods" (FM: p.282).

[200] This moving away of spiritual capital of ascetic monks from "the enchanted garden of the monastery to the world of ordinary life" is the key development in the disenchantment of the Western world (Anthony J. Carroll 2011).

[201] Although Weber attributed disenchantment to Protestant Reformation, the antagonistic position taken by the Roman Catholicism of medieval age against the genuine scientific discoveries also exacerbated and precipitated this disenchantment further, because every self-conscious person would recognise "the principle of non-contradiction, that truth could not contradict truth"; hence, rejection of and opposition of churches against scientific progress and discovery caused further alienation and disenchantment (Gregory 2012: p.46).

Not only the rise of the spirit of Capitalism "decisively eroded beliefs about the immanence of the holy" (Walsham 2008: p.499) but, as Weber argues, "every economic rationalization of trade and business … weakened the traditions upon which the authority of the sacred law primary depended" (SR: p.216). Indeed, since "rational systems in general, and bureaucracies in particular, have no room for enchantment", all non-rational elements are systematically rooted out by rational systems (Ritzer 2010: p.55); hence, the spread of rationalisation in all spheres of human activity has resulted in corresponding disenchantment in each sphere.[202]

Disenchantment is the shattering of our moral, cognitive and meaning making ability,[203] where "the ultimate and most sublime values [retreat] from public life" (SV: p.155), and the bond between the individual and his reliance on his lived personal experience of the world is weakened. Since the pre-modern means of enchantment "relate more to the inherent nature of an experience and the qualitative aspects of that experience" (Ritzer 2013a: p.128), their disappearance then adversely effects the quality of the experience. The disenchanted world brought about what Charles Taylor calls a "bounded" or "buffered self",[204] where there is a clear separation between the self and the world, and where meaning, rather than being inherent[205] in the world, is manufactured and conferred on it by the individual self.[206] Such an understanding of the world in scientific and rational terms, where everything is "governed by invariable natural law", rejecting "the possibility of any miraculous incursions or interventions" (Asprem 2014: p.71) and without reference to one's own experiences, is to regard the world as value-free, resulting in value-fragmentation, a consequence of disenchantment (McPherson 2009: p.126).

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[202] The extent and direction of rationalisation in each sphere could even be measured by the level of disenchantment, that is to say, "negatively in terms of the degree to which magical elements of thought are displaced, or positively by the extent to which ideas gain in systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency" (FM: p.51).

[203] Weber asserts that, despite an increase in rationalisation and intellectualisation, our world has not become a more meaningful place to live in; nor do these advancements indicate "an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives" (SV: p.139), as they do not offer any meaning beyond the purely practical and technical aspects. As pointed out earlier, the irony is that actions generated by reason are not only not the source of meaning or progress "but [are] the creator of those social conditions that eclipse the possibility of reason" (MacKinnon 2001: p.330).

[204] It should be pointed out that Taylor argues that it took more than disenchantment alone to produce the "buffered self" (Taylor 2007: pp.26-27).

[205] According to Taylor, in the enchanted world, "meanings do not inhere only in minds, but can reside in things, or in various kinds of extra-human but intra-cosmic subjects"; that is to say, meaning is already there in the objects, the sacramental, the relics and so on, it exists outside of us, "quite independently of us; it would be there even if we didn't exist." Objects were held to be holy and had magical or spiritual powers in themselves that could influence individuals, and the world was considered a meaningful place with order and purpose ordained, and under the control of the almighty God, independent of the individual and his response (Taylor 2011: pp.59-61).

[206] Taylor (2007: pp.29-30) writes that a disenchanted world is "a world in which the only locus of thoughts, feelings, spiritual elan is what we call minds; the only minds in the cosmos are those of humans … and minds are bounded so that these thoughts, feelings, etc. are situated 'within' them".

Value-Fragmentation

In Weber's account, the polytheism of the ancient world, where many gods and values ruled and influenced the lives of individuals, was dethroned by the unifying power of Christianity: it was a revaluation of the ancient values.[207] However, as Christianity developed the "rational methodical way of life", it ended up disenchanting the world, in which plurality of value spheres re-emerged and came into conflict. Nietzsche's death of God ended up paving the way for the return of many gods that are in conflict with one another, a revaluation of Christian values back into ancient values.[208] As Weber writes:

> "Many old gods ascend from their graves; they are disenchanted and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they resume their eternal struggle with one another" (SV: p.149).

The many warring gods of the medieval world gave way to the many gods or many contradictory value spheres of the modern day. Weber further writes:

> "Our civilization destines us to realize more clearly these struggles again, after our eyes have been blinded for a thousand years -- blinded by the allegedly or presumably exclusive orientation towards the grandiose moral fervor of Christian ethics" (SV: p.149).

Thus, in an ironic way, as Kim (2012: Pt.4.2) aptly points out, we have ended up having "re-enchantment via disenchantment".

Disenchantment fuels "a process of decentralization and pluralisation [causing a] 'crisis of meaning' within discrete societies" (William H. Swato 1983: p.322), as it fosters refusal to accede to any external sources of authority and to any overarching system of beliefs or calling that would come from beyond; because "we no longer see ourselves as related to moral sources outside of us, or at least not at all in the same way. An important power has been internalized" (Taylor 1989: p.143). The firm and personal footing once offered by the sacramental or religious ideals now give way to various ideas and rules of human beings' own making. However, as Weber asserts:

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[207] Nietzsche wrote that Christianity "ushered in a re-evaluation of all ancient values" (BGE: 46).
[208] Kranak (2014) outlines what he claims to be the two leading interpretations of the goal of Nietzsche's revaluation of values, namely, a rebirth of ancient values and the creation of entirely new values.

"Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (FM: p.280).

A disenchanted world, "a world robbed of gods" (FM: p.282), myths, religious or supernatural forces, "is carried through in the disappearance of values" (Bernstein 1999: p.320); because, with their removal, the "most important formative influences on conduct" (PE: p.xxxix) and the foundation upon which ethical conduct once rested, and the recourse of our value and meaning making, were also lost. Without such a foundation, ethics and morality came to be understood in relation to and "linked to the natural and observable order, separated from lived experience of the other" (Goodman and Marcelli 2010: p.564). The sources of morals are sought and found in the physical world,[209] and morality comes to be regarded as dependent upon rules and reasons that are the manifestations of the rationality and self-understanding of the individual subject herself. What the subject needs to work out what she ought to do then, "is purely disengaged reason" (Taylor 2007: p.254); and she takes herself as the master and maker of her own values, locating moral reasoning within herself, in effect personalising ethics. The main culprit in the rise of this pure subjectivity, this personalisation and internalisation of values, this value-relativity and value-fragmentation, is rationalisation and the emphasis on rationality and human reason as the ultimate source of the determination of values. However, when the self is "identified as fundamentally rational, its moral disorientation well on its way" (Goodman and Marcelli 2010: p.571).

Ethics now gets relegated to the status of a secondary and derivative activity, on the assumption that what is "ethical can be deduced from reason and from analyzing situations in which we find ourselves" (Birrell 2006). Derived from the reason of the autonomous subject, ethics is forced into subservience to the processes of reason, and left without any recourse or foundation beyond the instrumental rationality. However, when ethics is taken to come after the universal and more primary faculty of reason, no longer can it be considered as necessary for the conditioning of rationality, and it is viewed as superfluous for regulating the conduct of the subject. Submission to an external source of authority, an objectively ascertainable ground for one's own convictions, which was once held to be an immovable set of criteria independent of

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[209] Taylor refers to this as "immanentization of moral sources" (Taylor 2007: p.257).

one's power of reasoning or adherence to an overarching system of beliefs, characteristic of the enchanted world, is now nullified.

Furthermore, when ethics is taken to be a derivative of rationality, defined in terms of parameters set by reason, residing independent of the human subject and his relation with others, what becomes more important is the fixed and universal tools at the disposal of rational process of reasoning and inquiry to determine ethics, rather than the lived experience of the individual human being. In other words, the other person in one's intersubjective relationship will have little or nothing to do with one's ethical choice or response, because ethics comes and is applied after the relationship between the two subjects is already established. "With this shift, an interpersonal ethical dimension of individuals is further lost" (Goodman and Marcelli 2010: p.580). When detached rationality is taken to be the chief arbiter of human relationships, that is, when "principals replace principles" (Cohen 2003: p.144), responsibility for the other person in relationship is no longer on the shoulder of the subject, and is devolved upon the power of universal laws and the strength of the rational faculty to discover them. Weber asserts that the "refusal of modern men to assume responsibility for moral judgments tends to transform judgments of moral intent into judgments of taste" (FM: p.342).

From the above, we could conclude that disenchantment, rather than annihilating value, gives rise to pluralism of subjective values, "that unfortunate child of misery of our science" (MS: p.107). In this regard, both Taylor (2007) and Bernstein (1999) point out that the consequence of disenchantment is not the loss of value but the disappearance of the condition under which values could exist and survive.[210]

Disenchantment, then, is essentially a denial of dependence, where the recourse to our traditional foundation of meaning making and values, such as our religious beliefs, vanishes "in a mindless conformity", and through and within the tight confines of the "iron cage" of rationality. However, when God vanishes, "the neighbor quickly disappears" too, (Brueggemann 1999: p.23), because one cannot have a relation with his neighbour based on purely rationalised rules. Pushed to its limit, a rationalised, disenchanted world comes to be taken as wholly independent of the human, who becomes nothing but a "projecting animal

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[210] Taylor, for instance, contends that disenchantment does not come about because we, through the power of science, have been able to dismiss God or spirit or magic; rather, science and rationality helped bring about "the change in the conditions of belief". He writes: "the existence of God or other spirits is not negated by the modern world-understanding; but this understanding situates belief in a realm where it is open to doubt, argument, mediating explanations, and the like" (Taylor 2007: p.31).

caught in the mirror of itself" and its own perspective on the world. Such a disenchanted world is a world "which surmounts the human and leaves it behind a perspectival take on a world without perspective, a view from nowhere" (Bernstein 1999: p.320); and this is a fertile breeding ground for anxiety of meaninglessness.

Anxiety of Meaninglessness

The two consequences of rationalisation are rather contradictory: as through disenchantment human beings essentially come to reject the influence and power of other-worldly forces on their lives and their conduct, seeking autonomy and freedom to create their own values; however, within the confines of the "iron cage", they come to submit to and be captivated by the trappings and the rigidity brought about by rationality.[211] What accompanied these consequences, however, was nothing short of the loss of ultimate meaning, and taken for granted foundations for values in human lives, Nietzsche's nihilism; as well as the loss of one's identity as an outcome of the iron-cage phenomenon.

Both disenchantment and the "iron cage" foster anxiety of meaningless, because, while each attempts to render "social relations more predictable it does so by restricting the basis for creative and meaningful value-rational" (Gane 2002: p.27) actions, causing the disappearance of meaning itself. The rise of bureaucratic organisation, an embodiment of instrumental rationality, means that rules, processes, procedures and rational systems come to be the foundation for meaning; but by their very nature, they drive out and ignore "all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (FM: pp.215-216). In expunging all non-rational elements, those that make human beings human, meaning itself is lost, and anxiety of meaninglessness sets in.

Revaluation of Values (Weber's Response)

So far I have tried to demonstrate that, on the basis of Weber's account, the transition to modernity came about as a result of the rise of rationality, which dislodged and replaced all non-rational sources and foundations for ethics and meaning, including its own one; creating a world in which the individual, on the one hand, is torn between numerous value spheres, which are in eternal conflict with each other, and on the other hand, has lost her freedom and individuality to the restrictions imposed on her by the dominance of instrumental rationality. The subordination of value-rationality to instrumental-rationality, the loss or devaluation of our

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[211] Gane (2002: p.42) describes this contradiction in terms of "the emergence of an unstable world of competing values on the one hand … and of a stable, instrumentally rational order of calculable action on the other…".

ultimate values, these "internally 'consistent' value-axioms" (MS: p.20), gave rise to disenchantment and nihilism.

In a disenchanted modernity, morality needs not only an absolute immovable foundation but also a universal one,[212] because it is believed that truth needs to be held as truth by everyone and everywhere. Weber holds that, while the dominant instrumental rationality of modernity can produce facts about our world, facts cannot be taken as the foundation for morality,[213] as they are devoid of any inherent meaning and cannot tell us how to live our lives. According to Weber, value and meaning "are matters of subjective conviction, belonging exclusively to the private sphere" (Asprem 2014: p.35), and depend on what we take as our ultimate value within such a value sphere. Such a value cannot fit the pattern of instrumental rationality because a moral phenomenon can be "moral only if it precedes the consideration of purpose and comes prior to calculations" of good and bad, benefits and losses (Bauman 1993: p.11). Morality inherently has to be non-rational[214] and an outcome of value rationality. The rationally-constructed morality of the disenchanted world, then, is doomed to failure from the start. The reconciliation of value rationality of morality with the dominating instrumental rationality of modernity is the dilemma facing Weber's attempt at a revaluation of all values.

In what follows, and through a dialectic of enchantment/re-enchantment, I want to explore further this predicament facing Weber's revaluation effort, in the light of the inability or refusal to return to the pre-enchanted state, as well as the inappropriateness of fabricating a rationally-enchanted state as a solution. Having considered this predicament, I will then discuss Weber's revaluation response to the crisis of ethics and meaning.

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[212] On the back of the account of modernity offered by Weber, Bauman (1993: p.6) offers several "marks of moral condition" of modernity through the perspective of postmodernity. One of these marks is the realisation that "[t]he foolproof -universal and unshakably founded- ethical code will never be found….", that a "non-ambivalent morality, an ethics that is universal and 'objectively founded', is a practical impossibility…" (Bauman 1993: p.10), and that "morality is not universalisable" (Bauman 1993: p.12).

[213] Bauman writes that "modern thinkers felt that morality, rather than being a trait of human life, is something that needs to be designed and injected into human conduct…. They earnestly believed that the void left by now extinct or ineffective moral supervision of the Church can and ought to be filled with … rational rules; that reason can do what belief was doing no more…." (Bauman 1993: p.6).

[214] Weber writes that, from the point of view of an instrumentally rational action, "value-rationality is always irrational" (ES: p.26).

Enchantment / Re-Enchantment

> "No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance'" (PE: p.124).

If disenchantment is the problem of modernity,[215] as Weber conceived, then the cure may need to be sought in enchantment or re-enchantment of the world. On the other hand, we may need to find the courage to face the irredeemable enchanted past and irremediable current disenchanted world and carry on nonetheless. The demise of God and the enchanted world brought about numerous ways in which people came to believe that they can find, within their own human resources and motivation, a new moral order to and meaning in the world. Such beliefs and high aspirations, that the human being can and should do away with pre-modern religious enchantments on the way to a more morally meaningful world, have led to the "creation of a humanist alternative to faith" (Taylor 2007: p.77). Taylor claims that, increasingly, "exclusive humanism" (Taylor 2007: p.234) is becoming a more viable spiritual outlook. Nietzsche's revaluation of values, for instance, offered a unique brand of humanism that involved a return to the strong master class of people, where human beings are moved to rely strictly on their own instincts and devices.

For Weber, the most significant outcome of the disenchantment is the loss of values, meaning and ethics in the world; but to take re-enchantment as the remedy is to assume that, indeed, there was a time during which an enchanted world existed, and it was a better place than what we have today. This is to take the pre-modern world as a more meaning-laden, morally-filled and ethically-regulated period. Such an assumption would clearly regard secularisation and rationalisation of the Reformation and Enlightenment as a mark of deterioration of the condition of society and not a form of progress in an allegedly ever-advancing civilisation of humankind; and hence, the solution to the moral problem of modernity would then lay in attempts to rebuild and restore the tenets of the past enchanted world. Since Weber himself was dismissive of the idea of progress,[216] it would appear at first glance that, for him also, the remedy to the problem of disenchantment would be that of re-enchantment of the world back to its pre-modern

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[215] Of course there are those who believe that disenchantment is the wrong diagnosis for the moral problem of modernity and re-enchantment the wrong remedy (Robbins 2011).

[216] Weber "rejected a mechanistic notion of progress, according to which economic development is automatically accompanied by cultural, moral and human development" (Cohen 1972); so, unlike other spheres of human activity, it is science and scientific work that are "chained to the course of progress" (SV: p.137).

enchanted and supposedly desired state. However, this is not what Weber seems to be advocating, as he sees modernity as still being haunted by "the ghost of dead religious beliefs" that gave rise to its rationalisation (PE: p.124), and he "dismisses the likelihood of any return to religion" (Sherry 2009: p.371) because such "process is irreversible: Once shed, religion cannot re-enchant man" (Godard 2011: p.478). Weber writes: "If one tries intellectually to construe new religions without a new and genuine prophecy, then, in an inner sense, something similar will result, but with still worse effects" (SV: p.155). From a Weberian perspective, then, the solution to the disenchanted modernity should not be sought in reconstruction of "an archaic world order… [nor in]… return to a previous system state" (William H. Swato 1983), bearing in mind that, arguably, the pre-modern world was also the arena of much misery and suffering.

If we accept that humankind is inevitably propelled by the forces of change, then it may be wiser to speak of enchantment or new enchantment towards a better state of affairs rather than revival of the pre-modern world.[217]

On the other hand, since for Weber "the specific nature of bureaucracy" and its special virtue is to drive out all non-rational elements, he also did not believe that the solution could be found in factors that have given rise to and sustain bureaucracy itself. That is to say, rationalisation, as the cause of disenchantment and value fragmentation, should not be used as the foundation for value and meaning making, as it "is unable to resolve the crisis of values that it itself inaugurated" (Gane 2002: p.28). Hence, attempts by individuals within organisations "to preserve […] their personal identities", threatened or lost in the maze of bureaucracy, or counter their anxiety through various means, in particular through "rationalisation" (Brown 1997: p.664), the very cause of this loss and anxiety, is doomed to failure.

To seek the solution in a newly-formed enchantment of the world, then, may necessitate the accommodation of the operation of the factors that Weber attributed as the primary causes of disenchantment itself, namely rationalisation and secularisation. Hanegraaf (2003: p.359), for instance, while dismissive of an evolutionary theory that would suggest that the hold on magic, myth or religion represents "a superseded stage in social and cultural development, the present-day remnants of which are now in the process of dying out", argues that, indeed, magic can survive disenchantment "by successfully adapting to new social and cultural conditions", and

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[217] Charles Taylor writes: "'re-enchantment' […] doesn't undo the 'disenchantment' which occurs in the modern period. It re-establishes the non-arbitrary, non-projective character of certain demands on us, which are firmly anchored in our being-in-the-world" (2011c, 117)" (quoted by McPherson 2009: p.11).

in the process undergo a qualitative change. In other words, despite the fact that, for many, magic may be marginalised and distanced in their lives and culture through the operation of rationality and disenchantment, they are "never actually eliminated from the world" (Hansen 2001: p.107); and although these enchanting means and their effects are widely ignored by institutions, industry and academe,[218] and within organisations managers are often "presented in the usual imagery as icons of rationality" (Ven 2011: p.23) and "the irrational is considered dysfunctional" (Schneider 1999: p.283), they are "still found in popular and low culture" (Hansen 2001: p.107), so much so that it may be "defensible to suggest that the world has never been disenchanted" (Jenkins 2000: p.29) - at least not completely.[219] The fact remains that, "despite Weber's pessimism, enchantment still persists"[220] (Ritzer 1999), and it

> "is part of our normal condition, and far from having fled with the rise of science, it continues to exist (though often unrecognized) wherever our capacity to explain the world's behavior is slim, that is, where neither science nor practical knowledge seem of much utility" (Schneider 1993: p.x).

According to George Ritzer, postmodern thinkers dismiss the idea of a viable rational society, and their "social theory … is associated more with the ideas of non-rationality and even irrationality"; and for these thinkers, a postmodern society should be characterised, in many respects, by irrational elements such as emotions, intuitions, reflections, speculations and the like (Ritzer 1999: p.72). Since, in the modern, disenchanted world, "the objectively given sense of meaning of previous ages is now no longer to be found but must rather be produced" (Anthony J. Carroll 2011), the question could justifiably be raised as whether a rationally-produced enchantment of postmodernity is truly enchanting, or whether it is just more enchanting than the less rationally-produced enchantment that it wants to replace, and in fact is still nothing but a further step towards the abyss of disenchantment.[221]

Like Nietzsche, who believed that embracing nihilism was a necessary starting point to remedy the problem of modernity, disenchantment for Weber, on the whole, is "beneficial: insofar as it

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[218] "Academe today is both a product of and an agent for the disenchantment of the world" (Hansen 2001: p.106).
[219] Jenkins (2000: p.29) believes that "it is thus sensible to ask, is a disenchanted world even a possibility?"
[220] Today's world of consumerism, with its heavy usage and reliance on fantasies, dreams and passion to entice consumers, is an evidence of this survival, where consumption and spending behaviour, to no small degree, are dictated and directed as a response to a passion or desire, the outcome of a non-rational choice, underlining the importance of enchantment in the modern consumer-based economy (Ritzer 2010). See also Ritzer (1999: pp.68-70).
[221] At least in the domain of consumerism, the point has been made that much effort at "rationally produced enchantment is deemed insufficient" (Ritzer 1999: p.102).

is a loss, it is primarily the loss of an illusion" (Sherry 2009: p.370), which could lead to building a better foundation for morality, rather than a return to a pre-modern, flawed, albeit enchanted world. Weber's revaluation, then, like that of Nietzsche, is about accommodating nihilism and the operation of instrumental rationality in the rational process of value and meaning making, as he too is critical of the theological presupposition that "the world must have a meaning" (SV: p.153), a common foundation upon which the world and all value spheres can be interpreted and understood. By dismissing the idea of the existence of a hierarchy of value (Oakes 2003), Weber accommodates the operation of instrumental rationality within each sphere of activity, which results in values that are taken to be valid within each sphere, even though they may come in conflict with values from other spheres. For Weber, such a conflict is unavoidable; hence, for those who cannot bear this conflict between value spheres and cannot do without the presumption that there must an underlining value or meaning to all, lacking the courage to face the uncertainty brought about by the disappearance of enchanting means "the arms of the old churches are opened widely and compassionately for him" (SV: p.155).

I turn now to see how Weber demands the infusion of a non-rational element in the rational process of ethical decision making[222] from his ideal moral agent, the "genuine", charismatic or "cultivated man". The "near-universal avoidance by academe" and the "vast majority of scholars writing on Weber", in ignoring the non-rational element in Weber's notion of charisma (Hansen 2001: p.106), does not hide the fact that "Weber was aware early on that a completely material and empirical approach to reality is not sufficient" (Zaidi 2010: p.141).

The Cultivated Man

In his revaluation attempt to find an escape from the iron cage and a solution to the disenchanted world, Weber came to see the need for an element of non-rational[223] in any solution to the problem of rationality, and "hoped for the rise of charismatic leaders… this 'purely personal element'" (FM: p.43), because charisma has "an affiliation with the irrational"[224] (Cobley 2009: p.146). Such leaders, or "the cultivated man",[225] writes Weber, "have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody" (FM: p.245).

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[222] Hanegraaf (2003: p.377) argues that postmodern efforts at restoring meaning and value need to understand the "rational necessity of recognising the factor of the non-rational" in the lived experience of human beings.

[223] After all, "if rationalisation was widely considered to be an 'evil,' then the irrational presented itself as the most logical opposite" (Cobley 2009: p.144).

[224] Weber asserts that "charisma, … always rejects as undignified any pecuniary gain that is methodical and rational. In general charisma rejects all rational economic conduct" (FM: p.247).

[225] Weber writes that "[t]he term 'cultivated man' is used here in a completely value-neutral sense" (FM: p.243).

Since, for Weber, rationally-constructed values and rationally-based value systems are irrational, as they rely on non-rational propositions, the determination of good has to be in accordance with an "ultimate standpoint" or "ultimate value"; and this cannot be science or reason, but rather such an ultimate value-standpoint needs to be selected "from among the many possible ultimate value-standpoints" (MS: p.25). Weber's solution, the fostering of such cultivated or charismatic persons, then appears to hinge on the operation of two sets of rather contradictory ethical virtues, "an ethic of ultimate ends" and "an ethic of responsibility"; although Weber is quick to point out that these two ethics "are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements, which only in unison constitute a genuine man" [226] (PV: p.127). Weber writes:

> "We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an 'ethic of ultimate ends' or to an 'ethic of responsibility.'" (PV: p.120).

Ethic of ultimate ends or ethic of conviction has a deontological character and is based on one's clarified ultimate value or standpoint;[227] that is, on what one takes as a matter of principle. Thus it has a value-rational orientation, and regardless of the potential consequences, provides the obligatory aspect or foundation of the ethical decision. Weber stresses the importance of one's ultimate standpoint, by pointing out that the crucial element is "the quality of a man's bearing in life which was considered 'cultivated,' rather than in a specialized training for expertness" (FM: pp.242-243). It is the good intention that counts here and is the criterion of a good act, not the outcome of the act.[228] To have an ultimate standpoint is to organise our lives around a set of core values, those that have intrinsic value; and this, for Weber, is the mark of "intellectual integrity", even if it means an "intellectual sacrifice" in the sense of having to return to the irrationality, albeit safety, of an absolute such as religious belief systems; though knowing "that 'genuine' religious beliefs and practices could never be justified with appeal to reason, evidence, or fact" (Asprem 2014: p.2). As Weber writes:

> "For such an intellectual sacrifice in favor of an unconditional religious devotion is ethically quite a different matter than the evasion of the plain duty of intellectual

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[226] Weber denies "that an ethic of ultimate ends is identical with irresponsibility, or that an ethic of responsibility is identical with unprincipled opportunism" (PV: p.120).

[227] Hence, Weber urges individuals to "bring about self-clarification and a sense of responsibility" (SV: p.152).

[228] Weber writes: "If an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor's eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God's will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil" (PV: p.121).

integrity, which sets in if one lacks the courage to clarify one's own ultimate standpoint and rather facilitates this duty by feeble relative judgments" (SV: p.155).

The "ethic of responsibility", on the other hand, attempts to provide meaning to the decision in terms of cause and effect and consequences of action, in a methodical, analytical, rational and calculative way, having an instrumental-rational orientation and giving a teleological aspect to the ethical decision making. It is not an absolute ethics,[229] so judgements are conditioned and criticised by rational and scientific facts and approach. For Weber, only the person who is able to combine and reconcile these two ethics, the first an absolute or objective and the second a relative or subjective ethics, is considered to be a "genuine man - a man who can have the calling for politics" (PV: p.127). He writes:

> "…it is immensely moving when a mature man …. is aware of a responsibility for the consequences of his conduct and really feels such responsibility with heart and soul. He then acts by following an ethic of responsibility and somewhere he reaches the point where he says: 'Here I stand; I can do no other.' That is something genuinely human and moving" (PV: p.127).

One would start with the ethics of responsibility, aware of his responsibility for the consequence and the utility of his actions; until he reaches a point, a point the precise determination of which is left to the discretion of the individual concerned, where such consequences are not easily perceivable, as instrumental rationality can no longer adequately identify them; after all, "it is not true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true" (PV: p.123). Here the goodness of the action can only be validated by referring to the cause of the action; hence, what is required is a "passionate devotion to a 'cause', to the god or demon who is its overlord" (PV: p.115). Indeed, Weber asserts that "nothing is worthy of man as man unless he can pursue it with passionate devotion" (FM: p.135). This is the point at which "the scientific investigator becomes silent and the evaluating and acting person begins to speak" (MS: p.60). An appeal, then, to this non-rational, to one's "ultimate standpoint" and "ultimate value", needs to be made.[230] As Weber put it, here "the Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord" (PV: p.120). An important point here is that the unconditional commitment that comes with ethics of conviction overrides all concerns for the instrumentality of action and "precludes personal responsibility for the consequence" (Gane 1997: p.551).

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[229] See Gane (2002: p.68).
[230] Gane (1997: p.556) calls this, "decision-making on a responsible commitment to ultimate values."

The fact remains that instrumental rationality can only clarify available options and tell us what we can do, not what we should do. This latter task is left to our commitment to our ultimate ideals and values, because "only on the assumption of belief in the validity of values is the attempt to espouse value-judgments meaningful. However, to judge the *validity* of such *values* is a matter of *faith*" (MS: p.55).

Weber summarises the principle of his ethical philosophy as "the fulfilment of the scientific duty to see the factual truth as well as the practical duty to stand up for our own ideals" (MS: p.58). Moral evaluations, then, need to be carried out "according to our ultimate standpoint, the one is the devil and the other the God …[but importantly] the individual has to decide which is God for him and which is the devil" (SV: p.148). Weber is aware of interminable conflict between different value spheres in life, including the struggle between the sphere of ethics and politics; so his injection of the power of reason through the ethic of responsibility as an arbiter of value conflicts is "a form of moral endeavour within the context of [these] value struggle[s]" (Starr 1999: p.418). He writes:

> "No ethics in the world can dodge the fact that in numerous instances the attainment of 'good' ends is bound to the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at least dangerous ones --and facing the possibility or even the probability of evil ramifications. From no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose 'justifies' the ethically dangerous means and ramifications" (PV: p.121).

It is this sense of realism and knowing that ethical actions are rarely unambiguous that "leads Weber to call for the political leader to integrate" responsibility and conviction in order "to face the disenchantment of the world and not be disenchanted" (Gane 1997: p.560). A "cultivated man", a leader or a "politician with a vocation", has the task of reconciling the ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility in order to judge actions "not merely by their instrumental value but by their intrinsic value as well" (MS: p.24), integrating instrumental and value rationality and feeling a passionate responsibility for the consequence of his decision and conduct.[231] Ethics, then, comes down to being a matter of "practical valuation, and cannot therefore be definitively settled" (MS: p.1).

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[231] Since "ethics is not the only thing in the world that is 'valid'; rather it exists alongside of other value-spheres, the values of which can, under certain conditions, be realized only by one who takes ethical 'responsibility' upon himself", the task then is not to deny the conflict between responsibility and passion, between politics and ethics, but rather to compromise between the two (MS: p.15).

In acknowledging this difficulty or impossibility of arriving at a clear-cut ethical decision, Weber writes: "the problem is simply how can warm passion and cool judgement be forged together in one and the same soul?" (FM: p.115). After all, "the ultimately possible attitudes toward life are irreconcilable, and hence their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion"; hence, at some stage "it is necessary to make a decisive choice" (FM: p.152). In other words, since no ethical valuation and decision will be absolutely right, what matters most for the ethical actor, then, is "the subjective certainty that his attitudes are 'genuine'" (MS: p.24).

Weber's "cultivated man", perhaps like Nietzsche's Ubermensch,[232] needs to be taken as an ideal-type[233] of an ethical person. In that sense, it is not important that neither of these could fully be realisable in the world; what is important is the ongoing, never-ending process to become one. The cultivated man, Weber writes, strives "for self-perfection, in the sense of acquiring 'cultural values'"; but "this perfectibility … in principle progresses indefinitely" (FM: p.356).

Critique

Notwithstanding the critique levelled against taking disenchantment as the diagnosis of the crisis of modernity in the first place,[234] Weber's revaluation of all values project has been found to be wanting on a number of grounds. Not only his value-neutral stance is considered problematic,[235] but his solution in terms of a combination of "the ethic of conviction" and "the ethic of responsibility", embodied in the ideal of a "cultivated man", as a practical stance towards ethics, has also been criticised for failing to show how such a compromise between the two ethics is actually achieved (Sharp 2008).

From a Nietzschean perspective, Weber's ethics would be frowned upon for its close affinity to that of Kantian ethics, because both Weber and Kant attempt to keep in check the autonomy and freedom of the subject by appealing to an absolute: one's ultimate standpoints, in the case of Weber; and the universal and transcendental rational principle, the categorical imperative, in

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[232] Gould (2011: p.43) writes that both Nietzsche and Weber theorise "the modernization process as the replacement of ethics by politics."

[233] Ideal-type is a "mental construct [that] cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia" (MS: p.90). Weber takes the "ideal-type" in a given context, as a measuring tool to evaluate other things within that context.

[234] See footnote 215.

[235] Because such a stance denies us "any science, empirical or rational, any knowledge, scientific or philosophic, of the true value system" (Leo Strauss as quoted by Blau 1963: p.305).

the case of Kant. As Gellner (1974: p.190) suggests, "the preoccupations of Kant and of Weber are really the same. One was a philosopher and the other a sociologist, but there… the difference ends".[236] Nietzsche would certainly place Weber alongside Kant, in the camp of passive nihilists who have a failure of nerve to face nihilism head on and end up constructing and relying on an absolute, one's ultimate values. Leo Strauss argued that Weber's inclusion of such values "proved upon close scrutiny to be indistinguishable from nihilism" (as quoted by Eden 1983: p.369), and the reliance on what one takes as "ultimate values" effectively "prevents [Weber] from fully embracing the Nietzschean revaluation of immanence ...." (Zaidi 2010: p.139).

Furthermore, Weber not only appears to claim that "Nietzsche was wrong, that there were indeed moral values", he comes to suggest "that science could serve ethical forces by demanding clarity about values" through the inclusion of instrumental rationality in the act of ethical decision making (Eden 1983: p.367). On this basis, we may need to agree with Eden (1987: p.416) that "Weber's work thus has the form of a Nietzschean revaluation of values only up to a point… because …rather than risk an ascent or fall into nihilism", Weber's revaluation devalues itself in appealing to new absolutes.

Weber was aware that a Nietzschean radical self-affirmation and self-creation runs the risk of leading to arbitrariness, and that the Kantian appeal to a universal law of reason leads back to nihilism. His revaluation attempt to resolve this tension between Kantian absolutism and Nietzschean autonomy might indeed have given "such a darkly tragic and agnostic shade to Weber's ethical worldview" (Kim 2012: Pt.2.2); and although Weber asserted that, "if one wishes to settle with this devil, one must not take flight before him as so many like to do nowadays" but rather "one has to see the devil's ways to the end…" (FM: p.152), in scrutinising his revaluation effort it becomes clear that he failed to heed his own admonition.

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[236] MacKinnon (2001: p.334) also writes that "there was no more devoted Kantian than Max Weber", who had "deep admiration for Kant, in fact he modelled his own person on the 'Kantian personality', one that is rigidly secured by the iron rod of reason."

Conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to bring Nietzsche's crisis of nihilism closer to the modern bureaucratic organisational life through the works of Weber, and explored his response to Nietzsche's call for a revaluation of values to address this crisis. I argued that Weber's account of the rise of the disenchanted world "ultimately implicate the limits of rationality" (Hansen 2001: p.108), the very foundation of modern organisations, and highlighted the unintended consequences of the rise of instrumental rationality, in particular the subduing of value rationality. I showed that the highest religious values devalued themselves, as Nietzsche had foretold, fostering nihilism and disenchantment of the world, in which various spheres of human activities came to be guided by differing and conflicting values.

Weber was aware that the solution to the problem of nihilism and the resultant moral ambiguity can neither be a return to a pre-enchanted past, where absolute values ruled, nor re-enchantment through fabrication of new absolutes to take the place of the lost values through the power of reason, the main culprit of disenchantment itself, as this would result in "miserable monstrosities" (FM: p.155).

Weber's "revaluation of all values" hinges on the ability and courage to face "the fate of our times", embrace nihilism, and live in a disenchanted world dominated by rationalisation; and to this end he is in concert with Nietzsche. However, for Weber, unlike Nietzsche, moral decision making needs to rest on a solid ground; and on this premise he sees the task of constructing a moral world to be "plain and simple, if each finds and obeys the demon who holds the fibers of his very life" (SV: p.156). His revaluation entails explaining how to find and clarify the "demon", or our guiding ultimate value, in any morally challenging situation. To this end, he sees the necessity of combining the operation of two rather contradictory ethics, an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility; or put differently, he endeavours to combine the absolute element of "value rationality" with the relative element of "instrumental rationality".

Although Weber understood the difficulty associated with the "abysmal contrast" (FM: p.120) between these two ethics, the combination of which he demands from a "mature person" or "the cultivated man", I believe that he does not offer any adequate criteria "or insight into how a compromise between them is to be reached"[237] (Sharp 2008: p.309); and his overreliance on

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[237] In defence of Weber, we may need to agree with Jasper's point that, "If Max Weber's demands were excessive, the human situation was to blame, not his lack of realism" (as quoted by Gane 1997: p.560).

ultimate values as a foundation, as well as his dependence on reason and rationality as the arbiter of values, ultimately forces us to consider his revaluation project as life-denying in the Nietzschean sense. In his attempts to take the best of both worlds of rationality, his revaluation seems to be entangled in the mesh of an absolute/relative duopoly.

However, an important insight that Weber's elucidation of the concepts of rationalisation, disenchantment and charisma offers us, and what can be taken from this chapter, is the need to accommodate the element of the non-rational or magic[238] in any attempt to re-enchant a rationalised modernity through a revaluation: in a sense, Weber joins magic with meaning. In the next chapter, I will explore how, uncompromisingly, Gabriel Marcel's project of revaluation also finds the necessity of accommodating this element of magic.

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[238] Hansen (2001: p.109) considers that Weber's contribution is "of exceeding importance", in particular in the area of charismatic authority that he considers as "the wellspring of supernatural power."

Chapter 4 - Gabriel Marcel: Ethics of Fidelity

> "For if it is possible to say that the death of God in the Nietzschean sense preceded and
> made possible the agony of man which we are now witnessing, it is legitimate in a
> certain sense to say that it is from the ashes of man that God can and must rise again"
>
> (HV: p.156)

Overview

Where Nietzsche heralded the "death of God", Gabriel Marcel claimed that God has not yet died, and that it is indeed man who "is in his death-throes" (MMS: p.13); and if nihilism was Nietzsche's diagnosis of the problem of modernity, Marcel, in affirming this,[239] claimed that we have brought this misery upon ourselves, as "humanity betrayed by its own creation, by the exaggerated development of a global technology" (TW: p.xxxiv) is heading towards this emptiness, this nihilism. In this chapter, I argue that Marcel does not take God, the once absolute foundation for values, as the problem; rather, he sees the problem in human beings depriving the world of the element of "mystery" and resisting the "sense that there is an underlying unity to things" (Michelman 2008: p.235), by refusing to participate in this unity.[240] Thus it is such an "attitude towards life" that is of primary concern to him (HV: p.75). For Marcel, there is simply a sacredness of being which gives dignity and worth to the individual, and ethical imperatives arise out of this sacredness one holds for the other that place an absolute demand on oneself. His revaluation of values project is an attempt to bring to light this sacred dimension of our being[241] and re-establish our bond with the "mystery of Being", the pillar upon which he claims values and meaning already rest, though covered by the dust of technology and techniques. Marcel responds to Nietzsche's despising of any absolutes by re-interpreting God not as an absolute but as what he calls an "existential assurance", which could be discerned within our intersubjective relationships, acting as a unifying background within the bounds of which values could be found.

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[239] According to Hanley, "Marcel studied the development of Nietzsche's thought sympathetically and carefully" and believed that Nietzsche failed to overcome the crisis of nihilism because the doctrines of Ubermensch, eternal return etc., were not "capable of giving long-lasting satisfaction to a thought anxious to fathom the concrete situation of the human being" (Hanley 1995: pp.144-146). In regard to Nietzsche's notion of "eternal return", Marcel writes: "Let us acknowledge...that his hypothesis of the Eternal Return represents an attempt, justifiable at least in principle, to express in the language of causality this mysterious linking of the future with the past which can in reality take place only in some region transcending the world of cause and effect" (MB-I: p.194).

[240] Marcel writes that, "in striving after a certain type of unity, [our world] has lost its real unity". An example of false unities we are after are "increased socialization" or "extension of the power of state" (MB-I: p.viii).

[241] Marcel writes: "For in the last analysis our task is nothing less than that of perceiving in what fashion life can be organically linked with truth" (MB-I: p.191).

Marcel believes that we live in a "broken world" (MB-I: p.202), a world in which "human life has been treated as a vile and perishable commodity" (CF: p.93), where output is increasingly considered "as the only valid criteria of human values" (DW: p.22) and the only justification for their existence and their only reality. He contends that our ever-growing reliance and adoption of technology in all spheres of life has had a dehumanising effect, where living is reduced to subsisting, and human beings are treated as objects or things, as mere machines capable of producing a certain output, which could only be understood in reference to technology (S: p.43). Such an objectification of the human being "converts him into a pure abstraction" (EB: p.23), betrays his reality, and is yet another sign of the "degradation of the very idea of man" (TW) that Marcel bemoans.

There are a number of parallels between the themes used by Weber and Marcel[242] in describing the moral problem of modernity. Weber's disenchanted world is Marcel's problematic world, the "iron cage" finds its counterpart in Marcel's "spirit of abstraction", and the bureaucratic person appears as a functionalised person. However, where Weber's revaluation attempted and failed to strike a balance between conviction and responsibility, to walk a fine line between enchanted and disenchanted worlds, Marcel's revaluation of values finds the necessity of strengthening and re-establishing our hold on the enchanted or transcendental dimension.

In this chapter, I describe Marcel's view on the "broken" state of the world and the processes of collectivisation and individualisation that contribute to this condition and engender anxiety of meaninglessness. I will then explain the important distinction Marcel draws between the realms of "problem" and "mystery", to arrive at the notion of "secondary reflection"; because he insists that the crisis of nihilism should not be approached as a technical or a scientific problem, but rather that it should be viewed as a "mystery", and for a proper revaluation, the identification and understanding of the appropriate tool of reflection is necessary. I will then turn to Marcel's "revaluation of values" project by pointing out that he is deeply concerned both with the ontology of the human being as well as the ontology of "Being" or God. In this

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[242] However, unlike Weber, Marcel's work is quite unsystematic, as he resisted "all attempts at philosophic systematisation" (HV: p.199), arguing that philosophical research should remain an open-ended search and follow no fixed path. Hence, we must be "chary of expounding Marcel in terms of finished results and give primary attention to his method ... of ongoing inquiry in Socratic spirit" (Hocking 1954: p.439). He characterises his philosophy as a concrete examination of "the individual and of the transcendent" (HV: p.137), of which a successful result can never be considered as finally consolidated. Marcel argues that philosophy should designate the act of philosophising rather than a body of philosophical doctrines; and indeed philosophy is "an act which nobody else would have been able to undertake in place, or on my behalf" (MB-I: p.78): in other words, everyone has to do his own philosophising, because it is the lived and value-laden experience of the individual that can open up vistas of understanding of man and his behaviour, and this is simply not available to an objective analysis carried out from a distance.

regard, I explain the existential assurances of "ontological exigence" and "human incarnation", and argue that his revaluation is dominated by the convergence of these two seemingly contradictory assurances, "ontological exigence" or the need for transcendence on one hand, and "an obsession with human beings taken in their individuality but also affected by the mysterious relations linking them together" on the other (CF: p.147). The study of this mysterious relation, what Marcel refers to as the "intelligible background", provides an answer to the Marcellian question of "Who am I?"[243] The answer reveals that the "I" has a triadic constitution in terms of an I-thou relationship, where such an intersubjective relationship is sustained through the hold onto a transcendental dimension. I examine intersubjectivity and the constitution of a person in more detail, to arrive at Marcel's notion of value, showing its incarnate nature and its sacral dimension. I will then explore the concept of "creative fidelity", to reveal the element of unconditionality without which intersubjective relationships collapse. In brief, I try to show that, for Marcel, values are constitutive of who we are, and emerge within our relationships backed by the transcendental dimension. Such a dimension, and the fact that we are dealing here with a "mystery", indicates that Marcel's revaluation of values cannot be a matter of technique; rather, what is needed to effect such a revaluation is genuine wisdom, which itself, according to Marcel, is in crisis and in need of a revaluation. I therefore undertake an examination of the notion of wisdom, before offering a critique of Marcel's project. I will conclude the chapter by arguing that, although Marcel deepens our understanding of the nature of the crisis we face, as well as the nature of values and where to look for them, the notion of an absolute underpins and indeed dominates many facets of his project, and the weight of deficiencies and lack of clarity offered by him leads me to suggest that his appeal to "wise men" (TW: p.156) to rescue the broken world has a desperate undertone[244] and should be considered not as a solution but as yet another failed attempt at revaluation of values.

Broken World

Marcel contends that there is a sense of dissatisfaction with the broken state of the world, of our loss of identity and of becoming functionalised, and this impels us to feel a certain aridity, emptiness and impoverishment in our lives, the feeling that something is lacking. He believes that the processes of collectivism and individualism[245] are the two essentially inseparable

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[243] "Who am I?", according to Marcel, is "the only metaphysical problem" (HV: p.138), as other questions and problems lead back to this; and according to him, it is a question that remains unanswered and merely silenced, indeed no longer has a meaning because we are unhinged from any foundation upon which meaning was once secured, through nihilism.

[244] I am mindful of the fact that "hope" plays a key role in underpinning values, as I discuss in this thesis, and indeed authors such as (Hernandez 2011) view Marcel as someone who offers "a philosophy of hope".

[245] Also referred to as socialisation and atomisation, respectively.

aspects of the same process of devitalisation of the world (MB-I: p.27), which has brought about the broken state of the world; and for him, "the question is how to get people out of the false dilemma between imaginary individualism and … collectivism that denies the human personality" (S: p.88), leading to disenchantment and anxiety. [246]

Collectivism

The process of collectivism depreciates and disparages human relationships and foundational values by treating the individual as an abstract entity, an agent, as "mere units of production-as machines" (DW: p.17), whose behaviour ought to contribute towards the progress of a certain social or economic whole; and in doing so ignores whatever is unique in him. "What does seem certain", Marcel writes, "is that the progress and above all the extreme diffusion of techniques tends to create ... an anti-spiritual and anti-intellectual atmosphere" (MMS: p.9). Of course, it is ridiculous and childish to denounce technology and technical progress as such (DW: p.7, TW), and Marcel concedes that he has no case to plead against technology, recognising its value in bettering human life (Gendreau 1999, Hocking 1954), and noting that techniques cannot be considered as evil in themselves; however, he argues that science and technology, by operating in the abstract and considering objects in their insularity, leave out the sense of uniqueness and the concrete and personal that characterise a human being. Thus it is not technology per se but the prevalence of a "technological mindset" that gives rise to "the spirit of abstraction" [247] drowning "every feeling for values" (MB-II: p.111) and fostering dehumanisation.

When an individual is measured and valued not for the uniqueness and sacredness of his being but rather valued for what he does, the functions he performs, and by the level of his productivity and his expediency as an instrument, and by what he possesses rather than by who he is, we have the image of what Marcel calls the "problematic man". [248] Man, as seen as problematic, is one for whom existence is a problem that can be solved with a technique, and who is increasingly depersonalised and functionalised as a consequence of "the misplacement of the idea of function" (TW: p.12). This functionalisation degrades all human relations because "the individual tends to appear both to himself and to others as an agglomeration of functions" (PhE: p.10) that he performs, [249] and attempts to make sense of his life through them.

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[246] Both processes closely correspond to Webers' disenchantment and "iron cage" phenomena that also lead to anxiety of meaninglessness.

[247] It should be noted that Marcel has no problem with abstraction in the intellectual or scientific sphere, rather he is concerned with ill-conceived abstractions. He writes: "As soon as we accord any category, isolated from all other categories, any arbitrary primacy, we are victims of the spirit of abstraction" (MMS: pp.155-156).

[248] "Problematic Man" is also the title of one of Marcel's books, referred to here as (PM).

[249] The individual becomes a lawyer, a banker, a plumber, a church minister etc. and identifies himself only through the function he performs.

Individualism

Individualism or atomisation is the other pillar of the brokenness of the world giving a lending hand to the process of collectivisation. With an over-reliance on technology and material sufficiency, where we have come to regard anything that is unknown or cannot be understood in terms of technological thought as illusory, one finds no need for any other dimension to help with her understanding, because she sees herself as alone capable of giving meaning and value to an otherwise meaningless world. This gives rise to "a genuine anthropocentrism" (S: p.43) that eventually leads to the belief that "life is no longer … a divine gift, but rather … a 'dirty joke'…" (MMS: p.42). It also fuels value-relativism,[250] where the universality and unalterability of values, considered essential in Marcel's view, is suppressed by the idolatry of individualism and freedom, where "human freedom gives birth to its own values" so that values are located in the domain of pure subjectivity, which for Marcel is "an untenable position" (MB-I: p.174). The absurdity of such a view of freedom is that it takes an act to be more free the less it is motivated, "whereas what really matters for freedom is the proper quality of motivation" behind the act (TW: p.85). Thus the error of individualism lies in its interpretation of subjectivity, in that the individual becomes a captive of his own subjectivity, treating himself as an absolute and an authentic subject; while failing to see the other person "as a being endowed with dignity of his own", instead seeing him as an object, an "it", a "he" or a "she", a "somebody" (MMS: p.167). This "cult of the individual" involves a "moral egocentricity", in that the individual believes that he can only be free if he is the creator of his own values (Michaud 1995: p.13), that a free man is a completely independent man.

Anxiety of Meaninglessness

Marcel calls the bureaucratisation or functionalisation aspect of the broken world, that is, defining who we are by the functions we perform or by what we "have",[251] a cancer that causes boredom and anxiety, because for a functionalised person "this world is empty, it rings hollow" (TW: p.13). There is a "stifling impression of sadness", he writes, and in it one finds "the dull, intolerable unease of the actor himself who is reduced to living as though he were in fact submerged by his functions" (PhE: p.12). Both collectivism and individualism contribute to the existential anxiety of meaninglessness. Collectivism brings about a change in orientation of the way an individual grasps himself and other individuals: the more he sees others as objects and

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[250] In Chapter 3, we saw Weber referring to this outcome in terms of value-fragmentation, and attributing it to the prevalence of rationalisation.

[251] Marcel writes: "The more we allow ourselves to be the servants of Having, the more we shall let ourselves fall a prey to the gnawing anxiety which Having involves, the more we shall tend to lose not only the aptitude for hope, but even I should say the very belief, indistinct as it may be, of its possible reality" (HV: p.61).

views them in terms of their functionality, the more he comes to regard himself in terms of a function too. And when a person's functional value is used up and lost, meaning and value will also disappear. Marcel contends that this abstraction of people as objects with functions leads to devaluation of humanity, to a loss of sense of human dignity and "a devastating drop in the price of life" (S: p.49).

The process of individualism, on the other hand, alienates a person from others and from herself, and hence further contributes to the sense of unease and anxiety. Marcel writes:

> "To alienate is to estrange. Now, the uneasy person tends indeed to be estranged even from those closest to him; between them and him there opens up a more and more impassable gap" (PM: p.73).

Marcel warns that we are "being dragged towards catastrophe" (MMS: p.205) in a world where human relationships and values have been seriously deformed (Michaud 1995: p.8), where the human being has reached a point where he questions his own being and regards himself as questionable (MB-II: p,187). No longer is life loved by him, as he can see the false unity prevalent in the world. According to Marcel, these facts have now opened the possibility of "suicide …. on a mankind-wide scale" (MMS: p.108). He writes:

> "We live today in a world at war with itself, and this state of world war is being pushed so far that it runs the risk of ending in something that could properly be described as world-suicide" (MB-I: p.23).

For Marcel, without recognising that our lives are part of the "mystery of being", and without recourse to any transcendental values, human beings "would have no other alternative than despair" (Benefield 1973: p.17). He asks, "what is the meaning of despair if not a declaration that God has withdrawn himself from me?" (HV: p.47).

Crisis of Value

For Marcel, the anxiety and "the terrible spiritual unease" that mankind is suffering today is rooted in the "crisis of values", a crisis that rises from the very depths of man's being, a crisis caused by the modern decline in wisdom and manifested in a massive transformation of values taking place in mankind, the result of our "failure to grasp what values really are or rather what reality is" (MMS: p.163). He attacks the very idea of value because it relates to the economic

circuit, to empirical cycles of production, distribution or consumption, and does not belong to the realm of essences or being (DW: p.32); so to remedy the moral crisis of modernity, it is a mistake to attempt to replace one system of values for another, as one might replace one currency for another or one system of measurement for another. When the word "value" is used in this abstract way, it "does irresistibly evoke the ideas of objective measurement and prior choice, ..." (MMS: p.171), but value as is understood in Marcel's philosophy cannot be satisfactorily accommodated in any such impersonal or objective system of thought as it transcends any and every particular evaluation made through objective thinking. Objective thinking necessitates the separation of the object from the subject, which, according to Marcel, is distorting and barren. If we draw a distinction between problematic and meta-problematic values, the first being a value one has, as opposed to meta-problematic value, which is a value one is, then the meta-problematic value that Marcel is considering is not something that can be abstracted from the person like some sort of a property or specific characteristic. This is Marcel's notion of "value incarnation", which I will discuss shortly.

Marcel is in lockstep with Weber in claiming that modern society has become overly dependent on objective and rational thinking, which assess life almost exclusively in terms of logical and solvable problems, and hence seek the answer to all problems in reason and in technology. He is also in agreement with Weber that it is a "fatal error" to imagine that the solution can be found in these same destructive forces that have brought about the crisis in the first place,[252] or in a reversal of technology, because "the direction of technological thought is irreversible" (TW: p.198). It is also a "dangerous illusion", he asserts, to imagine that the solution lies in "some readjustment of social or institutional conditions" (MMS: p.37) or in attempts, through some rigoristic moral formalism, to bring all human acts under general rules and accommodate values within some objective, abstract and impersonal system, because such attempts again ignore

> "that element of the unique and the incommensurable which is the portion of every concrete being, confronted with a concrete situation. No two beings, and no two situations, are really commensurable with each other"[253] (MMS: p.25).

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[252] Marcel is critical of Cartesian rationalism and Kantian idealism, the first for its "severance … between intellect and life" (BH: p.171), and the second for divorcing reflection from experience; essentially, both for being impersonal and considering the condition and the situation of a human being through abstraction as they may consider any other object, in effect ignoring and suppressing the uniqueness of the human condition.

[253] The above statement underlines the existential nature of Marcel's philosophy.

The solution, according to Marcel, lies in our ability to "somehow overtake the activity of technology itself through a reflection which can be called existential in that it must focus on the implications of the 'I exist'…". Such existential reflection should create the possibility of a kind of wisdom that is grounded in powers that are not situated within the orbit of human world, an orbit that is in contrast with the technologically-dominated world and beyond the grasp of technology, a "meta-technological" order.

To undertake an appropriate reflection, we first need to understand the important distinction Marcel draws between the realms of "problem" and "mystery", and the reflection appropriate to each.

Problem and Mystery

Marcel describes the state of the world in terms of the two constructs of "problem" and "mystery", claiming that the world is "on the one hand, riddled with problems and, on the other, determined to allow no room for mystery" (PhE: p.12). The distinction between "problem" and "mystery" is important because Marcel believes that the element of mystery in our lives and in our relationships has been problematized, resulting in anxiety and the loss of values; so his revaluation of values is an attempt to revive this mystery.

A "problem" is a question in which the questioner himself is not involved. Marcel writes: "a problem is something which I meet, which I find completely before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce" (BH: p.117). Problems deal with objects that are completely separate from us, the enquirers, they are obstacles or challenges placed on our path for which we need to find a solution, and the solution we find, at least in theory, can be rediscovered, understood and solved by anybody; and in that sense the solution is a public and common property. To solve a problem, I need to take an objective and impersonal stance.
A "mystery", on the other hand,

> "is something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity" (BH: p.117).

Marcel refers to mystery as "a problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem" (PhE: p.19). Thus, whereas certain techniques could be employed by anyone to solve a problem, a mystery is unique to the

individual and is woven into the very fabric of her being, and "by definition, transcends every conceivable technique"[254] (MB-I: p.211). In the realm of mystery, there is no clear boundary between I and the object of my investigation.[255] For example, in responding to the question, "what is the meaning of my life?" or "who am I?", it is not proper for me to step outside of my life and take an objective and disinterested look back on it. Doing so would result in an answer most probably in terms of an enumeration of a series of events in my life or functions that I perform, an answer that anyone else using the same techniques of observation could have come up with. However, even though the description of events and functions may be correct, such an answer does not provide the meaning of my life, because a proper answer can only be given by me and only if I consider and treat my life as a mystery[256] unique to me, rather than as a problem common to many.[257] For Marcel, the realm of mystery pervades all the experiences in which we are involved in a personal way, including experiences of interpersonal relationships, religious experiences, and experiences that involve ethical responses. He demands that mysteries not be reduced to problems,[258] and is critical of modernity for its growing inclination towards the realm of problematic and of analytic philosophy for holding to an abstract and conceptual approach in all ethical reflections, leaving no room for mystery or personal experience.

Whether operating in the realm of problem or mystery, we engage in reflection, indeed "nothing", Marcel writes, "is more necessary than that one should reflect … since it is reflection that enables us to set about any task whatsoever in an orderly fashion" (MB-I: p.38); and it is by reflection that "we can raise ourselves to successive planes on which things become

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[254] Unlike problems, "mysteries do not admit of solutions rather lead to deeper reflection on the nature of existence" (Michelman 2008: p.235).

[255] This blurring out of the boundary between object and subject in the realm of mystery does not mean the rejection of the distinction between object and subject, nor is it a rejection of the objective knowledge.

[256] Marcel writes "so long as you have mystery you have sanity, take away mystery and you fall into morbidity" (DW: p.43).

[257] The notion of mystery, for Marcel, has nothing esoteric about it, and does not indicate something that is shrouded in secrecy or darkness; nor is it meant to represent some sort of a lacuna in our knowledge or something totally unknown, such as a religious mystery; rather, it is to indicate an experience that intimately involves the questioner (BH: pp.100 & 145). The point we are trying to make here is that, even though "mystery" is beyond the grasp of empirical thought, it can still be acknowledged without becoming a content of thought (Hazelton 1958), and so it must not be confused with unknowability. The unknowable is in fact only "the limiting case of the problematic, which cannot be actualized without contradiction" (MB-I: p.122).

[258] The scientist is a representative of the people, who operates in the realm of the problematic, while the philosopher operates, or should operate in the realm of meta-problematic, the realm of mystery. The scientist studies objects in a world from which he has deliberately removed himself, made himself a spectator, and because of this detachment from the object of his investigation, his experiment can be repeated by any other scientist. On the other hand, in the realm of mystery, the philosopher needs to employ a different kind of thinking, one that restores himself to the world being investigated.

intelligible" (MJ: p.1). "I remain convinced" he writes, "and this is the meaning of everything I have written for 40 years: reflection is our only recourse".[259]

Reflection

"Reflection is nothing other than attention" (MB-I: p.78), and is needed whenever we face and question our experiences at various levels, whether at the level of interacting with the world around us or at a reflexive level dealing with what is interior to us. Marcel identifies two types of reflections, "primary" and "secondary", corresponding to the distinction between "problem" and "mystery", respectively. The two levels of reflections are complementary, in the sense that each one is appropriate in its proper level. I turn now to "primary reflection", the consideration of which helps us better understand "secondary reflection", the high philosophical tool, according to Marcel, that can reveal our existential assurances.

Primary Reflection

When considering the obstacle before us as a "problem" to be solved, we engage in primary reflection, which is a problem-solving thinking, a purely analytical and scientific way that includes our everyday reflections involving generalisations and abstract thinking (MB-I: p.xi). At this level, we, who are always "beings in a situation" and already experiencing the world, separate ourselves from the content of our lived experience in order to recognise it as something other than ourselves.

Although primary reflection plays an important and essential role in human life, it is not the most fundamental mode of reflection of the human subject (Sweetman 2008), and not applicable to the realm of mystery, ontological matters, and many of our experiences, including our intersubjective relationships, because in the process of abstraction it cuts off the person from his lived experience. In doing so, however, no longer can the meaning of the experience be captured or conveyed adequately, because one's experience is prior to this level of reflective thought. In the process of objectification characteristic of primary reflection, the level of original existence is lost (Busch 1975), and with it most of the profound experiences of a human subject who is an embodied being-in-a-situation. What is needed is secondary reflection.

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[259] Cited in Murchland (1959: p.349).

Secondary Reflection

When we approach the question before us as a mystery, we engage in secondary reflection. "Secondary reflection" is the level of non-conceptual thinking that attempts to retrieve the original domain of experience by asking the meaning of the dichotomy between subject and object, and in doing so reveals an order of experience in which there is a unity between the subject and object, "which is ontologically prior to the distinction between them" (Pax 1972: p.15). In this sense, we could say that secondary reflection is unifying, as it retrieves what was lost by primary reflection by leading us to the realisation that the objects arrived at by primary reflection are objects because of a more fundamental and ultimate experience, in which there is no distinction between the subject and object. Marcel writes:

> "roughly, we can say that where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience which is first put before it, the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity" (MB-I: p.83).

It should be noted that secondary reflection does not aim at producing results as such; rather, it is an explanatory method (Benefield 1973): it is a thinking activity or an "experiential thinking as opposed to empirical thinking" (TW: p.229), which attempts to describe our non-problematisable experiences before we deduct objective and tangible knowledge from them through primary reflection. Secondary reflection culminates in a realisation or discovery, or in an "existential assurance of the realm of mystery", and motivates human actions appropriate for this level (Sweetman 2008: pp.59 & 142).

Revaluation of Values (Marcel's Response)

In the foregoing section, I have argued that Marcel attributes nihilism and disenchantment to the broken state of the world; but for him, unlike Nietzsche, it is not that God as a foundation for values has died, but rather that man has brought this broken state upon himself through weakening or severing his ties with God. For Marcel, God can never die because it is never an objective and absolute certainty, but instead an assurance that underpins our conduct and way of being. It is also of note to point out here that Marcel, having blamed man himself for the crisis of value and nihilism, attempts a revaluation of values by seeking the solution in man

himself; however, as I will demonstrate, he ends up finding the necessity of having the unconditional or God underpinning values and meanings.[260]

Marcel's revaluation of values hinges on the understanding and operation of "existential assurances", in particular that of "ontological exigence", the assurance or need that there be a God or a source of permanency that transcends us, as well as the understanding of what it means to be an "incarnate being", the assurance that I am at one with my body. Marcel points out that a philosophy such as his, which gives central importance to incarnation, will lead to quite a different ethics from those that are based on the impersonal, "making the most complete abstraction possible from the concrete rootedness of human beings" (EB: p.47).

I turn to describe these existential assurances next.

Existential Assurances

What emerges from Marcel's ethical philosophy, and his revaluation of values project, is an "authentic existential humanism" (TW: p.41); and he believes that, at the basis of such humanism, there are certain "existential assurances" that need to be recognised.[261] An "existential assurance", he writes, "relates to the structural conditions that allow an individual to open himself to others" (TW: p.39) and to experience and to participate by establishing and maintaining an intersubjective relationship with them. Anything that contributes to the growth and fostering of such experiences promotes authentic humanism, and "everything that contributes to diminishing this experience in human consciousness becomes an obstacle to authentic humanism" (TW: p.41).

The recognition of our existential assurances is important, as they provide the foundation for value and meaning;[262] however, Marcel is quick to point out that he uses existential in place of objective, and assurance in place of certitude, to distinguish "existential assurance" from any absolute or objective fact or foundation.[263]

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[260] Finding the necessity of God or a transcendental dimension in our relationships led Marcel to convert to Catholicism.

[261] Marcel writes: "At the present moment, for a philosopher who is conscious of his responsibilities and at the same time of the dangers which menace our planet, there is probably no more pressing task than finding fundamental existential assurances which are constitutive of being truly human in the image of God" (TW: p.44).

[262] But this recognition is not straightforward, because an "existential assurance" is like a "feeling" (Lacoste 2000: p.183); hence, any attempts to describe it in general or abstract terms would "greatly risk distorting it" (TW: p.39).

[263] Certitude is conceived as immune to doubt and unshakable, which is proper when we are considering objectivity but inappropriate when we are in the domain of the existential.

Marcel identifies a number of existential assurances, in particular those of human incarnation, as well as the "ontological exigence". Indeed, he characterises his philosophy in terms of these two existential assurances, as a concrete examination of "the individual and of the transcendent" (HV: p.137), claiming that

> "the fundamental existential assurance required by an authentic humanism is the affirmation of a primordial bond, a kind of umbilical cord, which unites the human being to a particular, determined, and concrete environment" (TW: p.38).

With this in mind, I turn to explore in more detail each of these existential assurances, before considering the intersubjective experiences which are the arena within which these assurances are encountered.

Ontological Exigence[264] (Need for Transcendence[265])

"What defines man are exigencies ... which go beyond all behaviour" (TW: p.34), and there is "an exigence which is so deeply rooted in the depths of ourselves that we succeed only with difficulty in expressing it distinctly" (CF: p.93). For Marcel, "ontological exigence" designates the recovery of our lost or forgotten foundation (TW: p.226) due to the brokenness of our world, and is the human reaction to this loss of sense of being. This exigence is a need and a demand for some level of coherence, and an understanding of our place and role within this coherence. It is the need to transcend the world of abstract objectivity and "find a level of experience saturated with meaning and value" (Willems 1990: p.22), even though such need cannot be satisfied in the temporal world and we feel that it is beyond our own means and power to soothe our dissatisfaction with the state of the world. Thus, our exigence is "that there be being" (Benefield 1973: p.91), perhaps that there be a God that can rescue us and restore to our experiences the ontological weight that has been lost.

Marcel seems to have difficulty himself defining ontological exigence (Treano 2006: p.58). He identifies an exigence of being and an exigence for transcendence, and notes that "the exigence of being … coincides with the exigence of transcendence" (MB-II: p.143). Exigence of transcendence, or ontological exigence, is not meant to be taken as the exigence to go beyond all experience, because going beyond experience is meaningless and useless; rather, it is to

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[264] According to Marcel, the word "need" inadequately describes the meaning of the French word "exigence".
[265] Marcel takes transcendent as the antithesis of immanent (MB-I: p.38).

substitute one mode of experience with another, one that strives "towards an increasingly pure mode of experience" (MB-I: p.ix). As a drive towards transcendence, ontological exigence "takes on its meaning, its value as aspiration, in relation to a being who is torn apart and suffering or … is exiled" (TW: p.51). This exigence, however, shouldn't be confused with a sort of desire or wish, as there is an element of a demand here, a "deep-rooted interior urge" (MB-II: p.41), an "urgent inner need", which may even be interpreted as an appeal that "is supra-empirical, it is sent out beyond the limits of experience, towards one who can only be described as an absolute Thou, a last and supreme resource for the troubled human spirit" (MB-I: p.152).

Marcel is concerned that this ontological exigence is silenced by the state of the world, by nihilism, by "bloodless rationalism" and by an unconscious relativism that discounts the personal, "ignores the tragic and denies the transcendent" (PhE: p.15). Without the feeling of this dissatisfaction, that something is amiss, ontological exigence is in danger of being systematically ignored, deliberately discredited and "smothered by the broken world of techniques and socialisation" (MB-I: p.viii). Marcel writes:

> "I should like to start, with a sort of global and intuitive characterization of the man in whom the sense of the ontological - the sense of being, is lacking, or, to speak more correctly, the man who has lost awareness of this sense" (PhE: p.9).

To restore or revive the awareness of this exigence for transcendence, Marcel believes that I need to begin with an awareness of "Who am I?", that is to say, I need to understand the connection between my body and my being and way of existence, because the experience of transcendence, like all other experiences, is linked "to our very mode of existence as incarnate beings" (MB-I: p.40).

Human Incarnation (Who am I?)

Incarnation is an existential assurance that I have, deep within myself, that I exist and that I am an embodied being, that is a "pure immediacy which is incapable of being mediated" (MJ: p.329). Marcel writes that incarnation is an "infinitely mysterious act by which an essence assumes a body" (HV: p.69), and without properly grasping what it means to be an incarnate being, this "affective unity I have with my body" (CF: p.xiv), that "I am my body" (EB: p.46) not a soul with a body, we will continue to view ourselves as mere objects defined in terms of

our functions and would be unable to experience meaningful relationship with others. To clarify this point further, he draws a distinction between what I am and what I have, between "having" and "being". The term "having" here does not refer only to one's material possessions but also to the habits, opinions and prejudices that make us impervious to the reality of others. As incarnate beings, we have both a "having" and a "being" relationship with the world; but "the realm of being must take precedence, because only by participating in being with others can we fulfil our potential as humans" (Howland 1990: p.10).

Marcel asserts that "my body" does not only have an instrumental value nor is it a part or an extension of my being, so it is inappropriate or impossible for the self to conceive of her body in any way at all except as a distinct entity identified with the self (CF). In other words, since there is an intimate union between me and my body and I am inextricably intertwined with my body, the relationship between "I" and my "body" should not be thought of in terms of a subject-object distinction, where the body is objectified and viewed as a mere instrument by which I make contact with the outside world. To treat it as an instrument of mine or as a possession of mine, as something that "I have" rather than what "I am", is to treat it as an object placed in front of me, as something that we can abstract a component from.[266]

Human incarnation, then, is the basis of all experience, where the body connects the individual subject to the larger realm of being, acting as a mediator in relation to the world,[267] enabling one to gain an awareness that he is a being among other incarnate beings and has relations with them; which itself signifies the "value-laden" nature of our being (Michaud 1995: p.15). Thus, "one's incarnation in a body is an absolute requirement for being in the world" (Howland 1990: p.7).

Being-in-a-Situation and Being-in-the-World
Marcel urges us "not to confound 'to be' with 'to exit'" (MJ: p.179), drawing a fundamental distinction between existence and being (Murchland 1959). "Existence", as distinct from "being", designates our primordial human condition in the world, our fundamental situation in which we find ourselves and encounter our experiences prior to any analytic reflection. It is "the very structure that allows the subject (and the object) to be constituted as such" (Pax 1972: p.33). "Existence", then, is a purely empirical and immediate consciousness, which is prior to any determination, any reflection, any intellectual act or any abstracting that we do on the basis

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[266] Such treatment of my body implies a Cartesian dualism, which for Marcel ignores the indubitable character of existence, tears apart the living tissue of my existence, and in doing so "I banish myself to infinity" (BH: p.12).
[267] As "the nexus of my presence with world rendered manifest" (cited in Brombert 1953: p.91).

of our perception of the world; and it could be said that "existence is a global experience of the world in which the embodied subject is indivisibly involved; [and it is] felt rather than rationally thought" (Wah 1999). Importantly, the human subject as an incarnate being has no isolated experience of "existence", because he lives in a context not a casual system, and is always in a situation of some sort or another (MMS, BH: p.96): in other words, he is fundamentally a "being in a situation" and therefore not adequately intelligible without reference to that situation (O'Malley 1966). Marcel points out that Descartes essentially overlooked the fact that, before the level of conceptualisation of our ideas and theories, we are already at the level of experience and participation in the world, at the level of existential contact, and our experiences are shaped by our situation. "The assertion 'I exist' is valid only if it signifies … an Original datum which is not 'I think' or even 'I am alive' but rather 'I experience'" (CF: p.17). On this Marcellian view then, the Cartesian 'I think therefore I am'[268] is mistaken and should be replaced by 'I experience, therefore I am'. The view that we are always already a "being-in-a-situation" (MB-I: p.132) and a "being-in-the-world" (TW: p.192), by virtue of our existence, dispels the Cartesian subject-object duality by signifying a bond that already exists between the two. Marcel writes:

> "when I affirm that something exists, I always mean that I consider this something as connected with my body, as able to be put in contact with it, however indirect this contact may be" (BH: p.14).

Of course, we could always try to abstract from our involvement in a situation, and become a disinterested party and disregard the relationship that defines the meaning of the object of our experience; in other words, we could try to consider the object of our experience "objectively" by identifying some "concepts" or "facts" about it. However, the key point Marcel is making is that our experience of the object is prior to this level of thought abstraction. Abstraction is always an abstraction from our experience of being in a situation, and comes afterwards.[269]

Intelligible Background

Secondary reflection reveals a realm of mystery referred to by Marcel as the "intelligible background", or an "underlying unity" (MB-II: p.19) in which there is unity between the subject

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[268] The proposition "cogito ergo sum" by Descartes.
[269] Since instrumental and objective interpretation of reality is the basis of empirical sciences and scientific inquiries, it could be said that they are founded on abstractions from our experience of being in a situation; and since abstraction is not the primordial level of attaining knowledge, Sweetman (2008: p.38) is right in pointing out that a scientific view "may not be the paradigm way to do philosophy, for it now appears to be parasitical upon the level of" being in a situation.

and object. The "intelligible background" is perhaps best understood through his explanation of the act of perception in experiences involving sensations or feelings.

In the realm of the problematic, objects are perceived when a message or signal transmitted from the object reaches our body.[270] The message contains some data about various features of the object such as its dimensions, colour, etc. In this mode, the subject, say I, is thought of objectively, as a physical receiving apparatus, and the message as a piece of datum travelling from the transmitting point to this receiving point, to my body. However, Marcel argues that we should avoid the temptation to interpret feeling, sensation and other such experiences of perceiving "on the analogy of the transmission and reception of a message" (MB-I: p.108) from an object and captured or received by an apparatus, a disinterested subject, because this assumes a separation between the subject and the object; which is incorrect, because every message presupposes the existence of sensation in the same way that every instrument presupposes the existence of a body (MB-I: p.108). There can be no receptivity without the body being pre-disposed for sensing, so only if the object and the subject have already been together in a kind of union more fundamental than their separation is experience or sensation understandable (Pax 1975). The point here is not whether any transmission takes place between subject and object, but whether such transmission can explain the act of perceiving, because "sensation is affection, not information"[271] (MJ: p.187).

Thus, even though I am naturally inclined to view my body as an instrument I use to interact with the outside world, secondary reflection reveals that such "interpretation is … philosophically untenable" (EB: p.45). Rather, "there is an intimate relationship between my body as a subject and sensation or feeling" (Lacoste 1995: p.70), and sensation is not transmission or reception of a message "but an immediate participation" (Pax 1972: p.28) in the world, where no abstraction or reduction is necessary for the act of perceiving.

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[270] Bertrand Russell's Causal Theory of Perception, which concludes "that percepts are in our heads, for they come at the end of a causal chain of physical events leading, spatially, from the object to the brain of the percipient" (Goddard 2003).

[271] To consider the act of perception as transmission of a message is to separate my perceiving body from the object as well as from myself. But having received the message by my body, I am still left to explain the transmission of this message from my body to me. In other words, treating my body as the receiving instrument distinct from me still raises the question as to how do "I" actually perceive? Where and how does this act of translation of the message take place between me and my body? Such questions cannot be answered at the problematic level and "there can be no science regarding the transition from the physical activity that is a prelude to sensing to sensing itself" (O'Malley 1966: p.91).

The relationship between existence and perception becomes clear here as, for Marcel, "existence" means our fundamental situation in the world in which we encounter our experiences; and as "beings in a situation", we are in immediate relation and participation with, or have an immediate consciousness of, other objects and subjects around us. Perception is the fundamental and immediate act by which I become aware of and recognise other objects and subjects, and in doing so am constituted as existing. Perception, then, is "a primordial and founding dimension of our existence" (Pax 1972: p.28).

Marcel, in effect, explains the act of perception not by a theory of communication but by suggesting that there must be "an underlying unity", an "intelligible background" or setting (MB-I: p.75), or a field or structure, that appears to bridge the subject-object dichotomy and bind us into a "we", or a special form of participation that enables us to explain the act of perception and feeling:

> "All human intercourse worthy of the name" Marcel writes, "takes place in an atmosphere of real intimacy that cannot be compared to an exchange of signals between an emission post and a reception post" (MB-I: p.182).

Thus, it is this "underlying unity which ties me to other beings of whose reality I already have a preliminary notion" (MB-II: p.19), enabling me to have relationships with them. In this atmosphere and within the illuminating power of this light,[272] I recognise the existence of other beings who are like me. However, this recognition and my relation to others is not a matter of reflection; rather, it is a relation in which I and the other exist. It is an existential relation. This point is significant, because while judgment of value may be true or false, feelings, perception or sensation can neither be true or false; hence, our existential relation or communion with others cannot be judged as true or false (MB-I: p.60).

The "intelligible background" provides the structure upon which all intersubjective relationships are formed and where truth[273] and value become manifest.[274] I turn now to explore the notion of intersubjectivity through which Marcel describes the constitution of an individual

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[272] The intelligible background, then, acts as a "light", because, as Marcel writes, "it is a necessary condition of all appresentation that the appresenting being should be placed in the middle of a light that will allow something to appear to that being, to be made manifest to it" (TW: p.87).

[273] For Marcel, "only if truth is a value... can truth become a stake to be striven for" (MB-I: p.ix).

[274] According to Marcel, since truth is not absolute, it would be better to say that, within the "intelligible background", the phrase "within the bounds of truth" becomes meaningful (MB-I: p.75).

being and explains where values emerge, and the transcendental dimension that holds these values in place.

Intersubjectivity

Since my experiences arise within this "underlying unity" in this "submerged participation" (MB-I: p.114) with others as uncovered by secondary reflection, we could say that "to be" means "to be with" or to participate; and not only am I a being-in-a-situation, but structurally my being is also a being-with-others (Anderson 1985), always in relationship with other beings like me. Thus, the new refined answer to the question of "Who am I?" is that I am a being-in-situations-with-others (Sweetman 2008: p.64). My being, rather than being an isolated self-standing existent, involves all existents; and thus its relatedness is intrinsic to its nature: in other words, if others are not there, I am not there either[275] (HV). Marcel agrees with Martin Buber that it is the relationship or tension that exists between an individual, an "I", and the world that includes "others", that defines the individual; indeed, the "I" is unthinkable without the world (S). "To exist is to co-exist" (PI: p.205): it is to deny any exclusive particularity of myself, because "nothing exists in ontological isolation or solitude but rather everything exists in a family of intersubjective relationships" (Miceli 1965). Marcel writes:

> "Not only do we have a right to assert that others exist, but I should be inclined to contend that existence can be attributed only to others, and in virtue of their otherness, and that I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others: and so as other than them" (BH: p.104).

The mutual participation of subjects with each other, the recognition that our beings are fundamentally united with other beings, is the experience of what Marcel calls intersubjectivity (MB-I: p.177), or the experience of "we are".[276] Intersubjectivity goes beyond mere opposition between my being and another, by drawing a distinction between the two; nor is it a forced fusion between two beings; rather, it implies that there is a genuine intimacy between us, and that I and the other are in some sense one. Indeed, "my relationship to myself is mediated by the presence of the other person, by what he is for me and what I am for him" (HV: p.49). I could, therefore, say that my identity and my self-understanding takes shape through the others

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[275] On this account the statement 'man is an island' is incorrect, because we are inherently social beings and can be appreciated as human beings only by including our relations and relatedness to other beings.

[276] Regarding the anti-Cartesian character of his metaphysics Marcel writes: "It is not enough to say that it is a metaphysic of being; it is a metaphysic of *we are* as opposed to a metaphysic of I think" (MB-II: p.10) [italics in original].

and the influence of their relationship with me: in essence, the others complete me as a person. Since it is at the heart of this "spiritual connection" (HV: p.49) between us that my existence can preserve its meaning and its value, without this connection I lose myself into abstractness and discontinuity, I stop being a person (Soltoft 1998).

Of course, "we are" is simply an unfinished statement, because there needs to be a common subject matter known to both parties making up the "we"; so "the intersubjective situation in its minimal terms is always triadic, - an I, a thou, and a common concern" (Hocking 1954: p.452). It is this third element, which is a common field, "a certain community of interest and experience" (TPR: p.37), or the "intelligible background", as described earlier, that creates a felt unity binding the "I" and the "thou" into a "we", moving us towards an "ontological communion".

Marcel's concept of a person is now given in terms of this intersubjective participation, this "I-thou" relationship; and it could be said that the question, "Who am I?", can be answered solely by the "other", because it is through the intersubjective relationship with the other that I become myself: I need the confirmation and the recognition of the other to maintain myself (Benefield 1973, Howland 1990: p.19). Marcel writes: "The more my existence takes on the character of including others, the narrower becomes the gap which separates it from being; the more, in other words, I am" (MB-II: p.35). On this basis, the person is not closed in upon itself, but essentially open to the other, and our relationships are not incidental to who we are, but rather they constitute our very essence. The significance of this human relationship within Marcel's philosophy becomes clearer by pointing out that, for him, the relationship between "I" and "thou" is anything but an abstract connection between separate data, but rather it has a life of its own, it is really a "being",[277] which can be protected, fostered, endangered, bruised or killed (TPR: p.38). It is at the level of intersubjectivity that the act of recognition or acknowledgement of the others takes place and experience undergoes a certain transformation and takes on the value of a test (TW: p.254).

Intersubjectivity requires opening ourselves to others and having the capacity to welcome those who are capable of giving themselves, without being effaced by them; but this does not happen automatically. By the mere act of bringing two willing parties ready to give and receive, the intersubjective bond is not established, because either subject in this encounter could withdraw

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[277] Marcel writes: "My inquiry into being presupposes an affirmation in regard to which I am, in a sense, passive, and of which I am the stage rather than a spectator" ('On the Ontological Mystery, p.18' as quoted by Hanley 1995: p.129).

or refuse to participate. "Intersubjectivity does not exist and cannot exist without freedom" (TW: p.39), and the free act on the part of each participant; and this "implies …. that it is always within our power to deny it" (MB-II: p.119). In other words, intersubjectivity is perpetually threatened, because at every moment the self may close itself and no longer recognise the other except in relation to itself, that is, objectify the other.

For an intersubjective relationship to take place, its essential characteristics, namely, "presence", "availability", and "reciprocity", must be present.

Presence, Availability and Reciprocity

Marcel argues that, while we could have a relationship with an object, what he calls an I-it relation, or with another person treated as an object, an I-he/she relation, a genuine intersubjective relationship presents us with a thou, and is an I-thou relationship. The denial of an I-thou relationship by us is to degenerate it into an I-it or I-he/she relationship.

For an intersubjective relationship to take place, I need to perceive, recognise and experience the other, not in the same way that I recognise an object, but as a "presence".[278] Presence denotes something more comprehensive and more profound than the mere act of physically being there, and belongs to a being who is capable of giving himself,[279] so it is the gift of self (BH). A person who is encumbered and occupied with himself is incapable of presence regardless of physical proximity. A person coming to my aid out of a sense of duty or obligation, for instance, is also not present to me. Marcel writes that,

> "there are certain beings who reveal themselves to us as presence … and there are others who don't give us that feeling… Presence is something that reveals itself immediately in a look, a smile, a tone, a handshake" (PBW: p.192).

To allow "presences" to reveal themselves to us, we must not put any obstacles on their way; that is to say, we must make ourselves available. For Marcel, the relationship with the other being is a mystery not a problem, hence, "the reality of a mystery does not enter into the realm

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[278] It should be noted that presence cannot be proved, as it is a "mystery" that is intimately related to our feeling; and although we have experiences of the presence of others, it is useless to make an attempt at instructing others to make their presence felt. When another person's presence makes itself felt, "it can refresh my inner being, it reveals me to myself, it makes me more fully myself …" (MB-I: p.205).

[279] Marcel writes: "It is an undeniable fact, though it is hard to describe in intelligible terms, that there are some people who reveal themselves as 'present' – that is to say at our disposal…." (Cited in Sweetman 2008: p.62).

of one's experience, unless that person is open and welcomes" this encounter (Hanley 1995: p.133). "Availability" or "disponibilite" is a form of free receptiveness (Cipriani 2004: ,p.171), of being open and at the disposal of another being, of allowing ourselves to be used to the full and of making room for the other in ourselves.[280] It is "to pledge oneself to another" (HV: p.23) who is present to us. This is a kind of "spiritual availability" towards others, or being at service of the other.[281] Presence cannot be claimed, demanded or forcefully manufactured, it can only be accepted as a free gift, and only if we make ourselves available to receive it, where in effect we bind ourselves by the gift we receive through the presence of the other (HV: pp.23 & 146). If I am "unavailable" or "indisponibilite", I treat the other person as a he, she or it, rather than a thou; and in doing so, I treat the other person not as a "presence" but as an absence. The consequence of this is a failure to establish an intersubjective bond, which implies that, by depreciating the thou, in effect I have depreciated myself and harmed my own constitution as a person. Marcel equates unavailability "with a crippling moral evil"[282] (Hernandez 2011: p.22), as it impairs our ability to act ethically, because it is a sign that we become preoccupied with ourselves and unable to respond to the appeals of another person.[283]

Intersubjectivity "presupposes a reciprocal openness between individuals without which no kind of spirituality is conceivable" (MMS: p.200); hence, both participant beings must be present and available to each other, and this participation "means to be committed and engaged"[284] (Traub 1988: p.212).

Marcel's conception of intersubjectivity is one in which there is a profound force of mutual attraction between individuals, where the "moving principle can only be in the last analysis the common attraction exercised by the same Someone" (TW: p.203); so there can be no genuine

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[280] Marcel writes: "… the person who is … [available] to me is capable of being with me with the whole of himself when I am in need…." (PhE: p.40).

[281] In explaining the concept of "availability", Marcel also uses the term "handiness" to convey the idea of having one's resources at hand and to offer these resources, whether they are material, emotional, intellectual or spiritual, to another being; so in that sense, "availability" can be seen as an aptitude or a more practical statement of how our actual behaviour toward other human beings should be.

[282] Cipriani (2004: p.172) writes that "unavailability without doubt characterises modernity and its will to control the other, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that it constitutes one of the main features of postmodernity albeit in a different form".

[283] Unavailability is rooted in the attitude of "having", where I treat my life and my being and everything around me, including the others, as something quantifiable, a possession of mine, which is susceptible to dilapidation and exhaustion, resulting in anxiety and worry in me.

[284] What is implied in my commitment to the other is that the other has a hold over me, because "all commitment is a response" (BH: p.46). A one-sided commitment can be taken as pride, and the person making a one-sided commitment is responsible to no one but himself.

relationship among people except through their several holds on the universal[285] (Hocking 1954).

Marcel is justifiably renowned as the philosopher of intersubjectivity (Anderson 1985), for his insistence that, structurally, my being is a being-with-others. He takes intersubjectivity as "the cornerstone of …ontology" (MB-II: p.191) and at the core of his ethics, as it promises that people who encounter each other as presences can create meaningful lives together (Howland 1990: p.20), because through the presence of the other, if we make ourselves available, we can participate in communion, and in doing so experience the meaning of values (Murchland 1959).

Notion of Value

Value presupposes a human being and a subject (William 1958); that is to say, there can be no value without a subject and a being to appreciate and affirm it. An object, say the table I am using now, has no value in itself, but I create or discover value and meaning when I encounter it. This applies to my relationships with objects and things such as concepts, as well as with other human beings. Values such as grace, love, beauty, justice etc. also mean nothing unless they are associated with a subject: for example, we value a just act, not "justice" as a word; or we value a beautiful subject, not "beauty" as a notion; and no one dies for the sake of love as a mere definition, but rather dies for the love of one's family, one's country and so on. Thus real value, in the strict sense, is personal, because it involves an intimate bond between what is valuable and what is supremely valuable in me (O'Malley 1966).

Since the constitution of a person includes her intersubjective relationship with another person as well as the other person, and as values appear in relations, we could say that value is not based on the individual self but grounded in intersubjective relationships between the parties (Hernandez 2011). Value "is always dependent upon the reality of the immediate relationship" (May 1994: p.27), and is founded upon "the 'we'" which is in each party to the relationship, making intersubjectivity possible (Randall 1995). The presence of the other, then, is essential, as it enables us to make a transition from existence to value.[286] This means that, for Marcel, value, rather than being a mere abstraction, a fact or an independent entity existing in its own right, is inherent in our beings, part of our constitution as a person, and manifests itself in our relationships. Marcel asserts that "a value is nothing if it is not incarnated" (HV: p.155); so

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[285] Indeed, Marcel believes that, within such a relationship, "the true aim of knowledge and life is to be integrated into the universal order" (DW: p.42), into this same "Someone".
[286] Marcel writes: "that which has value is also that which increases in us the feeling of presence …" (MJ: p.317).

outside of one's experience, it is non-factual and non-existent (Pax 1972). Hence, the moment we attempt to objectively define a value, that is to separate it from our being, to disembody it, "we distort it and we strip it of its authenticity" (DW: p.33). Marcel refers to value incarnation as a "mysterious" dovetailing of being and value (MB-II: p.52), where the human being, by its very nature, "cannot … be indifferent to value" (MB-II: p.49). "To exist is to be of value" (O'Malley 1966: p.76); and this fundamental interconnectedness of value and being makes it impossible to sever one from the other. Marcel writes:

> "I insist on this to emphasise that the question raised here refers not only to an axiology but also, and more essentially, to an ontology. Axiology and ontology here are probably inseparable" (TW: p.117).

Marcel's theory of ethics is essentially based on the idea that reality is already endowed with value, and so existence, by its very nature, is also endowed with value, or value has been bestowed upon it; "for what we call values are perhaps only a kind of refraction of reality, like the rainbow colours that emerge from a prism when white light passes through it" (MMS: p.163). Values, then, are originally encountered, or enacted and experienced, in a pre-reflective and pre-conceptual manner, in the plane of "mystery", and not recognisable by any abstract or conceptual means; rather, they become manifest and known to us through our relationships. Value incarnation, the view that value is neither detached from us nor created or invented by us, has a number of major implications. For example, it indicates that values "are eternal, and a man who lived two thousand years ago was at bottom no better and no worse off than we are, for knowing what is or is not right" (MB-II: p.111). It should also lead us to the acceptance of the transcendent nature of human existence (Sweetman 2008: p.62); and Marcel tries to show that we can recognise and acknowledge this fact in our unconditional commitments, for instance in the experience of love or fidelity.

Clearly, value incarnation puts Marcel at odds with the views of most modern philosophers, including those who fall under the category of atheistic existentialists, for whom value is something to be invented or chosen by us. Marcel writes:

> "If I examine myself honestly …. I find that I do not choose my values at all, but that I recognise them and then posit my actions in accordance or in contradiction with these values" (PhE: pp.87-88).

Where Sartre's "existence precedes essence" (Sartre 1960: p.292) has come to be taken as the definition of existentialism, Marcel notes that he is forced "to take up a position diametrically opposed to ... Sartre" (MB-I: p.174), because "nothing could be more fallacious than the idea of a sort of nakedness of being which exists before qualities and properties and which is later to be clothed by them"[287] (MB-II: p.23). It is "to be" that makes the existence of any property or value possible; so we cannot be completely devoid of value first and then somehow and from some independent source derive value and add to it, and having done so, to use these derived values to judge our being. It is simply not permissible "to isolate a judgment and to ask what truth is in relation to that judgment" (MB-I: p.75). Marcel contends that values cannot be known through epistemological, rational or some other cognitive process, "which is so often sterilizing in its actual effect on conduct, and which is too apt to disregard the element of the irreducible in human situations and acts" (MB-I: p.139); rather, it is the presence of the other in our intersubjective relationship that provides us with the opportunity to experience values. Importantly, to ignore this reality of values and consider them to be our own creations and arising from our freedom, which was Nietzsche's view, is to strip them "of all possible universality" (DW: p.32).

Consideration of Marcel's view of person constituted as a "we are", with its existential character expressed in the need for a mutual constitution, and his view of value incarnation, further indicate that value cannot be understood in terms of some objective facts but in the openness between the beings: that is to say, in the intersubjective bond between the beings. Value and the adherence to value then present themselves as demands upon us in such a way that the person "must respect them or lose all human dignity" (Pax 1975: p.49): respect them or lose or jeopardise her intersubjective relationship, and with that her constitution as a person.

On the view that is particularly shared by many religious ethicists, including Martin Buber, namely that philosophical ethics are unable to draw an "ought" from an "is" (Kegley 1969), Marcel's view of person would make such discourse irrelevant, because the "is" is in fact the affirmation of the person as a person in all his actualities. No longer is the question whether a particular action is moral or not, but rather that such an action is truly a personal one (O'Malley 1966: p.137). In Marcels' ethical philosophy, "the person is person only when he acts; the act can be act only through a person" (O'Hara 1964: p.153); so the moral is identified not with an "act" but with the upright, saintly person herself, someone in whom the human ideal is fully

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[287] Elsewhere, Marcel wrote: "My existence as a living being precedes this discovery of myself as a living being. One might even say that, by a fatal necessity, I pre-exist myself" (MB-I: p.174).

incarnated; and this brings Marcel to approve the Nietzschean formula, "become who you are" (DW: p.34).

Marcel introduces the concept of "creative fidelity" as the mechanism through which intersubjective relationship is maintained.

Creative Fidelity

Intersubjectivity is not a given, it needs willingness, courage and commitment on the part of individual participants; and while this bond is established by the free acts of the participants, it's essence and what maintains and enriches the relationship is a degree of fidelity. Marcel refers to "being as the place of fidelity" (BH: p.41), because fidelity to the relationship is the necessary condition for the existence of the reality of the personal realm, and any attempt at a moral reconstruction should re-establish fidelity in the very centre of human life (HV: p.125). Clearly, values totally dependent on the perceiving subject and his experience become relative to the subject and useless, giving rise to pure individuality, which Marcel opposes. It is also possible to refuse to accept the fact that a person inherently has value, and that at any moment a participant could exercise his freedom and call into question the intersubjective bond and withdraw or refuse to take part in such relation by not making himself "available". These issues raise the questions, Where in Marcel's ethical theory does the demand for moral obligation come from? Or how could we remain "available" over time? And how can an effective fidelity be exacted from the persons involved in relationship?

The answer to such questions could best be understood by considering the spirit animating the intersubjective bond, which is expressed by the moral attitude Marcel calls "creative fidelity". Fidelity implies faithfulness to another person; however, on closer inspection it can be seen that, since the other person in my relationship may and does change over time, and such a change is unforeseeable by me, it is meaningless and perhaps impossible for me to be faithful to this ever-changing other. In reality, then, in being faithful to the other person I am in fact being faithful to myself. That is to say, "true fidelity is fidelity towards myself" (HV: p.129), and my real obligation is to myself. Now, if by fidelity to myself I am essentially adhering to a set of rules and principles that I have adopted once and for all, we could say that, in effect, I have reduced myself to the status of a machine that blindly follows some rules, I have stifled my own reality. However, to maintain my personhood, I should compel myself to examine these principles frequently and see if they still correspond to what I think and believe. From this, we

can see that fidelity should not be viewed as a form of constancy,[288] conformity, or compliance to regulations.[289] In fidelity, one establishes a constant self over and against the fluctuations that might otherwise enter in due to changing circumstance (Wood 1999). To do so, the sameness of the purpose or goal must be ceaselessly affirmed in the face of any opposition that tends to weaken this purpose.[290] Thus, fidelity entails more than constancy, and "by nature possesses a certain creative and spontaneity" (Miceli 1965); but creativity should not be understood as production,[291] and in this sense it is the opposite of conformity. Nietzsche seems to have understood creativity as the opposite of conformity; hence, his Ubermensch became the creator or manufacturer of his own laws and against conformity to the laws of others. However, in Marcel, what is essential to all creation is placing oneself at the disposal of something outside of oneself, something that both transcends the self and is dependent on it (Marsh 1975). Creativity is also different from the act of innovation, since an innovator, unlike a creator, is "centred upon himself" (DW: p.24), unable or unwilling to admire or to be grateful.[292]

Marcel gives the example of an artist to illustrate his point further. An artist, say a master painter, cannot remain an artist by copying his last master painting, by using the same colours, same strokes etc. To do so is to cease to be an artist and become a manufacturer instead, reproducing the previous masterpiece! To be faithful to himself, to remain an artist, he needs to continuously change and be creative. On this basis, fidelity should not be mistaken with concepts of duty or obedience characterising many other moral philosophies. To comply with codes and principles means to lose creativity and, like the example of the artist above, cease to be a person. A genuine and effective fidelity can and should be creative and "infinitely transcends the limit of what can be prescribed"[293] (HV: p.133).

To sum up, it could be said that, in order to maintain what constitutes me as a person, I must guard against breaking the bond of commitment towards the other within my intersubjective relation, and this requires active conservation of the presence of the other; after all, "I establish

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[288] Constancy is "a rational skeleton of fidelity", a "perseverance in a certain goal" (CF: p.153), such as a firm adherence to a particular belief or idea.

[289] Fidelity is the opposite of conformity, as "it is the active recognition of a certain presence, or of something in us and before us as a presence…", which can easily be misunderstood or forgotten; and for this reason fidelity, even toward oneself, is difficult to discern and to practice (TS: pp.23-25).

[290] Such opposition can be in the form of pressure coming from the society that defines a person in terms of his consistent opinions and fixed functions he performs.

[291] Marcel writes: "We go wrong when we confuse creating with producing" (HV: p.25).

[292] The idea of creativity always implies being open, available and at disposal towards others, and this differentiates creative fidelity from an act of will. For example, a true friend, a faithful friend, is one who is always present to me in all adversities, not one who is constant in his will or conduct.

[293] Prescription only deals with behaviour (HV: p.133) and bears upon a specific action that one needs to obey, and as a duty it does not necessarily involve the being of the person who obeys; and unlike fidelity or love, which are deserved, the obedience implied in prescription is commanded and required; and that is why obedience is fragile and prone to failure.

myself as a person in so far as I really believe in the existence of others and allow this belief to influence my conduct"(HV: p.22). To achieve this, I must have fidelity towards the other, and to maintain my commitment I must be capable of renewing myself and be creative. Creativity here is the invention of a way of life that will affect my behaviour so that I maintain my commitments by actively giving myself in the intersubjective relation, in such way as not to objectify or depersonalise the other but to keep him as a thou. Marcel writes:

> "Creative fidelity consists in maintaining ourselves actively in a permeable state; and there is a mysterious interchange between this free act and the gift granted in response to it" (PhE: p.24).

The consideration of "creative fidelity" reveals the transcendental ground of the intersubjective bond, because fidelity has the elements of commitment and faithfulness and "cannot be separated from the idea of an oath; this means that it implies the consciousness of something sacred" (HV: p.132).

I turn now to explore this dimension, of the sacred.

Absolute Thou

By examining a number of human experiences such as making a pledge or a promise, Marcel uncovers an element of "unconditionality" and a dimension of sacred[294] in the act of commitment.

Within human relationships, a promise based on conditions attached to it no longer can be considered a promise as it degenerates into a form of contractual agreement;[295] but within our relationships, we make promises and pledges of love and commitments that endure and do not fail or end even in the face of death and in death. For example, how is it that a dead friend or relative remains a being to us, attached to our personal reality and refusing to be reduced to a

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[294] For Marcel, sacred does not necessarily have anything to do with religion, indeed he talks about "religio" as a structure upon which religion sits, writing: "I am tempted to think that it is this religio which we must first restore" (HV: p.93). However, sacred, for Marcel, is a "constant element, considered, be it well understood, as a demand rather than a law", without which there is "a serious consequence for the whole spiritual economy"; and it is the surest means by which we can resist the deadly fascination for relativism rampant in our society today (HV: pp.99-100).

[295] For Marcel, "a philosophy which revolves round contractual idea is likely to misunderstand the value of the relationship" (HV: p.56). He gives the example of making a promise to a sick friend to visit him, arguing that if I lay down a series of conditions when making the promise, the promise will be conditional and invalid. At the time of making the promise, I know that things may change that prevent me from visiting, but still the promise is taken as if it is unconditional (BH: p.41).

simple idea for us? The dead relative continues to be present even though he is deceased. Or, taking the case of a marriage vow or a promise I make to my friend, we could again ask, who have I made the commitment to in the vow or in the promise? It cannot be said in such cases that my commitment is to myself, because the obligation to fulfil such promise will then be nothing more than a decision to satisfy my own desires, and if I change my mind the obligation will be removed. Marcel asserts that "fidelity is never fidelity to one's self, but is referred to … the hold the other being has over us" (BH: p.46); so the commitment must have been directed not to myself but to the other person, to my marriage partner or my friend. Given this is true, we are still left to explain the cases where I still feel obliged to keep my promise and commitment in the absence of the other, say in case of the death of a relative or falling out of friendship with a friend, situations that perhaps I could not foresee at the time of making the promise. In the case of my marriage vow, since I and the other person change over time, in order for my vow or unconditional commitment to remain unconditional there must be an element of permanency in me that endures despite change of circumstances, and even if my beliefs change in a fundamental way over this period. In other words, for my commitment to be unconditional, I must be able to draw a distinction between the temporary and permanent elements of myself, because,

> "No act of committal, then, is possible except for a being who can be distinguished from his own momentary situation and who recognises this difference between himself and his situation and consequently treats himself as somehow transcending his own life-process, and answers for himself" (BH: p.41).

This means that, in committing myself unconditionally, I have come to acknowledge that I consist of what Marcel calls "a ruling principle" and "a life whose details …. the principle subjects to itself" (BH: p.48). The experiences where the sense of obligation and unconditional commitment in us persist cannot be explained without "an actual recognition of an ontological permanency; a permanency which endures and by reference to which we endure" (BH: p.119): that is to say, these experiences require recognition of a supra-temporal depth in myself or the existence of "something real" in myself, perhaps "the particle of creation which is in me, the gift which from all eternity has been granted to me of participating in the universal drama …" (HV: p.132).

Despite recognition of such a supra-temporal dimension, the fact remains that there are still no guarantees of consistency or solidity in my relationships, as my unconditional commitments and pledges of fidelity are still subject to failure, and I am prone to betrayal because the other

individual can exercise his freedom and change. In other words, although my commitment stems from a permanent depth in me, it is towards a potentially changing being, hence the bond and commitment can still be called into question. This indicates that we need to look further and beyond ourselves for the source that places the demand upon us, because absolute commitments can be conceivable only if our supra-temporal self participates in a source of strength and permanence that will always respond to our plea to remain faithful (Anderson 1985). According to Marcel, "if the notion of commitment has any meaning it must be in relation to an absolute which has first to be recognised" (DW: p.48). Such commitment needs to draw its strength from something more than itself, because

> "it is essential to human life not only … to orientate itself towards something other than itself, but also to be inwardly conjoined and adapted .... to that reality transcending the individual life which gives the individual life its point and, in a certain sense, even its justification" (MB-I: p.164).

Marcel believes that fidelity is based on a certain appeal delivered from the depth of our being and directed to a transcendent reality that is an "absolute recourse", an "absolute Thou", or God. This reality is a transcendence beyond "all possible experience as well as all rational conception" (CF: p.145). He writes: "But one might say that conditional pledges are only possible in a world from which God is absent. Unconditionality is the true sign of God's presence…" (TPR: p.40). Indeed, "the unconditional is implied in the very fact of being-in-the-world" (TW: p.192); and is revealed by examination of experiences such as those of promise making, marital fidelity, love, birth, death and the like, none of which are necessarily religious or esoteric experiences, but which all have an element of unconditionality requiring an ultimate ground for their explanation and justification. The "absolute Thou" experienced and recognised as part of such unconditional commitments help the individual to keep his or her commitments.[296] The more a person becomes aware of the structure of such experiences and his situation in the world, the more he will be led to the affirmation of a presence beyond himself, perhaps to belief in God or an "absolute Thou". That is to say, the existence of an absolute is inferred in such experiences, and is "the best explanation for these commitments"(Sweetman 2008: p.84). Admittedly, it could be argued that, from the unconditionality of a pledge or promise, we cannot conclude the existence of the "absolute

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[296] Since the foundation of my commitment is my fidelity to the "absolute Thou", which is bound up with my fidelity to the other person, the more disposed I am towards my affirmation of this "absolute Thou", the less conceivable will be the disappointments if the commitment is called into question, because I am more inclined to see the failure of fidelity as my failure and as a sign of my inadequacy rather than that of the other.

Thou" or God, nor is the affirmation of the existence of God by an individual a real proof of the actual existence of God.[297] Affirmation of God can only be an affirmation for the individual concerned in his lived experience, and not subject to a public or objective recognition or demonstration; therefore, the God or the Thou as the ground of unconditionality is not proven to be such a value, but rather it "appears" or emerges as such (Busch 1975). The intersubjective experience of the thou as unconditional value, however, calls for a response on the part of the individual; and this response is given as fidelity by the individual in resisting the objectification, depersonalisation and the reduction of the thou to an it/he/she.

Clearly, there are numerous examples of failed pledges and commitments, after all the person making the pledge is free in doing so and free to break the pledge; but in considering intersubjective experiences, it is incorrect to take failed examples as evidence that there can be no ultimate ground for them. It is important to bear in mind that there is often no objective necessity and no rational motive between the free act of making and keeping a pledge and the intended outcome it is directed to; so what becomes significant, according to Marcel, is not that a pledge can fail, but rather that such a pledge can actually succeed in establishing a lasting intersubjective bond. We could say that what interests Marcel here even more are the exceptions or the anomalies. "It is those relationships which do not fail, the love and commitment that do not end even in death …." that call for appeal to an "ultimate recourse" for their meaning and justification (Pax 1975), that are of interest. The fact is that, unlike, say, the laws of physics, God or the absolute Thou is not what can be seen or affirmed by anyone to be generally true for many things, but what holds unconditionally and perhaps is appreciated by a single person in a single experience and through a difficult and courageous effort to see.

Marcel does not deny the difficulty of providing a foundation for unconditional commitments, writing: "perhaps it should further be said that in fact fidelity can never be unconditional, except where it is Faith, but we must add, however, that it aspires to unconditionality" (HV: p.133); and although he does not prove, in the objective sense of the word, the existence of an unconditional reality as the guarantor of all pledges and promises, he does show us a way to be

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[297] Marcel, in response to such criticism, would acknowledge that neither of these cases provide an objective proof of God; but he is not looking for an objective proof of such existence and does not claim that there is such objective or demonstrable proof. We should bear in mind that his examination of the intersubjective experiences of fidelity, love and others is done at the level of secondary reflection, the level of mystery not the level of objectivity or primary. It should also be pointed out that Marcel is not attempting to prove the existence of experiences that have an element of unconditionality in them either, although such experiences are valid and intelligible for those who have had them; rather, he aims to reveal the structure of such experiences, because "to listen to the most intimate and pregnant aspect of our experience enables us to take off, like an airplane, and look at reality with new eyes" (as quoted by Lacoste 1995: p.79).

faithful to our pledges and maintain our intersubjective relationships through an appeal to such reality, to whom the pledge is made (Pax 1972, Busch 1975).

Marcel believes that "only an affirmation which reaches far beyond all empirical and objectively discernible ways of living can gain for us a sense of life's fullness" (HV: p.96), by underpinning our acts of fidelity, which in turn preserve our being and our intersubjective bonds. In other words, it is the relation to the transcendent reality or God that enables us to realise and develop our individuality (CF: p.148).

From the above, we could again claim the triadic nature of the intersubjective bond in which "to be" is to participate both with another being as well as in what is eternal, and we could say that intersubjective communion is set towards transcendence; so paradoxically; the more a person descends into such communion and is able to preserve his personhood, the more he ascends into transcendence (Miceli 1965: p.31, Iweadighi 1992: p.38).

Besides fidelity, Marcel investigates other experiences of intersubjectivity to reveal the element of unconditional in them, in particular those of love and hope, as he believes that creative fidelity itself is maintained by love and hope. Indeed, a commitment, with its intention of creative fidelity, is a vow and the expression of hope.

Hope

From the discussion above, we have seen that absolute and unconditional commitments are made from the depth of our reality and directed towards a certain power or transcendent reality that can guarantee such commitments. But what is the guarantee that the appeals for the fulfilment of these commitments will be heard and responded to?

Marcel believes that, in directing such commitments and appeals, an infinite credit is extended to this transcendent reality. "Hope means nothing more than this" (CF: p.167). Hope is the guarantor and the expression of our confidence that our appeals will be heard, and it is through hope that,

> "we embrace and promote within us, a certain process of growth and development
> and considering it as destined that through the workings of such creative process our
> appeal will be heard" (HV: p.40).

Since "the only true authentic hope is one that relies on something that does not depend on us" (TS: p.57), and as it would be impossible for hope to be in vain if directed to a transcendent reality, such a reality becomes essential as the ground of our hope (Marsh 1975). Marcel refers to hope as "the mysterious source of human activity" (HV: p.10) without which the call to creative fidelity cannot be heard or heeded by the individuals and hence no intersubjective relationship can be sustained. Hope here, however, should not be confused with wishing or optimism or considered as an expectation of what will be rather, hope is about what is and can be, and unlike wishing, "the outcome of a genuine hope is not a determined goal to be attained" (HV: p.52), nor can such an outcome be achieved by enlisting some techniques or be influenced by the individual's action (Hernandez 2011). The person "who truly hopes does not count on possibilities" (Benefield 1973: p.155), because absolute hope, which is inseparable from absolute fidelity or faith, transcends all laying-down of conditions: that is to say, there are no conditions that could fail and cause disappointment[298] - one has absolute confidence and feels a certain existential assurance.[299] Hope, then, "is the act by which this temptation [to despair and anxiety] is actively or victoriously overcome" (HV: p.36). Like fidelity, hope is creative in the contribution it makes towards the recognition of the presence of the other (O'Malley 1966: p.122), because in order for "presence" to be sustained as "presence", it requires perpetual and faithful renewal of its recognition through fidelity motivated by steadfast openness and availability, which is hope. The presence of the other in the relationship so faithfully sustained means a complete and unconditional acceptance of the other; but this can only be achieved through love. Love prolongs the presence of the other even to death. To love a being, according to one of the characters of Marcel's play, "is to say you, you in particular, will never die" (HV: p.147).

Love

Hope underpins and maintains our commitments in fidelity; but why do we hope to keep our commitments to others and sustain our fidelity? According to Marcel, hope itself "appears to us as inspired by love" (HV: p.44): it is an appeal and "a boundless recourse to an ally who is also love" (TS: p.55). Creative fidelity, then, is a matter of the heart; but this fidelity is of little value if not inspired by a hope for the continuing presence of the other whom we love (Benefield 1973). Although the reality of love has been erroneously relegated by the modern person to the

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[298] If I affirm the existence of an absolute Thou and direct my appeal or hope towards it, there can be no despair for me, because despair, in the sense of withdrawal of the absolute Thou, will be incompatible with the nature of absolute Thou.

[299] Marcel refers to hope as "a primordial existential assurance which is finally perhaps nothing other than a very mysterious radiation of the *gaudium essendi* [joy of existing]" (MB-I: p.43).

level of mere emotionalism, where the so-called lover uses the other to satisfy his own needs (Iweadighi 1992: p.32), for Marcel, love is a "spiritual perception": that is to say, it is "at once perception and emotion, knowledge and affectivity" (MJ: p.63); and it is through love that we recognise the presence of the other. It is love that convinces us that the other is a thou not an object, and in our relationship it is love that "implies a reciprocity profound enough to let other-directedness work both ways, to let each become a centre for the other" (PI). Marcel asserts that, "to love a being is to expect something from him, something indefinable, unforeseeable, it is at the same time to give him in some way the means to reply to that expectation" (TS: p.58). Thus, if I inspire another being with love, which I value and to which I respond, and when my love is reciprocated, a "spiritual interconnection" or a communion is established, which will be enough to bring about a deep transformation in the nature of the bond (HV: p.49).

According to Marcel, it is through the act of love that we can recognise and treat an individual being as an end-in-itself, as a thou, as "a being who possesses a unique an inestimable value" (MB-II). "Love rises up like an appeal from the I to the I…. I do not love someone because of what he is, I love what he is because he is himself…" (MJ: p.217).

Although fidelity, hope and love are all concrete approaches to being, love may be considered as the crown and climax of intersubjective communion (Miceli 1965); and ultimately, ethics is grounded in the certainty of love itself (McCarthy 2006), as it is love that allows us to see in the other "the image of God" (HV: p.42).

From this, it should be clear that intersubjectivity is not an attempt to view the other as a Kantian end-in-itself, which for Marcel is artificial and merely judicial, but rather the intersubjective bond is a spiritual bond based on "spiritual commerce between beings, and that involves not respect but love" (MJ: p.211). For Marcel, love itself is not a value, yet there cannot be any value without love, because without love the intersubjective bond dissolves. He believes that a deep reflection on the nature of love, and understanding this fact that love cannot be equated to value, leads us "to recognise what an impossibility a philosophy of values is" (MMS: p.189). It is the love of the other that opens the door of hope, and like hope and fidelity, love cannot be exercised if it is considered as a closed system. Inherent in true love is also an element of pledge, and love passes beyond itself in every direction and "demands for its complete realisation a universal communion outside which it cannot be satisfied". Such universal communion can only be based on the certainty of an absolute Thou (HV: p.152).

Marcel demonstrates that the more I make myself "available" to the other within my intersubjective relationships, the greater is the faith, hope and love that is shared with the presence of the other, and at the same time the more I become open to the absolute Thou. In other words, through the lived experience of an I-thou relationship, a relationship with a finite being, I enter into the supreme relationship of I-Thou, that is, the relationship with the infinite Being (Miceli 1965).

Thou Affirmation

From the discussion above, we could say that, where Nietzsche's revaluation came to locate life-affirmation as the basis of all values and meaning, Marcel's revaluation project sees life-affirmation as meaningful only if "the sense of a certain fundamental reverence towards life" is first recovered, a reverence that can come through an affirmation that goes beyond life itself; and in doing so, in effect sets "the seal of eternity upon the perpetually renewed act of creation" of our values (HV: pp.96-97). Based on Marcel's notion of intersubjectivity, the fact that we are always beings with others in a relationship sustained by the act of creative fidelity, which requires a hold unto the unconditional, it could be said that life-affirmation can only be meaningful within the context of an affirmation of Absolute Thou. Marcel sees the recognition and affirmation of such a "constant element … understood as a demand rather than a law" (HV: pp.99-100), as the surest means by which we can resist the deadly fascination for relativism rampant in our society today.

Ethics

> "Perhaps a stable order can only be established on earth if man always
> remains acutely conscious that his condition is that of a traveller"   (HV: p.153).

Because structurally human beings are always in relationships with one another, it is important for them to remain available and open to one another in a reciprocal ethical relationship. For Marcel, ethics is not based on a purely conceptual and objective analysis, as those of analytic philosophies, nor is it the result of valuations of a few known values or based upon a concept of duty or compliance with a set of universal laws, whether such laws stem from rationality or from some theological values. What is abstract or "objective is what does not concern us" (TW: p.39); that is to say, it does not take us into account,[300] so a passive acceptance or compliance with a set of rules and regulations is tantamount to betrayal of our beings, turning ourselves into an instrument, a mere cog in a wheel, as if we have lost or denied the freedom to act. "All

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[300] Whereas an existential experience is one in which the subject is intimately involved.

generalisations are deceptive", because each individual is governed by laws that, at least to some extent, are only valid for that individual (HV: p.89).

The consideration of creative fidelity leads Marcel to the possibility of a new revaluation of values and a different foundation for ethics, because fidelity is a testimony and an evidence of what is unconditional and absolute in us; hence, "a code of ethics centred on fidelity is irresistibly led to become attached to what is more than human" and to get its legitimacy from a transcendent dimension, which is "the very mark of the Absolute in us" (HV: p.134).

Kierkegaard, like Kant and many other philosophers, understood ethics as the universal, and in considering ethics as only to do with the individual and his singularity, that is to say, in pure subjectivity, ended up abandoning ethics in favour of religion. Marcel, on the other hand, despite emphasising the role of the individual in ethical determinations, avoids pure subjectivity, by seeing subjectivity as being determined by intersubjectivity. The other person or the other subject is of vital importance, because without the other the constitution of the self is severely impaired. By placing creativity at the basis of the intersubjective relationship, Marcel transcends the "sort of ethical individualism for which the individual tends to be thought of as something self-contained, a monad" (MB-I: p.139). Thus, although Marcel refers to the condition of man as that of a "traveller" or a "homo viator", to stress this element of individuality and subjectivity, this subjectivity is prevented from roaming unchecked; and as Paul Ricoeur observes, it is "hope" that operates beneath our experience and "makes the passage something more than just simple wandering" (TW: p.255). Ethics grounded in intersubjectivity and in the communion of beings further indicates that, prior to any specific act of valuing or choice, the person's situation is one of responsibility and obligation towards other beings. Value incarnation indicates that it is the type of person one is that determines how one behaves in an ethical situation, not an abstract and rational analysis made independent of the context and the situation of the person. It is simply "not enough to exhume this or that general principle once elucidated by a secular thinker or a doctor of the Church", because such a principle will be valuable "only if it becomes incarnate" (DW: p.55). Marcel stresses that we must not overlook the fact that a person is defined "in terms of the tension between his own situation, which is always singular, and the universal values which are proposed to him; values he does not create" (DW: p.48) but needs to assert and embody. Again, this is to say that our mode of being or existence as ethical is prior to the determination of any specific conduct; however, such a mode of being is not one of existence in isolation, but rather it is being together with others and sharing experiences with the others. Ethics, then, appeals to the individual's experience, where

the individual recognises the others as human beings co-existing with him in the world. The other needs to be respected for his capacity for the sacred and be recognised not as an object but a thou "who is the bearer of a singular value" (McCarthy 2006: p.23); and it is in this recognition that the individual restores his own sense of dignity and also becomes a thou.

Marcel is safeguarding one's sense of dignity without recourse to any ethical formalism, and avoids the slide into conformism to a set of rules. This is achieved by placing creativity at the heart of ethics. Clearly, a morality that is based on love, creativity, fidelity and human dignity is not rule-based but is eschatological (Hernandez 2011); and where "hope" takes the centre stage, morality relies on possibilities for a better future through rehabilitation of the individuals. The transcendental aspect of our experience encountered within our intersubjective relations is the insight that provides the motivational power of our ethics, and it is this insight, lost through the prevalence of "the spirit of abstraction", that Marcel believes needs to be restored and strengthened. As part of this insight, we should see that ethical behaviours receive their ultimate ground and justification in an "existential assurance" of an underlying reality, because commitments and ethical obligations can become unconditional and absolute only if such qualities are given by an unconditional and an absolute; and without the belief, faith and hope that our appeal to sustain our obligations will be heard and responded to, truth and value lose their meaning.

The required insight mentioned above is nothing but genuine wisdom, which I explore next.

Wisdom

"Wise men … where are such men today?" (TW: p.156)

Marcel believes that a revaluation of values that attempts to address the problem of nihilism brought about by the prevalence of technology can neither be achieved by going against technology and arresting its progress nor by trying to regress to a pre-technological past; rather, he sees the solution in going beyond and in somehow overtaking the activity of technology itself. This requires genuine wisdom, which is currently in a morbid state,[301] necessitating "a fundamental revaluation of wisdom" itself (TW: p.197). Wisdom is needed and could provide

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[301] According to Marcel, the hegemony of science and technology has resulted in a decline and dislocation of wisdom, where it is in danger of "ultimately becoming nothing but degenerate, and to some extent depraved, life" (S: p.30). He argues that, not only "the very notion of wisdom has been withdrawn from circulation" (TW: p.156), but even "the word wisdom is in disrepute" (TW: p.197) today and is generally viewed with a degree of mistrust and disdain, and more often and wrongly is taken to be synonymous with whatever is old, or is equated with intellectual capacity and scientific progress.

the solution for us, because it is metatechnical and metatechnological, in the sense that it often involves a critical questioning of technology and the very notion of technique. Wisdom sought here, then, is not about a direct opposition or rejection of technology or anything technological;[302] rather, metatechnology, as Marcel conceives it, "is first and foremost a recapturing of integral selfhood" (TW: p.194). This recapturing of my true self can take place only if I become attuned to the reality in which I participate, only in my recognition of the transcendent aspect of my personhood. Marcel believes that it is only on the basis of an existential reflection that focuses on the implication of what it means to be a human being and aims to unveil what is behind our most mysterious of experiences, those of hope, love and others, "that a wisdom worthy of the name is possible" (TW: p.198). The essence of wisdom, then, is the recognition of the transcendent reality, the universal, or God.

But what is wisdom? According to Marcel, wisdom is not the result of experience through the senses, as conceived by Descartes (S: p.26); so a person of many experiences is not necessarily a wise person, nor can wisdom be considered as equivalent with knowing or in proportion with scientific progress. For Marcel, wisdom cannot have a strictly humanistic character; rather, it needs to be grounded "to some extent in an action emanating from what many of us would call Holy Spirit": that is to say, grounded on "spiritual powers which are not situated within the orbit of human world" (TW: p.198). Indeed, for Marcel, there can be no wisdom without the presence and affirmation of such spiritual powers; hence, "to the extent that the universal is debased or driven out, wisdom becomes eclipsed and its place is taken by system of technical processes…" (DW: p.51). On this basis, ethics or wisdom that is not related to a stable order outside of the human sphere, and hence not defined in terms of the transcendent "is not worthy to be called wisdom" (TW: p.198). Marcel considers wisdom to be "an essence: and essence is not definite, objectifiable content, but rather a certain kind of light" (S: p.39); so to the extent that man tries to approach this light and can truly establish "a relationship to the original light" as the source of wisdom, the anxiety and insecurity with the modern world will be diminished (TW: p.211).

The challenge now is to find ways to approach this source of wisdom. It seems evident that wisdom, defined as above, cannot be acquired immediately, for example through some sort of

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[302] Such an opposition is the case in the practices current in certain religious sects whose adherents avoid the use of technology or technical innovations.

training;[303] nor can we expect it to be swiftly bestowed upon us by an act of grace, as "nothing in the least like grace is allowed by wisdom"; so there can be no wisdom that is not the fruit of a slowly developed maturity, and this presupposes patience and continuity (DW: p.40). For Marcel, there is a close affinity between wisdom and common sense, as "at bottom common sense is not so very different to wisdom" (DW: p.46); and in fact the disappearance of common sense in modernity most likely has and does condemn wisdom to be vanished too. Of course, common sense implies common life, a community, and we can deduce that there can be no common sense and no wisdom, as a result, if there is no organic group such as the family or community. Since "the direction of growth of [Marcel's] ethics would be towards [an] open community" (MB-I: p.139), it could be said that the community[304] that Marcel advocates is the breeding ground for wisdom, where the genuine intersubjective bonds among people are created and maintained through the realisation and affirmation of the universal or that light as the source of wisdom.

Since Marcel sees wisdom as necessarily associated with the recognition of the transcendence, it is the achievement of the universal or God that makes a wise man, a sage; however, as he insists, one is not a sage but rather one becomes a sage[305] (TW: p.211).

Marcel, having criticised individualism, is aware that, by locating the solution to the moral crisis in fostering wisdom and bringing out sages, is essentially advocating a new type of anthropocentrism, one that is meant to replace the anthropocentrism associated with the cult of the individual promoted by the world of techniques. He notes that this new anthropocentrism, this new man-centeredness, "presents the challenge which is the beginning or principle of wisdom as it must be defined today" (TW: p.211). Such wisdom must be grounded in reason but establish the relationship joining human beings with the universal. True wisdom lies in setting out on a path leading us towards the richness of those dimensions of our world that ordinarily we are simply unaware of.

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[303] In fact, Marcel, in drawing a distinction between wisdom and science, points out that, while science, being a pile of scattered cognitions, attempts to establish itself around a centre, wisdom, considered as the appropriation of means to achieve an end that is regarded as an undisputed good, is to be found wherever man tries not to organise his life around a centre. Thus, wisdom cannot be reduced to a series of rules and instructions to be followed.

[304] It should be noted that this is a community of communion not communication, within which the ultimate realisation of our humanity is achieved through fostering and maintaining the spiritual attitudes of faith, love, hope and others.

[305] We are the travellers on a road to wisdom, a road which is replete with dangers and frustrations, where we may waver or start to succumb to the forces operating in the society, those of individualism and collectivism in particular; which is why Marcel refers to the wisdom we are pursuing as a "tragic wisdom".

Critique

Despite his dislike of the term existentialist, Marcel has been labelled a Christian Existentialist[306] and is viewed and criticised as having his philosophy tainted with religious dogmas and hence lacking "the force of a precise and vigorous method"[307] (Grene 1947: p.398). By placing many of his concepts within the realm of mystery, Marcel eliminates the need to provide any empirical proofs, leaving it to us to accept them, perhaps as an act of faith or personal experience. For instance, he provides no real proof for the existence of the "intelligible background" within or "against which minds are able to communicate with each other" (MB-I: p.104); and considers hope as a "mysterious radiation" (TW: p.43). His concrete approaches of experiences of fidelity, hope and love have been considered as mere translation of theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (Benefield 1973), and not only he believes in the reality of "soul" in the religious sense,[308] clearly the Absolute Thou or God occupies a central role in his understanding of the human constitution and is the ground and guarantor of the intersubjective relationships. There is also a degree of circularity of argument in Marcel's description of a number of his themes. For instance, wisdom, he argues, is needed to enable the recognition of our existential assurances, including the assurance of our ontological exigence, the need for God. The breeding ground of such wisdom is a communal community, where genuine intersubjective bonds among people are created and maintained through the realisation and affirmation of God; however, such an affirmation is not the result of an impassionate and objective rational analysis, but rather it requires genuine wisdom. Thus God is meant to be the source and foundation of wisdom without which God himself may not be recognised! Similar circularity of argument can be seen with regard to intersubjectivity, where on the one hand Marcel urges us to regain intersubjectivity, as it is "the only way to rediscover the path to the sacral" (S: pp.51-53), and on the other hand a prior recognition of the existential assurance of this sacred element is necessary, as it provides the unconditional element that prevents the intersubjective relationship from collapse.[309]

I am led to suggest that Marcel offers a dialectic which can be palatable and have great value to those who are sympathetic to his approach. On the basis of his conviction that philosophy

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[306] This label was given to Marcel by (Sartre 1960: p.289).

[307] This is despite his own claim that his philosophy was fully advanced and pointing towards the universal before his conversion into Catholicism at the age of 40; that is to say, his religious conversion was the consequence of his philosophy and not vice versa.

[308] Although "soul" was not discussed in this chapter, Marcel believes that "soul… so long discredited, should here be given its priority once more", and indeed "it is precisely the soul that is the traveller" (HV: pp.10-11).

[309] Marcel contends that, when human relations "are referred back to a superhuman order … their truly sacred character becomes apparent" (HV: p.96).

should imply "an exaltation of experience, not a castration of it" (CF: p.80), and in his revaluation attempt to address the crisis of nihilism brought about by "the spirit of abstraction", he might have placed too much emphasis on phenomenological description of experience at the expense of reason and rationality. Perhaps Benefield (1973) is right in asserting that the numerous deficiencies in Marcel's philosophy outweigh "his more positive contributions to a philosophy of existence".

In the area of ethics, although Marcel is dismissive of the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy in ethics (BH: p.131), the notion of God is dominant, and its recognition is essential for the maintenance of ethics and avoidance of the arbitrariness and relativism, and in that sense tips the balance towards heteronomy in ethics.

Marcel's revaluation of values project came to rely heavily on the notion of existential assurances, in particular the "ontological exigence", the need for God; and although Marcel insists that God or Absolute thou should be considered as an assurance in an individual's experience instead of an objective and absolute certainty perceivable by all, it seems clear that Marcel's revaluation cannot do away with the need for a foundation, whether this is called an "Absolute thou", the unconditional, or "something sacred". The fact of locating such a foundation outside of existence is exactly the criticism that Nietzsche so vehemently had levelled against religion, considering it as a clear sign of the weakness of will.

Conclusion

> "…the world is in need of exorcism…" (DW: p.18)

This chapter explored the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, demonstrating that, although he acknowledges the crisis of nihilism as identified by Nietzsche, he takes a diametrically opposite position to him, by neither blaming God as the cause, nor taking the absence or death of God as the solution. In other words, where Nietzsche saw God as the problem and his revaluation sought the solution in man, Marcel saw man as the problem in the sense of his own withdrawal from the ground of his being, and sought the solution in God. It could also be said that, where Nietzsche took God as a problem to do away with, Marcel took God as a mystery enmeshed in the very fabric of our being.

Marcel attributed the loss of God to the rise and domination of technology and a mentality fascinated and unsettled by the progress of technics, which in turn have resulted in the decline

and dislocation of wisdom and the disappearance of morality. He acknowledged that it is a folly to ignore or reject the redemptive power of technology or to attempt to artificially revert to a pre-technological past, considering it as naïve, even a "fatal error", to imagine that these "forces of destruction" themselves have the ability to solve our problems and confer meaning and value to our lives (HV: p.162). The solution, as conceived by Marcel, "is above all a question of moral renewal" (HV: p.164); and his revaluation of values is an attempt to deepen the notion of life itself and to re-awaken the sense of the sacred in individual, in teaching the individual to treat the other as a child of God, a thou, and in doing so awaken within him the consciousness that he himself is a child of God too. To this end, Marcel advocates a conversion from egocentricism to availability and openness, from the "closed" attitude of the self, the "I", to the "open" attitude of intersubjectivity, the "I-thou". These relate to the structural conditions of the individual, and require recognition of the existential assurances, which though fundamental, cannot easily be discerned, and escape any conceptualisation.[310] The existential assurances of "ontological exigence" and "human incarnation", in particular, point to the need for the transcendental dimension of our values and being, as well as the recognition that values are not created by us, but rather encountered in a pre-reflective manner, in the realm of mystery.

As part of his revaluation of values, Marcel also sees the need for a fundamental revaluation of wisdom, exhorting us to recognise God as the wellspring of such wisdom, and encouraging us to put on the armour of wisdom and set out on the road to become wise men, sages, who must adopt spiritual attitudes in order to establish the bonds of fraternity among people and create a community of communion. "All my thinking", he writes, "has aimed at such a wisdom" (TW: p.198). Marcel concedes that a philosophy of transcendence such as his cannot culminate in a theory, "but rather in an understanding of saintliness; a saintliness apprehended not as a way of being, but as something given in the purest form in its intention" (CF: p.146). The genuine wisdom sought by Marcel through such revaluation is a wisdom guided by a fresh understanding of what a human being is, a being who is always in a situation with others as well as with the sacred dimension.

Although Marcel admits that he has "no sort of magic formulae" (DW: p.18), he comes to believe that God still lives, and his revaluation suggests that perhaps "the only way to rediscover the path to the sacral" is in regaining "inwardness", that is in intersubjective relationships[311] (S:

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[310] Marcel alludes that we may need to turn to poetry and music to attain such assurances (TW: p.39).
[311] Indeed it could be said that Marcel's "whole philosophy is obsessed [with such communion]" (Miceli 1965: p.120).

pp.51-53). It is within the context of such relationships that values can survive, backed by the recognition of a sacred element.

In the context of a Nietzschean revaluation of values project, Marcel's attempt to chart a path through nihilism and anxiety should be considered as a failure and a relapse back onto the notion of an absolute, a transmutation of Nietzschean life-affirmation into Thou-affirmation, and a sign of decadence in the Nietzschean sense; because although our "ontological exigence", the need that there be God, is taken to be an "existential assurance" and not a certainty, God itself is taken by Marcel to be an absolute and is central to his revaluation. Despite this failure, however, Marcel's revaluation attempt offers us new insights, in particular, on the incarnate nature of our being, the nature of values, and their place within our human relationships.

Neither Weber's "cultivated man", struggling to balance the ethics of conviction and responsibility, nor Marcel's wise or sage man, grounding ethics in God, could be the ideal substitute to Nietzsche's Ubermensch, and do not offer an adequate response to nihilism. For Marcel, questions of ultimate concern were always part of his life[312] (Hanley 1995: p.139); and his elucidation of intersubjectivity shows us how, through a concrete existential way, God or one's ultimate concern could be sought and revealed. The notion of "ultimate concern", however, is pivotal in Paul Tillich's attempt at a revaluation of values. In the next chapter, I turn to explore Tillich' revaluation of values response.

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[312] Marcel wrote that the affirmation about God "is inseparable from a passionate interest, or from what Paul Tillich has very well called 'ultimate concern'…" (TW: p.162).

Chapter 5 - Paul Tillich: Theonomous Ethics

"Morality is not a subject - it is a life put to the test in dozens of moments."

Tillich[313]

Overview

If the cry of Nietzsche's madman that "God is dead" came as a surprise, imagine the shock had it been uttered by a theologian. In Paul Tillich,[314] we hear the claim not only that "God does not exist", but indeed to argue for the existence of God "is to deny him" (ST-I: p.227). The God that Nietzsche was referring to had to be killed because this "God of theological theism" objectified the human being, turned her into a cog, a thing among things, and "nobody can tolerate being made into a mere object of absolute knowledge and absolute control" (ThC: pp.184-185). Tillich claims that Nietzsche failed to provide a viable solution for the crisis of the death of God because "the murderer of God finds God in man. He has not succeeded in killing God at all. God has returned in Zharathustra" (EG: para.11) and in the figure of Ubermensch.

In this chapter, I explore the revaluation of values offered by Tillich,[315] who employs the "method of correlation"[316] to argue that, unlike Nietzsche's revaluation, which sought the solution to the existential problem of nihilism in existence itself, a proper revaluation should look for the solution outside of existence, because the existential problem cannot have an existential solution. "Man is the question, not the answer" (ST-II: pp.14-15). Correlation means that, although there is interdependence between the question and the answer, in this case between our existential predicament and the solution to it, the question and answer are

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[313] Cited in Beorn and Knowles (2014: p.115).

[314] Tillich is considered a "philosophical theologian" (Smith 2003a) and may be viewed as "the twentieth century's foremost Protestant theologian of culture" (Brant 2012: p.49).

[315] In an age where theology, having completely lost its monopoly as a foundational science and increasingly excluded and viewed as irrelevant in any serious discussion about ethics, we may be tempted to dismiss Tillich's theologically-based ethics as inappropriate and out of step with recent attempts to find a foundation for ethics. My consideration of Tillich's ethical philosophy, and to a lesser degree that of Marcels' which I undertook in the previous chapter, is done in the light of my acceptance of (Müller 2001)'s argument that the religious and theological views of morality are not beyond the bounds of rational discussion.

[316] Tillich describes correlation as the "interdependence of two independent factors. It is not understood in the logical sense of quantitative or qualitative coordination of elements without causal relation, but it is understood as a unity of the dependence and independence of two factors." It is "the correlation between existential questions and theological answers" (ST-II: p.13). Furthermore, in the first volume of his Systematic Theology, he clearly states where he looks for the solution to the problem facing human beings. He writes: "In using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions" (ST-I: p.70).

independent of each other; so much so that it is impossible to derive the answer from the question. Tillich's revaluation of values is an attempt to find a theological foundation for ethics as the solution to the crisis of value and meaning facing man.[317] To understand his revaluation effort, it is important to bear in mind that he uses concepts and notions in their ontological and essential sense as he sees them: for instance, he uses love in the sense of its agape quality, not sensual; or justice not in terms of equality. His revaluation also finds the need to revaluate many other concepts: Nietzsche's God is revaluated as "the God above god" (TCB: p.176) or "being-itself"; religion and faith are revaluated as "ultimate concern"; morality is revaluated not as an act but as a way of being; the Christian notion of the "Fall" as "estrangement"; and Jesus as the "Christ" or the "New Being".

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I provide a brief description of man's existential predicament, which Tillich attributes to a rupture in existence, the separation of our essential being from our existential being, which is also the cause of the anxiety of meaninglessness. Tillich's revaluation, then, is an attempt to reunite these two elements of our being, making us whole again, a self-actualisation to become a person. To this end, he identifies a number of ontological concepts that he takes as a priori or absolutes, in particular those which form the ontological structure of being. Tillich's revaluation also hinges on the understanding of religion not as a set of beliefs but as an infinite concern for the unconditional, the "ultimate concern", which I will describe.

I will then explain Tillich's "theonomous ethics" as the fruit of his revaluation and the solution to the crisis of ethics, which is meant to overcome the deficiencies of autonomy and heteronomy, underpinned by the transcendental dimension or God. Indeed, as I will try to make clear, the common thread throughout Tillich's revaluation project is an insistence and demonstration that morality is intrinsically religious and religion is intrinsically ethical; therefore, as he claims, there can neither be any conflicts between reason-based and faith-based ethics, nor could religion and ethics be substituted for one another.

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[317] He contends that, although there is no conflict between philosophy and theology and indeed both address the question of being, the attitude and the approach of a philosopher is that of detachment and objectivity toward being and its structure; but "the attitude of the theologian is 'existential'", as he is concerned with the meaning of being and not the structure, and in this process he is not detached but involved with the whole of his existence (ST-I: pp.25-26).

Since Tillich makes a distinction between ethics and morality,[318] and having described his theonomous ethics, I will then turn to explain how he locates a religious element in each component of morality, those of moral imperative, moral content, and moral motivation. The moral imperative for Tillich is the same as that of Nietzsche and Marcel, namely, to become a person; but I will explain why the moral imperative is not sufficient to enable one to become a person and requires moral motivation, which itself has to transcend the imperative. The moral content is how one maintains her relationship or encounter with the other and remains a person in the process; and this as I will describe as being dependent on the principles of justice, love and wisdom. I explore these principles with particular attention to love, which for Tillich is the ultimate moral principle and is the principle that uses wisdom and provides the adaptability necessary in each concrete moral situation. The notion of kairos is then introduced as the mechanism through which wisdom is renewed for a given age, as well as the figure of "New Being", which is personified in the Christ as the mark of the manifestation of the kairos of our time.

I offer a critique of Tillich's revaluation project, before concluding the chapter by pointing out that, although he offers a new perspective on the cause of the crisis of nihilism in terms of his notion of estrangement, his response through the method of correlation draws on too weak an interdependence between the problem and the solution, and perhaps even completely severs any association between the two. This leads me to suggest that Tillich re-interpreted the existential problem through his theological lens before addressing it through the same theology. I argue that his great reliance on God and his revaluation of many concepts, including those of Christian revelation, are made without adequate justification, undermining his whole revaluation effort.

Existential Predicament

Tillich is essentially in lock step with Marcel in referring to the dominant spirit of modernity as "the spirit of industrial society", which is influenced by the trinity of interrelated activities of "mathematical natural science, technique and capitalist economy" (RS: pref.II). In such a society, characterised by the dominance of technology and technical reasoning, the only dimensions of being are considered to be "those which can be totally grasped with the tool of formal logic" (ST-II: p.90). Tillich is critical of capitalism, "the symbol of self-sufficient

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[318] Tillich defines Ethics as the "science of the moral" and proposes that the term "ethics" be used when discussing the theory of morals, and terms such as "moral" or "morality" be used when referring to a moral act itself (MB: pp.21-22).

finitude" (RS: chap.2-I), believing that such an institution is contrary to existence (Clary 1994) because, within it, human beings come to be detached from their transcendental moorings, as "petrifying calculations" take the place of "creative life" (RS: chap.1-I). God becomes superfluous and replaced by "the system of finite inter-relations we call the universe", a system which is self-sufficient, calculable, manageable, and open for improvement by its masters, human beings [319] (ThC: pp.43-44).

"Technical reason", Tillich writes, "dehumanises man if it is separated from ontological reason" (ST-I: p.81), it transforms human beings into commodities, "which pure science can calculate and technical science can control"[320] (TCB: p.137).

Tillich is critical of the hegemony of the scientific model of knowledge, what he calls "controlling knowledge", because it is based on technical reasoning and has come to be considered as the only valid mode of acquiring knowledge. "Controlling knowledge claims control of every level of reality" (ST-I: p.110), so much so that even our life, spirit, community, values and meanings are quantified, managed as numbers, and controlled and treated in terms of objectivity and detachment, measurement, analysis, and technical methods. In what closely echoes Weber's concerns, Tillich writes:

> "Man actually has become what controlling knowledge considers him to be, a thing among things, a cog in the dominating machine of production and consumption, a dehumanised object of tyranny or a normalised object of public communications. Cognitive dehumanisation has produced actual dehumanisations" (ST-I: pp.110-111).

According to Tillich, the human being resists this objectification and feels the need to adapt to this dehumanisation rather than being broken by it; however, such an

> "adaptation makes him a means for ends which are means themselves, and in which an ultimate end is lacking. Out of this predicament …. the experiences of emptiness and meaninglessness, of dehumanisation and estrangement have resulted" (ThC: p.46).

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[319] According to Tillich, "The liberation given to man by technical possibilities turns into enslavement to technical actuality" (ST-III: p.74), and as a result, "man, for whom all this was invented as a means, becomes a means himself" (TCB: p.138).
[320] Tillich writes: "The man-created world of objects has drawn into itself him who created it and who now loses his subjectivity in it. He has sacrificed himself to his own productions" (TCB: p.138).

This experience of meaninglessness of the world is Nietzsche's nihilism, and although we are aware that we are in need of "an ultimate meaning in our daily lives" (MSA: chap.4 para.44), the question remains, as to how can we find meaning in this world? Tillich himself sees this question as a reformulation of an age old question, of "how do I find a merciful God?", and contends that the answer to this question can be found neither through intellectual nor through moral works; indeed, "nothing can be done by man who is in the situation in which he asks the question" (ST-III: p.242).

Tillich regards Nietzsche as a "great warrior" struggling to combat and revolt against the harms of capitalism, and would regard Weber in the same light[321]; and attempts to play his own part in this struggle. Capitalist society, he argues, regards "itself as an association of individuals united for the sake of common production", and to this end it relies on rational necessity and breeds the ethics of self-sufficiency, by presupposing on the one hand "the loss of a content determined by the reference of life to the eternal and the consequent attention to finite forms", and on the other hand "the loss of community-love" (RS: chap.2-II).

Tillich uses the concept of ambiguity to refer to the existential predicament we face in life, and he takes life to be ambiguous in its forms, functions and dimensions; and these ambiguities are experienced in all spheres of life, whether in morality, religion or culture.[322] The notion of "estrangement" lies at the core of these ambiguities and existential predicament, and is used to explain the condition of human beings that leads to nihilism and existential anxiety of meaninglessness. It is the key to understanding Tillich's revaluation of values project.

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[321] Tillich believes that Protestantism, in protesting against form and conformity, and against the authority of the sacred, must not detach itself from this authority. He writes: "But if Protestantism tries to protect the majesty of the unconditional against every attempt of a finite reality to set itself up as unconditioned, it must somehow participate in the unconditional" (TPE: p.209). Capitalism is the outcome of this detachment from the unconditional or sacred, as Weber lucidly demonstrated.

[322] Tillich writes: "Life remains ambiguous as long as there is life" (ST-II: p.4), and elsewhere, "Life has many aspects, it is ambiguous" (TCB: p.27).

Estrangement[323]

> "…the state of our whole life is estrangement from others and ourselves, because we are estranged from the Ground of our Being, because we are estranged from the origin and aim of our life" (SF: chap.19 para.11).

The ambiguities of life are the consequence of "the separation and interplay of the essential and existential elements of being" (ST-III: p.137), the elements of "created goodness and estrangement", the good and evil dichotomy. All our behaviour is motivated by the tension between these two elements, and this means the impossibility of achieving goodness under the condition of existence alone, as Nietzsche perceived. Tillich writes: "Man as he exists is not what he essentially is and ought to be. He is estranged from his true being" (ST-II: p.45). However, human beings long for an unambiguous life; that is to say, they yearn to return to their essential and created goodness. On this basis, Tillich contends that the answer to the existential problems cannot be found in existence itself, which is the domain of ambiguities; and although religion is not an answer to this problem either, because itself is also a sphere of ambiguities in the sense that it is a function of life (ST-III: p.80),

> "since religion is the self-transcendence of life in the realm of spirit, it is in religion that man start the quest for an unambiguous life and it is in religion that he receives the answer" (ST-III: p.114).

We saw such a distinction between one's essence and existence in the ontology of Marcel too, where his response to the search for an unambiguous life was captured in terms of his notion of "ontological exigence",[324] our inner need to recover our lost and forgotten foundation, the need that there be a rescuing God. According to Tillich, a human being "is not a thing which may or may not exist, it is an original phenomenon which logically precedes all questions of existence" (ST-I: p.188); and he is critical of naturalistic philosophies that deny man's essence, such as that of Nietzsche, because they take existence for granted, without asking about the source of the negativity and ethical failing of man (ST-II: p.34). Tillich argues that,

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[323] The estrangement that Tillich is talking about here should not be equated to a physical separation of a person from another person; rather, this estrangement "is an ontological affair in which creation moves from potentiality to actuality" (Peters 1963: p.296), from essence to existence. Tillich identifies three types of separation: "separation among individual lives, separation of a man from himself, and separation of all men from the Ground of Being" (SF: chap.19 para.5).

[324] See chapter 4, as well as (see TW: p.226) and (see CF: p.93).

"there is an ultimate unity of all beings, rooted in the divine life from which they emerge and to which they return. All beings … participate in it. And therefore they all participate in each other" (EN: p.45).

Tillich goes on to at least partly demythologise the biblical story of the "Fall", by re-casting it in terms of the separation of man, a being created good and in unity with the divine life but becoming sinful as a consequence of his fall, abandoning his participation in divine life and making a "transition from essence to existence"[325] (ST-II: p.33). On this basis, he attributes our existential predicament and the anxiety associated with it to our fall from our essential goodness, and the crisis of morality stems from our estrangement or separation not only from each other but also from ourselves. "Man is split within himself" (SF: chap.19 para.10); and this fact for Tillich points to even a graver problem, namely that we are also separated from the "ground of our being", or God, even taking an antagonistic and hostile position against Him. Tillich asserts that values and morality, once separated from the soil of divine reality, fall apart. This is the crux of our moral problem, and if the solution to this problem is sought in secular ethics, it is because the religious message of love and grace have "disappeared behind the preaching of religious or moral law" (MB: p.14).

For Tillich, "the state of existence is the state of estrangement" (ST-II: p.51), and this estranged existence or condition is also the cause of existential anxiety.

Anxiety of Emptiness and Meaninglessness

Tillich defines anxiety as the "self-awareness of the finite self as finite" (ST-I: p.192), which is "the state in which a being is aware of its possible nonbeing" (TCB: p.35). He goes on to distinguish three types of anxiety, all of which he considers as existential,[326] characterising the moral and spiritual condition of humanity in different eras: Ontological,[327] Moral,[328] and Spiritual.[329] Although each form of anxiety is predominant at different historical epochs,[330] all

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[325] Tillich claims that the "Fall" should not be interpreted literally as a historical fact taking place at a given point in time; rather, the separation between man's essence and his existence should be viewed symbolically. For him, the biblical story of the Fall denotes the fact that the fall or separation always existed in man.

[326] Existential anxiety is the basic or primordial form of anxiety, and neurotic or psychological forms of anxiety grow out of existential anxiety.

[327] Where anxiety threatens "man's ontic self-affirmation, relatively in terms of fate, absolutely in terms of death (TCB: pp.41-45).

[328] Where anxiety "threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, absolutely in terms of condemnation" (TCB: pp.41 & p51-54).

[329] Where anxiety "threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation, relatively in terms of emptiness, absolutely in terms of meaninglessness" (TCB: pp.41 & 46-51).

[330] According to Tillich, ontological anxiety was predominant at the end of the ancient civilisation, the moral anxiety at the end of the Middle ages, and the spiritual anxiety at the end of the modern period (TCB: p.57).

three forms are interwoven and all "are immanent in each other"; and in each it is the fact of nonbeing that threatens one's being. According to Tillich, "[t]his estranged world is ruled by structures of evil… They rule individual souls… [and] produce anxiety in all forms" (ST-II: p.27). He attributes the social presupposition of the anxiety of meaninglessness, which he considers as the dominant form of anxiety in our times, to "the breakdown of absolutism, the development of liberalism and democracy, the rise of a technical civilisation" (TCB: p.61). Like Weber, who saw the anxiety of meaninglessness as being brought about by the fruits of rationalisation, namely, the "iron cage of rationality" and disenchantment, Tillich also attributes this anxiety to "the risk of losing oneself and becoming a thing within the whole of things or of losing one's world in an empty self-relatedness" (TCB: p.155).

Tillich asserts that anxiety of a finite being cannot be eliminated, because it is not psychological but existential;[331] that is to say, anxiety, the threat of non-being, cannot be removed because non-being is part of being, "it belongs to existence itself" (TCB: p.39). He writes:

> "They try with their methods to overcome existential negativity, anxiety, estrangement, meaninglessness, and guilt. They deny that they are universal, that they are existential in that sense… and they try to remove them. But this is impossible. The existentialist structure cannot be healed by the most refined techniques. They are objects of salvation…"[332]

Tillich's revaluation of values, which I will consider next, is an attempt to reunite the essential and existential elements in human beings; and this, according to Tillich, is the only way that the anxiety of meaninglessness could be overcome.

Revaluation of Values (Tillich's Response)

Although Tillich agrees with Nietzsche that the crisis of nihilism has come about because of the absence of an untenable God, unlike Nietzsche he does not believe that a revaluation could do away with God; rather, he believes that the remedy lies in a revival of the bond that links us to our ground of being, or God. Thus God, for Tillich, never died and could not have been killed, but was withdrawn from our lives.

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[331] In Chapter 2, I argued in more detail that attempts to remove anxiety through creation of a god, an absolute, or something meaningful to rely on, exacerbates the problem, because "naked absolute, produces naked anxiety…" (TCB: p.39).
[332] (From 'The Theological Significance of Existentialism and Psychoanalysis', pg 91-92 by Paul Tillich, as cited in Cooper 2006: p.69).

Concerned with "the growth of ethical relativism in theory and in practice" (MSA: chap.2 para.3), Tillich knew well that a proper revaluation of values should not only cater for a degree of flexibility to prevent values from becoming rigid and irrelevant to a given time and concrete situation, but should also accommodate for an absolute element, to give values authority and validity to combat the rise of disillusionment and relativism; and "both [these requirements] must be united" (MB: p.87). To this end, Tillich finds the necessity of uncovering a number of self-evident absolutes.

Absolutes[333]

Tillich believes that, without some absolutes, a priori or some central concepts, ethics, and hence meaningful life, will be impossible; so he considers it "a service to life itself to find these absolutes and to show their validity and their limits" (MSA: chap.2 para.7). He asserts that absolutes must exist, because relativism by definition is possible only on the basis of the structure of absolutes. There is no such thing as "absolute relativism", the term is self-contradictory (MSA: chap.2 para.7). Thus, even if the statements about absolutes are relative, "the absolutes themselves are not relative. One cannot escape them. Even if I had argued against them, I'd have had to use them to do so" (MSA: chap.2 para.49). We saw the need for absolutes in Marcels' revaluation attempt in terms of "existential assurances",[334] as well as in Weber's in the form of "ultimate standpoints". Tillich identifies a number of ontological concepts, which he takes to be "a priori in the strict sense of the word" (ST-I: p.184), an absolute. These are absolutes of "essences, ontological structures, and being-itself" (MSA: chap.2 para.19).

I turn now to briefly consider each of these absolutes.

Essences

According to Tillich, "essences" are discoverable through abstraction (MSA). They are trans-temporal, and without them language cannot exist.[335] For instance, consider the "redness" of the colour "red", which is universal and independent of any particular object or any particular instance of the colour red. Even if by some cosmic event the possibility of creation of the colour red disappears off the face of the earth, "redness" as an essence will still remain. This argument

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[333] Tillich points out that, by absolute, he does not refer to "an absolute thing" such as how God is thought of by many; rather, by absolute he is referring to "something that resists the stream of relativities" (MSA: chap.2 para.8).
[334] Examples of Existential Assurances identified by Marcel are, "human incarnation", "ontological exigence", hope, death and birth. See Chapter 4.
[335] Tillich writes: "This power is the power of abstraction, the power to create universals in terms of language" (MSA: chap.2 para.22).

can be extended to other essences, such as the essence of an object, a plant or even of a human being.

Structures of Being (Ontological Structures)

In our encounter with reality, the structure of our mind and our power of questioning allows us to discover the universal structures of being. According to Tillich, these absolutes are the basic and essential structures that make thinking, understanding and acting possible: they "make the world of becoming possible as a world" (MSA: chap.2 para.30). Examples of such absolutes are the categories such as "causality and substance", or absolutes of "polarities".

<u>Causality and Substance</u>
Without the category of causality, actions would simply not take place: for example, my computer would not switch on, someone needs to push the power switch first.

<u>Polarities</u>
Tillich gives three examples of absolutes of polarities, and notes that there are many others. The given examples are the ontological polarities of "individualisation and participation", "dynamics and form", and "freedom and destiny".[336] Tillich contends that, within each of these polarities, "the first element expresses the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself, while the second element expresses the belongingness of being, its character of being a part of a universe of being" (ST-I: p.183). Each pole in a polarity is prevented from becoming the highest generic concept, and each pole is meaningful in so far as it refers by implication to the opposite pole (ST-I: p.183). At the ontological level, the two poles are united and in harmony, but they are separated at the existential level, the level of estrangement, and cause conflict and problems (ST-II: pp.62-65).

Polarity of Individualisation and Participation
This ontological polarity could be compared with Marcel's existential assurance of human incarnation and participation in the world. A human being is not a closed system; rather, he is always a being in the world, so much so that neither the self nor the world is conceivable without the other. "The self without a world is empty; the world without a self is dead" (ST-I: p.189). This relation of the self to the world is unique, and has a dual characteristic, in the sense that it is one of belongingness allowing or exposing the self to be affected by the world, as well as

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[336] Tillich maintains that "every ontological element includes its polar opposite completely without tension and without the threat of dissolution" (ST-I: p.269).

being one of separation from the world enabling the self to know his world and to respond to it as an act of freedom. This existence or awareness of the self in the world, the self-world relationship, is the most basic ontological structure, and as such it precedes all other structures; hence, such an understanding has to be beyond question and cannot be derived from or arrived at through some rational investigations or empirical facts. For Tillich, this is an absolute. He writes:

> "The basic ontological structure cannot be derived. It must be accepted. The question 'What precedes the duality of self and world, or subject and object?' is a question in which reason looks into its own abyss-an abyss into which distinction and derivation disappear" (ST-I: p.193).

The self-world correlation includes not only the environment but all the norms, ideas and relationships one holds and apprehends. Thus, being in the world does not imply merely having an environment to live in, but rather that we are a "being with" (EPNM: p.52) others in the world. Without participation in the world, the self is "an empty shell, a mere possibility" (TCB: p.149).

Like Marcel, who conceived the constitution of a person as an "I-thou" relationship, Tillich also understands a person's constitution as a similar duality, asserting that "Man becomes man in personal encounters. Only by meeting a thou does man realise that he is an ego" (LPJ: p.78). He further writes: "a person becomes a person in the encounter with other persons, and in no other way"[337] (EPNM: p.51). No individual exists without participation with another individual self; and this is not something an individual may or may not have, this is a principle, an absolute.

Polarity of Dynamics and Form

The polarity of "dynamics and form" refers to vitality and intentionality. The dynamic element in a human being, his creativity, keeps him alive and growing: it is the impulse towards his self-transcendence. The element of dynamism is conditioned and balanced by the element of form or intentionality. Intentionality here means "being related to meaningful structures, living in universals, grasping and shaping reality" (ST-I: p.200). In other words, the dynamic of creativity is combined with meaningful structure. "Dynamism" separated from "form" ends in

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[337] Other references given by Tillich in this regard are: "The person as the fully developed individual self is impossible without other fully developed selves" (ST-I: pp.195-196), and "There is only one way to do this, namely in the encounter with the other persons. In the person-to-person encounter, both persons are created as persons" (EPMA: p.246).

a meaningless urge for self-transcendence,[338] and "form" separated from "dynamism" turns into legalism and external law. In the structural polarity of "dynamics and form" we also find a parallel with Marcel's notion of "creative fidelity", where the spontaneity and dynamism of creativity was checked with the constancy of fidelity. Both the Tillichean polarity of "dynamics and forms" and the Marcellian "creative fidelity" are essential in maintaining the constitution of a person in each philosopher's respective doctrine of man.

Polarity of Freedom and Destiny

By virtue of the fact that the self is in the world and participates, he does not have absolute freedom but a restricted freedom. Living and participating in the world necessitates acting, but acting involves the being who acts and the beings that are being acted upon. This restricts man's freedom to make of himself what he wants. Tillich here is rejecting what he calls "radical existentialism" (TCB: p.148), where man is taken to have and to be infinite freedom. "Man is finite freedom", Tillich asserts; and "he has received his being and with it the structure of his being, including the structure of his finite freedom" (TCB: p.149). As a finite freedom, man is capable of making decisions, but set in the context of destiny.[339]

Being-Itself

Tillich identifies "being-itself" as the most fundamental absolute that "underlies all the other absolutes as well as the stream of relativities, the absolute that makes the idea of truth possible"; this is the absolute that contains "the norms of every ethical command" (MSA: chap.2 para.55). Being-itself is absolute because no one can imagine non-being nor can deny the "is-ness" of being. Being-itself transcends any particular being, it transcends both subject and object, it "is beyond essence and existence" (UC: 3rd. dialogue), yet contains the essence of every being; hence, it is the basis of truth, it is "the Holy", the unconditional, the ultimate, and the ground of everything that has being. Tillich asserts, "God is being-itself, not a being" (ST-I: p.262) beside other beings that could be killed. For Tillich, "being-itself" is not an empty absolute, the result of a radical abstraction; rather, this concept is the result of two profound experiences, one

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[338] Tillich holds the view that Nietzsche's "will to power" runs unchecked, culminating in the Ubermensch, which he considers to be negation of "will to power" itself. Ubermensch, for Tillich, is an example of the existential "disruption of dynamics and form"(ST-II: p.60), and he considers it a meaningless concept, because man can never go beyond the structural limits of his being. Man will always be man and the notion of a perfect man is an absurdity.
[339] Tillich writes: "Our destiny is that out of which our decisions arise; it is the indefinitely broad basis of our centered selfhood; … Destiny is not a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, formed by nature, history and myself. My destiny is the basis of my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny" (ST-I: p.185).

brought about by the shock of non-being and our existential anxiety, and the second the result of the experience of love of being-itself.[340]

In Marcel we saw that the "I-thou" relation is a triadic relation involving not just the "I" and the "thou" but also related to the transcendent or God. Tillich also sees the interdependence of being-itself, "the ground of our being", in I-thou relationships, writing, "He who cannot relate himself as an I to a thou cannot relate himself to the true and the good and to the ground of being in which they are rooted" (LPJ: p.31). To maintain this I-thou relationship, "the ground of our being and meaning should concern us ultimately" (BR: p.51): it should become a matter of "ultimate concern" for us.

Ultimate Concern

Tillich's unique view of religion illuminates his entire philosophy, in particular that of ethics, because in contrast to religion understood in its common or narrower sense, he defines a larger concept of religion and faith as the state of "being grasped by an ultimate concern, by an infinite interest, by something one takes unconditionally seriously" (MB: p.30), and writes that "God is the name of the content of the concern" (ThC: p.40) for the adherents of various religions. In other words, religion, rather than being a mere collection of rules and traditions, is a "direction toward the Unconditioned" (RS: chap.1-II).

Each of us, Tillich observed, has something in our lives that concerns us above all other concerns, or concerns us ultimately. Ultimate concern is what one takes "seriously without any reservation" (SF: chap.7 para.12), and can only be applied to something that is most important and unconditionally important, something that is taken as the deepest and most fundamental in our lives. For Tillich, "no human mind is entirely without an ultimate concern and some practical and theoretical expression of it …" (Kegley and Bretall 1952: p.347). Every person must have an ultimate concern, "he cannot escape it even if he wants to" (Midgley 1967: p.40); after all, "man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning .... Man is ultimately concerned about that which determines his ultimate destiny beyond all preliminary necessities and accidents" (ST-I: p.17).

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[340] Tillich writes: "But there is not only the shock of non-being. There is also a positive experience. It is the experience of *eros* – 'love' in Greek - the love of being as such, a mystical relation to being-itself" (MSA: chap.2 para.55).

If existential concerns are the hallmark of religious strivings, then everyone, including atheists, can be defined as religious (Beck 2004), because everyone has an ultimate concern, and being grasped by issues of ultimate concern is to be "grasped by something unconditional, holy, absolute" (Tillich and Taylor 1991: p.123). Even the sceptics of the concept of "ultimate concern" have an ultimate concern, namely their scepticism. In other words, there is something "holy to everyone, even to those who deny that they have experienced the holy" (MSA: chap.4 para.15); and since "we can never be without" our ultimate concern (DY: p.16), Tillich believes in the "utter impossibility of atheism" (EG: para.11), asserting that secular culture[341] and atheism "presuppose the unconditional element and both express ultimate concern" (ThC: p.27).

Tillich maintains the essential unity of the three functions of life, those of culture, religion, and morality,[342] arguing that since "culture gives content to morality, [and] morality gives seriousness to culture" (ST-III: p.171), if religion as an ultimate concern is undermined, quasi-religion soon replaces it, because human beings cannot stand in a religious vacuum.

For Tillich, "the anxiety of meaninglessness is anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern" (TCB: p.47), because our ultimate concern is our attempt to go beyond all conditions to the unconditional and in doing so give meaning to all conditions.[343] It provides "direction and unity to all other concerns, and with them, to the whole personality" (DY: p.105).

But the problem we face here is that, if anything can potentially become the object of ultimate concern for us, say an object, a political movement or an aspiration, a scientific endeavour, a principle (eg. justice) or a philosophy, then Tillich's notion of "ultimate concern" would lose its potential usefulness. Mindful of such a problem, Tillich insists that "no ultimate concern is ultimately ultimate unless it is ultimate concern about the Ultimate" (Midgley 1967: p.34).

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[341] Even in the activity of the most secular of our enterprises, that of scientific enquiry, Gilkey (1970: p.40) argues, we can observe a dimension of ultimacy or of unconditioned, and this is despite the tendency and the character of our modern society to reject a "meaningful dimension of ultimacy". Gilkey writes: "… ironically, science as a human endeavour depends for its very achievement of objectivity and rationality on a deep, and in relation to other passions, an ultimate passion among the scientists to find and adhere to the truth" (Gilkey 1970: p.49).

[342] For Tillich, "religion as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture" (ThC: p.42), and at least in his earlier writings he also refers to ethics as the "science of ethos" and "science of culture" (Wariboko 2009: p.189); so for him, ethics pertains to the norms, standards, rules and laws current in society, because the "meaning-fulfilling existential relationships of the individual to things and to reality are always socially conditioned relationships within which the socially formed and socially determined personality acts" (SS: p.188).

[343] Ultimate concern is the "meaning which gives meaning to all meanings" (TCB: p.47).

Anything less than the ultimate, anything finite, can be a matter of concern but not of ultimate concern, and the elevation of a finite or preliminary concern to ultimate results in idolatry:[344] for instance, the idolatry of the self, as is manifest in the principles of ethical autonomy; or idolatry of something else, as seen in ethical heteronomy (ST-I: p.16). Tillich asserts that "[t]he unconditional concern … is the concern about the unconditional. The infinite passion ... is the passion for the infinite ... The ultimate concern is concern about what is experienced as ultimate" (DY: p.9).

It is important to note that Tillich differentiates the act of concern from the content or the object of that concern. Of course, the content matters infinitely for the life of the person with the concern, no matter how unworthy the content may be; but the content does not matter for the formal definition of one's ultimate concern (DY: p.4). The content or the focus of ultimate concern may vary, but the form of ultimate concern remains the same. For example, a religious person may be ultimately concerned about God or his spirituality (the content of his concern); however, replacing God with another ultimate concern, say another god or ideal, should not change the depth of his concern or diminish his total conviction or surrender that he is willing to offer for this new content, because "whatever concerns man, ultimately becomes god for him" (ST-I: p.234). It is "the passion of the infinite and not its content that is decisive; for its content is just what it is itself"[345] (Kierkegaard 2009: p.155).

Tillich's concept of ultimate concern allows him to address the problems associated with moral theories that take moral rules to be universal, absolute and unchangeable. For example, application of universal rules to a particular situation may not always be appropriate or desirable; but when ultimate concern is involved, the reliance on the universal rules is removed and placed on the existence of one's ultimate concern, which will always be valid for the person having this concern; after all, such a concern is unique, and "because of this uniqueness, it is incomparable to anything else and is therefore beyond any laws of necessity or probability" (Beck 1946: p.289). Since only that which is our ultimate concern "should concern us ultimately" (BR: p.51), the truly ultimate should become the norm by which every human endeavour must be judged and transformed (Midgley 1967). The individual here has no objective proof whatsoever to rely upon; his ultimate concern provides the subjective

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[344] Tillich points out that, from a theological point of view, a preliminary concern is a medium or vehicle pointing to what is beyond itself, to the ultimate concern. For example, a religious relic is a preliminary concern pointing to the transcendence, but becomes an object of idolatry if taken as the ultimate itself.

[345] Understanding this distinction provides a criterion for determining the true ultimacy from false ones, since "the term 'ultimate concern' unites the subjective and the objective" act of concern (DY: p.10). The subjective side is the act of ultimate concern, which is an act directed towards the objective, namely the 'ultimate' itself.

certainty,[346] the imperativeness and assurance for him, resulting in conviction and commitment to act. In respect of morality, as I will elaborate later on, it could then be said that, for Tillich, morality is considered essentially as a matter of conviction and concern, not content, not about rules or principles.

The point to stress here is that "ultimate concern" is not about anchoring our conduct in some absolute set of rules or values, it is not about resurrecting Nietzsche's dead god; rather, it is about our total and unconditional reliance on our concern. The concern is not towards some universal object out there either; rather, it is inward. A genuine ultimate concern appears in our experience, in our person-to-person encounter as the fundamental source of our being (Dorrien et al. 2007); it "represents what we essentially are and therefore ought to be" (DY: p.56). Although a morality based on ultimate concern addresses the problems associated with absolutism in morality, since one's ultimate concern is not necessarily the same as those of others, the issue of moral relativity could still be raised here: that is to say, it could be asked if one's ultimate concern should be interdependently connected with others? Tillich would respond to such an issue by reminding us that such questions arise only if we confuse the "ultimate concern", which is absolute, with the content of ultimate concern, which is relative.

Ontology

Ontology constitutes the basis of Tillich's entire revaluation attempt;[347] and he considers morality as fundamentally ontological (O'Keeffe 1982, Graber 1973), because "being precedes action in everything that is, including man,…" (MB: p.14); and since "ontology precedes every other cognitive approach to reality" (LPJ: p.20), understanding the nature of man's being as well as the "being-itself" is essential in understanding his ethical philosophy. This is so because "only the 'good tree' brings 'good fruits'. Only if being precedes that which ought-to-be, can the ought-to-be be fulfilled" (ThC: p.142). Tillich asserts that "value is man's essential being", (SHV: p.195) rooted in the essential nature not his existential, so it cannot be derived from existence but from the "essential structures of being which appear within existence" (SHV: p.193). The important ramification for morality based on this belief is that morality "can be

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[346] Tillich writes: "We can only point to [Ultimate Concern]. People have made it known; and we can find it in ourselves. There is no external evidence for it…" (UC: 2nd. dialogue).
[347] Tillich writes: "The philosopher cannot avoid existential decisions, and the theologian cannot avoid ontological concepts" (ST-II: p.35).

maintained only through that which is *given* and not through that which is demanded"[348] (ThC: p.142) [italics added].

As we saw earlier, in his search to identify some absolutes Tillich came to locate a set of ontological absolutes that constitute the structure of being as well as the most fundamental absolute, that of the being-itself. He maintains that "man cannot solve any of his great problems if he does not see them in the light of his own being and of being itself" (LPJ: p.125), so the answer to all questions about morality, the source, content and motivational power behind it, directly or indirectly, is related to ontology. Tillich further holds the view that "every constructive philosophy and theology unites essentialist and existentialist elements", so a proper revaluation of values cannot succeed unless we come to understand our essential nature, indeed as a critique of many existential philosophers;[349] he notes that "one has misunderstood existentialism if one uses it without reference to its opposite", essentialism (EPNM: p.42).

Theonomous Ethics

Ontology, as the foundation of all values and meaning, leads Tillich to be dismissive of all value theories that depend on a valuating subject, choosing among a number of relative values through some valuation process. To move away from the relativity in such a process, we cannot rely upon the existence of some chosen absolute or basic values as the criteria for a hierarchy of values, because such absolute values themselves require another foundation, as Nietzsche's genealogy revealed. "[T]he whole theory" of values, Tillich concludes, "is wrecked by the necessity of distinguishing between relative values, which can be reduced to valuations, and absolute values, which require another foundation because they command valuations" (SHV: p.192).

Tillich places the solutions offered by other ethical theories into three categories: a) heteronomy, b) autonomy, and c) rationalistic-progressive (MB: p.83). Although these solutions are mutually exclusive, his revaluation of values attempts to combine the respective strengths of each and eliminate their weaknesses, in formulating a unique form of ethics (Novak 1986).

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[348] Here Tillich is in full agreement with Marcel in dismissing the Sartrean "existence precedes essence" formulation.
[349] Most notable of such existential philosophers would be Nietzsche.

In heteronomous ethics,[350] the self is recognised as part of a larger structure and needs to conform to the commands and precepts of an external authority such as God. Ethical norms and commands, then, are dependent on God as the authoritative source, "preformed in the divine mind", and hence are considered to be eternal and immovable (MB: p.83). Tillich rejects heteronomous values, because such commands do not provide the required moral imperative and motivation. "How can commandments" he asks, "coming from beyond existence possess obligation for existing beings with whose being they have no essential relationship?" (LPJ: p.75). Not only do such commands become irrelevant to existence, they suffer from an inherent rigidity and inadaptability; and despite attempts to inject a degree of flexibility such as those made by religious hierarchy, as Tillich points out, the consequence of heteronomy has been "the loss of a determining influence [by religions] on the changing world of the last centuries" (MB: p.84). The inability of the impersonal and absolutism of heteronomous ethics in adapting the moral law to change has resulted in the degeneration of morality into moralism, and "the distortion of the moral imperative into an oppressive law" (ThC: p.133). On Tillich's account one must resist obedience to any command that is not stemmed from one's inner being because such commands deny one's dignity as a person.

Ethical autonomy[351] sits at the opposite extreme to that of heteronomy. Here the self is meant to be the ultimate moral authority. Within the camp of autonomous ethics, Tillich includes existential philosophies, notably that of Nietzsche, where to combat the problems of rigidity of law in heteronomous solutions, the opposite pole has been adopted, namely that truth is taken to be relative, and change has been made the chief character of the ethical principles.[352] The autonomous approach, however, results in relativity in ethics, due to absence of any absolute or ultimate principles; and Tillich is dismissive of the idea that values can be derived from existence or life itself or be dependent on their relation to life, as Nietzsche attempted to show, because existence itself is the domain of estrangement, and life stands within the hierarchy of values, not detached from it.[353]

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[350] Tillich also refers to this as "static supra-naturalism" (MB: p.83). Such ethics are often represented by organised and revealed religions where God or a divine being is taken as an existent being like any other being, but having a much higher quality and located outside of existence and man's experience. It should be pointed out here that, although Marcel's "true heteronomy" has similarities to this ethics, it would be unfair to directly place it under this category.

[351] Tillich also refers to this as "dynamic naturalism" (MB: p.83).

[352] In the case of Nietzsche, there are no independent norms above life to guide one's conduct, so values are produced or modified in a dynamic process of life.

[353] Marcel also made similar points, rejecting the idea that we could derive values from life in order to judge life itself. (See MB-I: p.75).

Other theories within the category of ethical autonomy attempt to redress the deficiencies left open by pure autonomy by taking a pragmatic stance, and appeal to experience or reason to provide ethical norms.[354] Tillich refers to these as the "rationalistic-progressive" solutions, which establish some principles, such as equality, responsibility or freedom, in the name of absolute moral laws in nature or in human reason. Tillich finds this approach ineffective too, because "in their basic ideas, they agree with the principles of the philosophy of life" of ethical autonomy (MB: p.85). Tillich concludes that "neither autonomy nor heteronomy, isolated and in conflict, can give the answer" (ST-I: p.96). His own revaluation of values attempts to overcome the deficiencies of these approaches; it is an attempt to "transcend both graceless moralism and normless relativism in ethical theory and moral actions" (MB: p.14). For Tillich, ethics should be,

> "concerned with neither the Good nor obligation, with neither the personal order nor the legal order. It is not moral philosophy; it is the science of ethos, that is, the science of the realization of the Unconditioned within meaning-fulfilling existential relationships" (SS: p.203).

In marrying autonomy and heteronomy, Tillich establishes a theonomous[355] form of ethics, claiming that it can overcome the inadequacies and problems of ethical relativity as well as the rigidity and absolutism of law. This is achieved by showing the distinction between the moral imperative, which is absolute and unchanging, from the moral content, which is relative and dependent on the cultural norms and the particular and concrete situation in which the moral decision is being made.

Theonomy, Tillich clarifies, is not "the acceptance of the divine law imposed on reason by a highest authority [that is heteronomy]; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth" (ST-I: p.94), which is the ground of our being or being-itself. Theonomous ethics is autonomous, although "the ethical principles and processes are described in the light of the Spiritual Presence" (ST-III: p.285). Clearly, autonomy, for Tillich, does not mean having the freedom to do what one pleases; rather, it refers to "the obedience of the individual or society to the law found in its own being" (Midgley 1962: p.251). Ethics, he writes "is purely autonomous, entirely free from all religious heteronomy and yet 'theonomous' as a whole in the sense of the fundamental religious experience".[356] Unlike autonomous and heteronomous

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[354] Weber's combination of "ethics of responsibility" and "ethics of conviction" is probably a reasonable fit under this category.

[355] God (theos) and law (nomos).

[356] (From 'What is Religion?' by Paul Tillich, as quoted in O'Keeffe 1982: p.139).

ethics, which are "without ultimate moral motivating power"[357] (ST-III: p.292), theonomous ethics through the spirit-created love can provide moral motivation.[358] Theonomous ethics, Tillich elaborates, is an ethics in which, under the influence and impact of God or "Spiritual Presence, the religious substance - the experience of an ultimate concern - is consciously expressed through the process of free arguing and through an attempt to determine it" (ST-III: p.285). It takes into account the ontological foundation of values by considering the command of God as being that of "man's essential nature put against him as a law" (LPJ: p.76). It is thus the natural moral law (MB: p.33), according to which man, by his very nature, has an awareness of universally valid moral norms.[359] Such norms are rooted in his essential nature, and ultimately and by implication, in the structure of being-itself. As our essential nature, moral laws are neither autonomous, that is we have not imposed it on ourselves, nor are they heteronomous, not something imposed on us from outside. Clearly, such a belief is also a rebuttal of the theories that assert that morality is the construct of cultural norms, and hence the apparent relativity of moral norms is explained away by pointing to the variations in cultures and customs of people. Although Tillich agrees that, "undoubtedly, the concrete formulation of moral commands and their interpretation in ethical systems are largely conditioned by the social situation" (MB: p.34), he believes that "the contrast of ethical demands in separated cultures is not a contradiction, but a different expression of a common fundamental principle" (MB: p.31). In all ethical systems within any culture, it is the basic norms rooted in a person's essence that appear.[360]

Within theonomous ethics, morality and each moral act has a religious component, pointing to its transcendental dimension. I turn now to explore this religious element in every moral act.

Morality

The estrangement from our essential nature plays a crucial role in Tillich's conception of morality, as for him, "the moral law is experienced as law only because man is estranged from the structural law of his essential being, namely, to become a centred person"[361] (MB: p.48), and moral experience is in fact an expression of one's encounter with reality (MSA: chap.3).

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[357] Although Tillich maintains that all ethical theories, including autonomous and heteronomous, have an element of theonomy in them, because they are all dependent on the expression of an ultimate concern.

[358] Love is the key factor here, as ethics, according to Tillich, is nothing but "the expression of the ways in which love embodies itself, and life is maintained and saved" (MB: p.95).

[359] Marcel also subscribed to "natural moralities" and saw them as the reason why even non-believers were capable of committing ethical acts.

[360] The awareness of such norms, however, is distorted by existential factors such as culture, education etc.

[361] The moral law "is the expression of what man essentially is and therefore ought to be, but what he actually is not, as the law shows to him" (MB: p.53).

Tillich offers a revaluation of the very notion of sin, by defining it in terms of this estrangement or separation.[362] He writes:

> "I should like to suggest another Word to you, not as a substitute for the word 'sin', but as a useful clue in the interpretation of the word 'sin', 'separation' … sin is separation. To be in the state of sin is to be in the state of separation" (SF: chap.19 para.5).

A non-moral act, then, is not the violation of a list of rules committed;[363] rather, it is a condition or state in which one exists, separated from one's initial essential nature. It is the transition from our essential into an existential state, the transition out of our original state of unity, what Tillich calls the state of "dreaming innocence" (ST-II: pp.33-36). The essential nature is our created state, and since God's creation can be anything but good, our essential state must also be good and in unity with the ground of our being. A non-moral act, then, is our act of turning away from the participation in the ground of our being[364] (EN: p.56).

In contrast, a moral act is the act of transitioning back to our essential state where we are reunited with the ground of our being, overcome estrangement and become whole again. "True ethical principle is the reconciliation with one's own being" (UC: 3rd. dialogue). Thus, like Marcel, for Tillich "morality is the constitution of the bearer of the spirit, the centred person" (MB: p.17). The moral act is the act of establishing oneself as a person through self-realisation, self-actualisation and self-constitution in encounter with other persons (MB: p.21, ST-III: p.169), and not obedience or "subjection to laws" (EPNM: p.51), whether divine or human.

The impetus for morality, then, is the desire to overcome estrangement and cope with the associated anxiety of emptiness, it is the desire for reunion with one's essential self. This desire stems from the fact that "estrangement always implies a fundamental belongingness and therefore an inner drive towards reunion"[365] (UC: 3rd. dialogue). The moral law acts as a

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[362] Tillich uses "estrangement" in place of "separation" in his later works.

[363] Tillich writes: "Have the men of our time still a feeling of the meaning of sin? Do they, and do we, still realize that sin does not mean an immoral act….?" (SF: chap.19 para.4).

[364] Tillich also explains this transition from essence to existence in terms of the ontological polar elements of "freedom and destiny". God is infinite freedom, nature is finite necessity, and man, in contrast to other creatures, has finite freedom. It is this finite freedom that makes the transition from essence to existence possible. This finite freedom is a divine gift that paradoxically enables him to turn away from God (ST-II: pp.35-37). But an individual does not simply exercise his freedom and choose to be separated from his essence; rather, this existential estrangement should be considered as an act of freedom, which "is imbedded nevertheless, in the universal destiny of existence… Every ethical decision is an act both of individual freedom and of universal destiny" (ST-II: p.43).

[365] Tillich also writes: "It is impossible to unite that which is *essentially* separated. Without an ultimate belongingness no union of one thing with another can be conceived" (LPJ: p.25).

warning that summons us back to our original state of unity, where the ambiguities in all spheres of life disappear; that is to say, a moral act is a religious act and a cultural act at the same time. In this state of reunion, there is no independent culture, independent religion or independent morality (ST-II: pp.38-39, ST-III: p.102).

I will proceed to describe the components of morality, those of moral imperative, moral content, and moral motivation, drawing on Tillich's revaluation of religion as "ultimate concern" to show that each of the three components of morality have a religious character. [366]

Moral Imperative

The moral imperative, Tillich writes, "is the command to become what one potentially is, a person within a community of persons"; this is to say, that "his true being shall become his actual being - this is the moral imperative" (MB: p.20). As an imperative, the command must have an absolute and unconditional character irrespective of its content and regardless of whether or not one actually obeys the moral command or not. Tillich asserts that "it is impossible to derive a moral imperative from other sources than its own intrinsic nature" (MSA: chap.3 para.5), because if we were able to derive it, say, through some calculations of utility or fear of reward and punishment or other means, moral imperative would then depend on something else, becomes a conditional imperative, and loses its absolute seriousness and unconditionality. The moment one recognises something as a moral duty, the duty becomes unconditional, categorical, absolute and imperative.

Tillich's ontological foundation of values dispels the gap between "is" and "ought" perceived in value theories. The moral imperative, "the ought-to-be which is implied in the objective value is rooted in the essential nature of man"; in other words, it is one's essential nature that appears "as commanding authority" (SHV: p.195), giving power and authority to moral law, making values imperative on the individual. Tillich stresses this point: "I repeat: What commands us is our own essential nature, our unique and eternally significant true being. It speaks to us and demands of us that we do not waste and destroy it" (MSA: chap.3 para.14).

Thus, it is not an external law imposed upon us that demands our obedience, but rather "the 'silent voice' of our own nature as man, and as a man with an individual character" (MB: p.24). This "silent voice" is an indication that, despite man's estrangement from his essential being,

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[366] Taking religion as ultimate concern, such a religious character is the case not only for Tillich's theonomous ethics but indeed of any other proper ethics.

he is not completely separated from it, and the moral command is unconditional because it is we ourselves commanding ourselves. "This alone makes it obligatory and its denial self-destructive. This alone accounts for the unconditional form of the moral imperative, however conditioned the contents may be" (LPJ: p.77).

Since a person becomes a person in his encounter with another person and in no other way (EPMA: p.248), any attempts to objectify or dehumanise the other in this encounter in effect destroys one's own humanity,[367] and "he never can become a mature person" himself (EPNM: p.51). It is this destruction or damage to one's own constitution as a person[368] "…that creates the unconditional character of the moral imperative. If I use a person as a thing I myself lose my dignity as a person…. Here is the birthplace of the unconditional character of the moral imperative" (MSA: chap.3 para.9).

The moral act unites our essential being with our actual being, and once this unity is achieved, there would be no need for a moral command, because "We would be what we should be, and do what we should do. There would be no 'ought to be,' no command, 'Thou shalt. . .' only simple being" (MSA: chap.3 para.11). Tillich's "become a person" (MB: p.20) is essentially a restatement of Nietzsche's moral imperative to "become who you are". It is clear that all three philosophers, Nietzsche, Marcel and Tillich, have the same understanding of what the moral imperative is; and for all three the moral act is not compliance or obedience to an external law or command, but rather it is an act in accord with the inner law of our being. On this basis, a non-moral act is not an act in contradiction or in disobedience to a command or a law, but an act that contradicts and hinders our self-actualisation and self-affirmation as a person.

Thus, like Nietzsche and Marcel, self-actualisation comes to be Tillich's answer to the question "why be moral?". For Tillich, the moral aim is to become "a person within a community of persons" by constituting and preserving a person in all his potentialities (MB: p.29). The moral act is imperative because it is the telos for which we are created, and the imperative is unconditionally valid because it is our own "essential being that confronts us in the moral command, demanding something from us in our actual being with all its problems and distortions" (MSA: chap.3 para.10). Tillich writes:

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[367] Marcel essentially held the same view, in that failure to uphold the dignity of the other, say by objectifying her, damages the intersubjective relationship and as a result destroys one's own constitution as a person.

[368] Tillich writes: "In our tendency to abuse and destroy others, there is an open or hidden tendency to abuse and to destroy ourselves. Cruelty towards others is always also cruelty towards ourselves" (SF: chap.19 para.10).

"The reason for the unconditional character of the moral imperative is that it puts our essential being as a demand against us. The moral imperative is not a strange law, imposed on us, but it is the law of our own being. In the moral imperative we ourselves, in our essential being, are put against ourselves, in our actual being" (ThC: p.31).

Morality must be categorical not hypothetical; it must be imperative, otherwise it will not be a moral act;[369] and since there is an essential unity between morality, culture and religion despite their existential separation (ST-III: p.283), without imperativeness of morality the culture and religious functions of human beings also lack ultimate seriousness and disintegrate (MB: p.19). In short, it is this imperativeness, this unconditional character of an act, that makes the act a moral one, not the content of the act itself. This is an important claim by Tillich, because it means that, faced with a number of alternative decisions, each one might be justified as a moral act in a particular situation so long as the decision is done "with the consciousness of standing under an unconditional imperative. The doubt concerning the justice of a moral act does not contradict the certainty of its ultimate seriousness" (MB: p.23).

Of course, every moral decision carries a risk, the risk of being the wrong decision; but for Tillich, the wrongness of the decision does not make the decision immoral, because a moral decision is only dependent on the unconditionality, the "ought to be" of the moral imperative. Since the moral imperative must be unconditional, it implies something above finitude and transitoriness (MB: p.28); and as religion is defined as the state of being infinitely concerned with the unconditional, Tillich concludes that moral imperative has a religious dimension, and religion is it's intrinsic unconditional character and quality. This is to say that "morality points beyond it to its religious foundation" (MB: p.15). Of course, if indeed religion is intrinsic in moral imperative, there can then be no conflict between religion and secular ethics (MB: p.30). Tillich counters and dismisses the argument of theologians who claim that the religious and unconditional character of morality stems from the fact that it is a divine command issued through the "Will of God", by contending that the Will of God needs to be revaluated and understood not as an arbitrary command coming from an external ruler and imposed on us, but rather as our essential and created nature. He writes: "The 'Will of God' for us is precisely our essential being with all its potentialities, our created nature declared as 'very good' by God, as,

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[369] This is in contrast to ethical philosophies that see the moral aim as providing the maximum amount of pleasure or utility, often derived without any regard for an element of unconditionality and imperativeness of the act. Such philosophies take the moral act itself to be the moral imperative; but on Tillich's account, achieving maximum amount of good or pleasure through an act does not provide the imperativeness to commit the act in the first place. As Nietzsche also points out, "utilitarianism is not a foundation but only a theory of consequences, and absolutely cannot be made obligatory for everyone" (WP: 724).

in terms of the Creation myth" (MB: p.24).

Only because the Will of God is manifest in our essential being and is intrinsic to our own nature can we accept the moral imperative as valid and good (MB: p.24). Indeed, Tillich asserts that any moral command imposed on us from an outside source, whether this is considered the "will of God" or other authorities and sources, is not unconditional, and "we can and must resist it, because it denies our own dignity as persons" (MSA: chap.3 para.10). But the demand coming from within "is the awareness of our belonging to a dimension that transcends our own finite freedom and the ability to affirm or to negate ourselves" (MB: p.25). Again, this does not mean that the relation between morality and religion is an external one, because the will of God is nothing else than the good of essential being. "Morality", Tillich asserts, "does not depend on any concrete religion; it is religious in its very essence" (MB: p.64).

In short, we could say that religion is the state of being grasped by ultimate concern; everyone has an ultimate concern, hence everyone is religious. Morality is the self-affirmation of our essential being, but "our ultimate concern [also] represents what we essentially are and therefore ought to be. It stands as the law of our being, against us and for us" (DY: p.56). Since the moral imperative "consists of actions taking the character of the ultimate concern" (Hummel 1987: p.126), we could say that an ethical act is in fact an expression of the ultimate concern. It has a clear religious dimension and is an unconditional imperative because of this religious quality.

It should be noted here that, in formulating the moral imperative, neither Tillich nor Marcel set out to prove the existence of God; however, Marcel found God as the unconditional within our intersubjective experiences, and Tillich shows that God or being-itself is "within the different realms of man's encounter with reality" (MSA: chap.4 para.11). Without this religious dimension, the moral imperative will be impaired both in Tillich's and Marcel's formulation of it, and with it the constitution of the person. He cannot become a person.

Moral Content

Although the moral imperative, that is becoming a person "within a community of persons"[370] (MB: p.20) by maintaining relationships with others, has an unconditional and absolute character, the moral content that is the relationship itself is relative, because each situation in which the individual finds herself is unique.

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[370] This point is mentioned by Tillich elsewhere, by noting that "only in the continuous encounter with other persons does the person become and remain a person. The place of this encounter is the community" (TCB: p.93).

For Tillich, an individual is always in a relation and cannot be studied apart from his relations, because "meaningful existential relationship is always supported by social relationships" (SS: p.188); and since such a relationship or "ethical content is a product of culture and shares all the relativities of cultural creativity" (ST-III: p.170), it pertains to norms and standards current in society, that is to say, it is always a socially conditioned relationship "within which the socially formed and socially determined personality acts" (SS: p.188). Tillich holds that, in every system of thought, "there is a point where individual experience, traditional valuation, and personal commitment must decide the issue" (ST-I: p.8); and as Taylor (2009) notes,[371] for Tillich "there is really no self-constitution, [and] no moral act without participation in culture". However, if ethical content shares the relativities of culture and it is the society and cultural norms and conventions that determine who a person really is, would ethical relativism across cultures and times be justified? In intersubjective relationships, who determines if the other is indeed a person and what criterion is used in such determination? In other words, are there still any absolute guiding principles that help us make ethical decisions?

The answer to such questions and determination of the normative aspect of ethics can be found by considering Tillich's "three ethical norms which work together in every ethical decision", the principles of justice, love, and wisdom (EPMA: p.248).

Justice and Love (Creative Justice)

Within the ethical or "I-thou" relationship, the "thou" or the other person in the relation demands by his very existence to be acknowledged as a person[372] (LPJ: p.60); he demands justice. Justice, Tillich argues, is needed for the recognition of the human value in the other person, it is the acknowledgement of "every being with personal potential as a person" (MB: p.46), and as such it "is the affirmation of every person as a person" (LPJ: p.43). Justice, then, is the form in which a person maintains the relationship with the other and actualises himself in the process. Tillich's view of justice is in agreement with Kantian categorical imperative, namely to treat the other person as an end and never only as a means. He writes: "Justice is always violated if men are dealt with as if they were things.... it contradicts the justice of being, the intrinsic claim of every person to be considered a person" (LPJ: p.60).

Since failure to treat the other as a person is to damage the relationship and hence depersonalise oneself, "injustice against the other one is always injustice against oneself" (LPJ: p.78). But

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[371] Taylor arrives at this conclusion in reading the third volume of Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.
[372] This acknowledgement, however, is not to be taken in a mere abstract sense but as participation in the "thou".

how would I know if the other I encounter is really a person, needing to be treated as a person rather than an object or a sub-person? The blatant injustices committed throughout history[373] indicate that the source of morality cannot be the recognition of the other as a person if a person is defined based on the prevalent norms and conventions of society. In other words, justice, as enshrined in the law of society and as the mere legal functions based on cultural experiences, cannot be taken as the guarantor of the recognition of the other as a person. So what kind of justice is required for such recognition?

To address such difficulty, Tillich describes the ethical relationship not just in terms of justice but also in terms of love and power, and contends that all three concepts have ontological foundation and need to be understood in their essential unity rather than in their distorted existential estrangement. He writes: "Justice, power, and love towards oneself is rooted in the justice, power, and love which we receive from that which transcends us and affirms us", so the relation to ourselves is in fact "a function of our relation to God" (LPJ: p.122), in whom these concepts are united. These concepts have "ontological dignity" as they are part of the structure of the being-itself, "metaphysically speaking as old as being itself" (LPJ: p.20).

Tillich's view of justice is not that of equality, because justice in the abstract and legal sense, in terms of proportionality that gives positive or negative retribution in reward and punishment, can be detached and objective and performed as an external act without creating a relationship between the parties. The person to person encounter, however, always implies involvement, mutual participation and communion; it is a union between the two beings, "mere objectivity never occurs between human beings" (MB: p.38); indeed, decisions "based on the abstract formulation of justice alone is essentially and inescapably unjust" (LPJ: p.15) and can never be applied or be considered appropriate and effective for a given concrete situation. Tillich asserts that "justice is not an abstract ideal standing over existence; it is the fulfilment of primal being, the fulfilment of that which was intended by the origin",[374] and what was intended by origin is the unity and participation of the separated. "The name of this participation is love" (EPMA: pp.248-249). Love is the desire and urge for the "union of the separated who belong to each other and want to reunite"[375] (MSA: chap.2 para.12). Thus, the dynamic driving force towards

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[373] History shows that for centuries human beings were considered as slaves, Nazis treated the Jews as sub-humans, women, children or other minorities such as the American Indians were not considered as equal to other people, even in supposedly advanced societies, until late 20th century. In acknowledging such difficulties, Tillich responds by suggesting that "there are indications that man's essential nature makes itself heard in the midst of these uncertainties" (MB: p.37), so that when one treats the other person not as a person, he suffers distortion of his own personal centre.
[374] ('The Socialist Decision (1933), p.140' as quoted by Taylor 2009: p.203).
[375] Tillich also writes: "love is the urge toward the reunion of the separated" (EPMA: p.249).

the reunion of persons in a relation is love not justice, it "is love which creates participation in the concrete situation" (LPJ: p.15).

We should bear in mind that Tillich talks about reunion of the parties, not union, because there has to be a prior unity and belongingness between the parties without which unity cannot come about. Tillich maintains that "love cannot be described as the union of the strange but as the reunion of the estranged. Estrangement presupposes original oneness"[376] (LPJ: p.25).

Since "nothing can be received cognitively without emotion", a union is not possible "without emotional participation", which is love (ST-I: p.110). On this basis, Tillich contends that "all communions are embodiments of love, the urge for participation in the other one"; so it is love which is the source and the ultimate norm of all moral demands, love is "the ultimate moral principle" (MB: p.39).

Love has an ontological foundation[377] because human love cannot be through one's initiative; that is to say, autonomy cannot be the ground of love, as we do not choose to love, we just love. The ground cannot be heteronomous either, because love is not something we could elicit. To prevent the relation or encounter with the other degenerating into sentimentality or becoming a mere act of obedience to the law or mere identification with the other person, love, in the sense of its agape[378] quality, takes justice into itself as its unconditional element and transcends the finite limits of human love. In so doing it converts justice into a "creative justice" (MB: p.42). Tillich writes:

> "Love does not do more than justice demands, but love is the ultimate principle of justice. Love reunites; justice preserves what is to be united. It is the form in which and through which love performs its work. Justice in its ultimate meaning is creative justice, and creative justice is the form of reuniting love. (LPJ: p.71).

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[376] We noted similar argument in Marcel's philosophy as well, where he argued that without a prior unity between the subjects which could be discovered through secondary reflection, no intersubjective relationship can exist. See chapter 4.

[377] Love here is not the sentimental or emotional type because "if love is emotional, how can it be demanded? Emotions cannot be demanded", (LPJ: p.4) however, "acts of love must have an emotional background" so that feeling and desire lead into action (Novak 1986: p.450).

[378] Love has four aspects or qualities, agape, eros, libido, and philia. Agape refers to the transcendental aspect of love, it "is the quality within love which prevents the other forms of love from becoming distorted into selfishness" (EPMA: p.249). All four aspects exist in love, though in varying degrees. Agape is independent of other qualities or aspects of love and "is a creation of the Spiritual Presence which conquers the ambiguities of all other kinds of love" (ST-III: p.146).

Justice without love is abstract and cold, and "love without justice is sentimentality" (EPMA: p.249). Creative justice, on the other hand, is the place where justice united with love becomes the type of justice needed in the person-to-person encounter. It explains the relation and the unity necessary in recognition of the other person. Creative justice is unlike the distributive or retributive justice that are based on calculations and proportionality and applicable in the legal realm; rather, it is based on intrinsic justice, which is dynamic; hence, such justice cannot be defined in definite terms. Love does not eliminate the need for justice nor can it give what justice cannot; rather, it is the creative element in justice. For Tillich, a love that does not include justice "is chaotic self-surrender, destroying him who loves as well as him who accepts such love (LPJ: p.68); but although justice is essential, with respect to love it "is the secondary and derived principle"; love is the primary, "the creative and basic principle" (MB: p.94) and the criterion of ethical judgements. Love is always the same, while at the same time, "in the power of the Spirit", flexible, given the unique situations (MB: p.43). As the primary and highest principle, love cannot be defined;[379] suffice to say that, "as the striving for the reunion of the separated it is the opposite of estrangement" (ST-III: p.47).

Love binds the moral imperative, which is always unconditional, with the content of the moral, which is conditional, and it can do this because "love is unconditional in its essence, conditional in its existence" (ST-III: p.290). Love can transform itself according to the concrete situation without losing its unconditional validity, and in doing so "offers a principle of ethics that maintains an eternal, unchangeable element but makes its realisation dependent on continuous acts of a creative intuition" (MB: p.88). The historical and cultural relativity of ethical content does not contradict the unconditionality of the moral imperative, because in order to be valid, all contents must "confirm the reunion of man's existential with his essential being"; this means that all contents must be expressions of love (ST-III: p.290). For Tillich, this adaptability and the "ambiguous character of love enables it to be the solution of the question of ethics in a changing world" (MB: pp.88-89); and although "creative justice" is not the same as Marcel's "creative fidelity", both concepts play a crucial role in intersubjective relationships in order to maintain the bond between the persons and prevent the destruction of ethics and one's constitution as a person.[380]

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[379] Because "there is no higher principle by which it can be defined" (MB: p.95).
[380] Interestingly, the concept of "justice" is scarcely used in Marcel's philosophy. Love on the other hand is considered to have ontological foundation and takes centre stage in the ethical philosophy of both Tillich and Marcel. Where Tillich holds the view that, at the ontological level, love and justice are united, resulting in Creative Justice, clearly the unity of love and justice is implied in Marcel's works, and "love" is meant to encompass justice as well.

Power of Being

Tillich describes being in terms of the concept of "power", because "power is the possibility a being has to actualise itself against the resistance of other beings" (TCB: p.173). "Being is the power of being!"[381] (LPJ: p.37); and since "being-itself" represents the ultimate reality or God, it could be said that God is the "power of being" in all other beings. Tillich writes:

> "the concept of being as being, or being-itself, points to the power inherent in everything, the power of resisting nonbeing. Therefore, instead of saying that God is first of all being-itself, it is possible to say that he is the power of being in everything and above everything, the infinite power of being" (ST-I: p.261).

Every human being, indeed "every organism, natural as well as social, is a power of being" (LPJ: p.98), or is a finite power that is an expression of the infinite "power of being". Tillich here concurs with Nietzsche's assertion that "life itself is the will to power" (BGE: 13), and for him "power of being" is a way of expressing Nietzschean "will to power". Since every finite being is a "power of being" or power, in every encounter or in every relation of beings, power is active; that is to say, the relation is between one power with another; and since the degree of power is not identical in every being, this essential inequality of powers becomes the source of the dynamism and creativity in life.[382] According to Tillich, then, justice unites with power in every personal encounter and is dependent on the power relation between the two persons involved. In such an encounter, each person exercises his "power of being" over the other in the relation.[383] Justice united with power is intrinsically just, because the type of authority exercised here is "authority in fact",[384] meaning that the authority is accepted by both parties in spite of the power differential between the two, and it is the expression of mutual dependence of each person on the other.

For Tillich, justice and love are forms through which power is expressed; and since every being is a power or an expression of the infinite "power of being", we could say that it is "the presence

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[381] Or as Tillich has it, "power of being" is the best metaphor to describe being (TCB: p.179).

[382] On the basis of above, we could say that Tillich, as was Nietzsche, is dismissive of egalitarianism, because it fails to recognise the inherent inequality of beings, which is necessary for dynamism and healthy functioning of a society; and in doing so it in fact "contradicts a justice that demands recognition of different powers of being in relation" (Thomas 1987: p.122).

[383] Tillich argues that it is not unjust if, in an encounter between two beings, one being shows it's superior power; what is unjust, however, is if the superior power destroys the inferior power, because every being has an intrinsic and essential claim for justice to be recognised as that being (LPJ: pp.p87-88).

[384] Tillich contrasts "authority in fact", which is just, with the unjust authority of "authority in principle", where a person has authority by the place he occupies and is beyond criticism because of this place.

of the divine Ground of Being" or the Spiritual power in human spirit that enables us to identify the moral demands in every unique situation without the need to follow any static table of laws or commands. According to Tillich, love, power and justice are united in their essential and created nature, and are "rooted in the justice, power, and love which we receive from that which transcends us and affirms us" (LPJ: p.122); however, they are estranged and separated in existence. Reuniting them, which is the moral aim for us, requires appeal to the transcendent, to the dimension of ultimate concern; and the only way to reunite these elements and hence actualise and affirm our personhood is "through the manifestation of the ground in which they are united" (LPJ: p.108); and this, according to Tillich, is the appearance of Jesus as the "New Being", which I will discuss shortly. I turn now to consider the third moral principle, that of wisdom, which is used by love to maintain ethical relation.

Wisdom

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. And the awareness of the Holy is insight".

(Proverb 9:10 as quoted in EN p.163)

Wisdom, as enshrined in divine revelations, plays an important part in Tillich's ethics,[385] as for him "a moral universe …is…a result of experience and real wisdom" (ThC: p.139). Tillich lists the principle of wisdom as the third consideration after the two principles of justice and love in any ethical decision making, and although "love is the ultimate principle of moral action" (EPMA: pp.248-249), "love itself uses wisdom" (ST-III: p.291). Tillich bemoans the degradation of the notion of wisdom in modern society, where its power and significance has vanished, as it has come to be considered as "the virtue of old age" (EN: p.163), and as such, an inappropriate, perhaps even a ridiculous word to use.[386] He concedes that, although wisdom is universal, in the sense that it is not exclusive to a few select but rather comes to all people including the simplest and the unlearned, it is not easy to find wisdom as it is not a matter of intellectual power: rationality is not wisdom; nor is acquisition of experience or insight. Tillich here is in full agreement with Marcel, that wisdom is greater than these;[387] it belongs to a dimension that cannot be reached through scientific inquiry, but rather it belongs to the ground

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[385] As Taylor (2009) put it, Tillich's entire "ethical thought is a wisdom, a process of discernment that must take in the entire matrix of being and culture to evaluate actions".

[386] Tillich asserts that words, "which speak of matters of spirit" such as wisdom, love or justice, have suffered and lost their ontological meaning in the modern world (EPMA: p.249).

[387] For Marcel's views on wisdom, (see TW: pp.194 & 197), (and S: p.26), as well as Chapter 4.

of our being, to the dimension of the holy; indeed, "there cannot be wisdom without an encounter with the holy"[388] (EN: p.168).

According to Tillich, moral commands outlined in religious scriptures represent the wisdom of the ages and the ethical experiences of the past about man and his relations to others[389] (MB: p.44, ST-III: p.291, MSA: chap.3). Wisdom is the source of these moral laws as delineated in revelations, and although these laws are tremendously important they do not possess an absolute and unconditional validity; indeed, they can even become destructive if elevated to absolute validity (MB: pp.44-45). Moral laws provide guidance to the conscience, a guidance based on wisdom, without necessarily being able to provide a definitive ethical solution in a given concrete situation (Carey 2002: p.112). Tillich's moral agent, then, has a "transmoral conscience", which judges the right act in a given concrete situation, "not in obedience to a moral law, but according to its participation in a reality that transcends the sphere of moral commands" (MB: p.77); and this participation is nothing but love. Thus, although "the principles of wisdom .... guide our moral conscience, … they are not ultimately valid except as modified by the principle of love" (EPMA: p.251).

Tillich offers a lucid definition of morality that incorporates the three principles of love, justice, and wisdom, as such:

> "a moral action is an action in which We actualise ourselves as persons within person-to-person encounters. Its principles are the love whose backbone is justice; the love which, though unconditional itself, listens to the concrete situation and its changes, and is guided by the wisdom of the past" (EPMA: p.251).

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[388] The awareness of the holy, the recognition of God, creates awe and fear in the individual, and this fear is the first step in acquiring wisdom, because the individual realises his finitude and the infinity of the holy and the infinite distance between himself and the ground of his being, and "learns that acceptance of one's limits is the decisive step towards wisdom (EN: p.168). Tillich writes: "In our encounter with the holy, facing with awe the ultimate mystery of life, we experience a dimension of life that gives us the courage and the strength to accept our limits and to become wise through this acceptance" (EN: p.170).

[389] According to Tillich, revelatory laws liberate people from the burden of having to continuously make innumerable decisions on their own, by showing them "a meaningful way to act in most situations" (MB: p.93). They provide a warning of the possible risk in deviating from the stated law without telling us what must be done. Another application of such commands is "a considerable amount of moral habits necessary to fulfil the demands of an average existence" (MB: p.45).

Moral Motivation

Drawing a distinction between commanding law and moral law, Tillich dismisses the motivational force of the commanding law, because the very existence of such law is the expression of man's estrangement from his nature. Without this estrangement there would be no need for the law to demand reunion in the first place, hence it makes no sense to expect the law itself be able to overcome this estrangement. The command to be good or to do good, which is the case in heteronomous morality, does not make us do good (MB: pp.49-51).

The moral law, on the other hand, is understood as the demand to actualise one's essential being, but the question raised here is whether such a demand can provide the motivational force for the fulfilment of the moral imperative. In other words, we want to know what motivates us to affirm our essential being?

According to Tillich, the moral imperative by itself does not provide moral motivation; rather, the moral motivation is "the driving or attracting power of that which is the goal of the moral command - the good" (MB: p.60). It is the goal of the moral command not the command itself that provides the motivation. The moral goal, then, needs to transcend the moral command or the moral imperative itself, and Tillich maintains that the "question of moral motivation can be answered only transmorally", because to fulfil the moral law, to unite our essential being with our actual being, to become a person, must be conditioned on something above the law itself, on "something in which the spilt between our essential and our existential is overcome" (MB: p.64).

However, the moral goal cannot be produced intentionally.[390] To command or demand love from someone results in a superficial and non-genuine response, because "love intentionally produced shows indifference or hostility in perversion" (LPJ: p.4); and indeed, any attempt to inject or engender moral motivation inevitably degenerates theonomy into heteronomy.

Tillich holds the view that we are motivated to affirm our essential being and seek reunion, when we become aware of our "belonging to a transcendent union of unambiguous life which is the Divine Life", and he claims that such an "awareness occurs under the impact of the

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[390] In a similar connection Tillich writes: "But a spiritual center cannot be produced intentionally, and the attempt to produce it only produces deeper anxiety" (TCB: p.48).

Spiritual Presence" [391] (ST-III: p.169). In other words, the act of our faith, that is being grasped by the transcendent union, our ultimate concern, "and the fact of accepting the moral imperative's unconditional character are one and the same act" (ST-III: p.169).

It is the impact of the "Spiritual Presence" that makes the fulfilment of moral law possible, and this is characterised as grace[392] (ST-III: p.292). Thus, Tillich finds in "grace … the power of moral motivation" (MB: p.56). Where there is grace there is no need for the compulsion force of the command to demand obedience, because,

> "he who has the grace of loving a thing, a task, a person, or an idea does not need to be asked to love, whatever quality of love may be predominant in his love. A reunion of something separated has already taken place, and with it a partial fulfilment of the moral imperative" (MB: p.61).

It is the power of grace that overcomes our estrangement, and it is grace that fulfils the demand of the moral imperative to become who we are. In the absence of grace, it is the commanding law that takes over, and the painful struggle to comply with the moral imperative begins. The self-affirmation and self-actualisation "of a person as person without grace leaves the person to the ambiguities of the law" (ST-III: p.170). For this reason, as Tillich contends, all non-theonomous ethics, which are without the moral imperative's motivating power, namely grace, "are unavoidably ethics of law, and the law makes for the increase in estrangement" (ST-III: p.292).

Although grace as a gift is independent of human merit and not dependent on one's own efforts or endeavours, one needs to be ready, open and available to receive it. "Not everyone is prepared to accept saving grace" (ST-I: p.316). This readiness and openness "itself is the first gift of grace, which can be either preserved or lost" (MB: p.61). We saw this argument made by Marcel as well, but neither philosopher elaborates on the possible conditions needed to receive this very first gift.[393]

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[391] "Spiritual Presence" is used as a symbol expressing unambiguous life. The root of ambiguity of life is the existence and separation of the elements of essential and existential (ST-III: pp.114-115).

[392] Tillich writes: "Theologically speaking, Spirit, love, and grace are one and the same reality in different aspects. Spirit is the creative power; love is its creation; grace is the effective presence of love in man" (ST-III: p.292).

[393] Tillich further distinguishes between two types of grace, "common" and "special", and contends that while both types of grace are bestowed upon man and both perform the same function, the "special" grace is reserved for those who are grasped by the "new reality" that has appeared in Christ (MB: p.61).

Self-Affirmation (the Courage to Be)

Tillich's revaluation of values responds to nihilism and existential anxiety by trying to re-establish the ontological bond with one's own essence. To this end, the revaluation requires one to affirm one's very essential being, her created goodness. "Morality is [this] self-affirmation of our essential being" (ThC: p.136). Self-affirmation, then, is understood as the ethical act by Tillich, Marcel and Nietzsche; the difference in their views, however, lies in the fact that, whereas for Tillich and Marcel it signifies affirmation of one's essential goodness and our unity with this essence, leading to the affirmation of God, for Nietzsche and as a consequence of his radical naturalism, it is an affirmation of one's unity with life.

As pointed out earlier, the anxiety of meaninglessness brought about by nihilism cannot be eliminated, because non-being does not have an existence or being of its own.[394] Avoiding non-being through avoiding being leads to neurosis (TCB: p.66); indeed, for Tillich, anxiety is a sign of maturity, as it indicates our ability to except the loneliness associated with taking risk in making our own meaning rather than succumbing to conformism to rules. After all, "a decision for any ethical act has in itself the character of risk. Nobody can be a person who doesn't risk in his or her ethical decisions" (EPMA: p.251). To be a person, to self-actualise, rather than eliminating anxiety we need to accept the necessity of non-being as a constitutive part of who we are, an essential ingredient of our existence as a whole, and this requires self-affirmation (TCB: p.66). In other words the precondition for self-affirmation is the acceptance of the threat of anxiety and the state of meaninglessness itself; indeed, "the act of accepting meaninglessness is in itself a meaningful act" (TCB: p.176).

However, self-affirmation requires courage,[395] because courage "is the strength of the soul to win victory in ultimate danger..." (TCB: p.8). For Tillich, "courage is the power of life to affirm itself in spite of" anxiety one faces (TCB: p.27), and it is the expression of the "power of being" it embodies (LPJ: pp.36-40). Rather than removing anxiety, "courage takes the anxiety of nonbeing into itself" (TCB: p.66).

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[394] We cannot even imagine "non-being; one can only experience its threat" (MSA: chap.2 para.51).

[395] According to Tillich, "anxiety strives to become fear, because fear can be met by courage. It is impossible for a finite being to stand naked anxiety for more than a flash of time" (TCB: p.39).
Courage, in Tillich's formulation, is not a blind and brave attempt to overcome obstacles; rather, it "must be considered ontologically in order to be understood ethically"; that is to say, we need to consider courage "as the universal and essential self-affirmation of one's being" (TCB: pp.1-3), an ontological concept.

Since human being is always in a context and in relationships, that is to say, "the self is self only because it has a world"[396] (TCB: p.87), and without participation with others the individual himself ceases to be an individual, self-affirmation requires affirmation of the self as an individual as well as the affirmation of self as part of the world. The individual not only needs the ability to overcome the anxiety related to loneliness of the self, brought about by his estrangement, but also the anxiety of being absorbed and lost in the whole. Both these affirmations are attempted, either through a "courage to be as a self" or a "courage to be as a part",[397] and both are an integral and inseparable part of one another, that is to say, "the courage to be is essentially always the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself, in interdependence" (TCB: pp.87 & 92). In other words, neither self-affirmation as a part nor self-affirmation as oneself can overcome anxiety by themselves; the only self-affirmation that could overcome anxiety is one that unites both by transcending them (TCB: pp.154-155). Such a self-affirmation or courage needs a power that "must be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world" (TCB: p.155); and such a power is nothing but the power of being-itself. The need for a courage rooted in being-itself "presupposes that the spiritual life is taken seriously, that it is a matter of ultimate concern" (TCB: p.47), and this points to the religious character of self-affirmation. As Tillich writes: "every courage to be has an open or hidden religious root. For religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself" (TCB: pp.155-156).

In the aftermath of Nietzsche's death of God and the anxiety that follows, for Tillich "the source of the courage to be", or our affirmation, is being-itself[398] (TCB: p.34); in other words, "courage to be is rooted in the God who appears" when the theistic God of Nietzsche "has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt" (TCB: p.190).

Tillich leaves no room for doubt regarding the transcendent source of courage, writing:

> "The ultimate source of the courage to be is the 'God above God'; this is the result of our demand to transcend theism. Only if the God of theism is transcended can the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness be taken into the courage to be" (TCB: p.176).

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[396] Tillich also writes that the "self and world are correlated, and so are individualization and participation"(TCB: p.88), which are the polarities discussed earlier in this chapter.
[397] Tillich hastens to add that, by "courage to be as a part" we are not referring to some collective courage that can face a collective anxiety, say an organisational anxiety, "the courage to be as a part is like all forms of courage, a quality of individual selves" (TCB: p.92).
[398] This point is stressed in a number of places, for instance, Tillich writes: "The courage to take meaninglessness into itself presupposes a relation to the ground of being which we have called "absolute faith" (TCB: p.182).

Kairos

The question still left unanswered in the foregoing discussion is, how does love, the ultimate moral principle, adapt itself to a changing world? and when does it adapt itself to the change? How is the wisdom of the past, accumulated and presented as revelation, brought up-to-date for use by love in ethical determination?

To respond to such questions, Tillich reintroduces the Greek concept of kairos[399] ("the right time") (TPE: p.156), arguing that an adaptive ethics based on love is an ethics that "must be understood as ethics of the kairos". A kairos is "the historical moment when something new, eternally important, manifests itself in temporal form, in the potentialities and tasks of a special period"[400] (MB: p.89), and perhaps signifies the "moment of maturity in a particular religious and cultural development"[401] (ST-III: p.369); for instance, in the language of the New Testament, the appearance of Christ designated the fulfilment of time or kairos. Tillich argues that it is the "prophetic spirit" that announces the coming of kairos at various periods throughout history, and indeed "all great changes in history are accompanied by a strong consciousness of a kairos at hand" (MB: p.89). On this basis, it could be said that the coming of Christ, Moses, Abraham and other founders of religions announce the kairos of their time, that is, the right time for a marked change in ethics, because the wisdom offered by such revelations is changed or renewed at each kairos.[402] For Tillich, ethics determined by kairos is the answer to the demand for an adaptive and dynamic ethics (MB: p.89), because law is an attempt to impose an ideal that is determined at a given time over the subsequent times, it is fixed and cannot appear in kairos, but love is not fixed and, as the principle of ethics, is embodied in concrete contents and appears in every kairos. "Love realising itself from kairos to kairos, creates an ethics that is beyond the alternatives of absolute and relative ethics" (MB: p.90).

Based on the above, Tillich attributes the discrimination and inequality that existed against various classes in society, such as against the slaves in the past, to the absence of the kairos with the qualities of love as we have come to expect today. We might say that people of those times did not have the capacity to grasp the notion of love as we understand and grasp it today, because the right kairos had not appeared; nevertheless, love as a principle was love for all

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[399] The concept of kairos appears in Marcel's ethics as well, though not to the same extent as that in Tillich's.

[400] Kairos has also been interpreted "in the sense of a special gift and a special task, breaking from eternity into history" (TPE: p.155).

[401] Marcel referred to Kairos as a "life-giving opportunities" that the person "who is really available (disponibile), discovers all around him like so many switches controlling the inexhaustible current flowing through our universe" (HV: p.140).

[402] Marcel also viewed kairos as an opportunity that our liberty is given "of exercising and spreading itself as it could never do if it were left to itself …." (HV: p.63).

times, because "love is eternal although it creates something new in each kairos" (MB: p.92).

Tillich writes that the concept of kairos was "chosen to remind philosophy of the necessity of dealing with history, not in terms of its logical and categorical structure only, but also in terms of its dynamics" (ST-III: p.393); however, kairos is perhaps the acme of the immersion of his ethical philosophy into theology and Christology and leaves him exposed to criticism.[403] Such criticisms particularly come to the fore when noting that kairos introduced to inject a degree of dynamism, based on man's historical and cultural wisdom into ethical decision making, is handicapped by Tillich's own bias towards one particular kairos, the "great kairos" (ST-III: p.396), namely the appearance of Christ; a view that inevitably brings back the destructive forces of absolutism in the ethical argument.

In any case, both wisdom and kairos form vital elements of Tillich's theonomous ethics, because within such system the law "formed by the contemporary kairos are executed by the wisdom of the judge that mediates between the abstraction of the law and the individual case" (Thomas 1987: p.120).

New Being

The moral aim is the overcoming of our estrangement, and Tillich refers to "a reality in which the self-estrangement of our existence is overcome, a reality of reconciliation and reunion", the New Being[404] (ST-I: p.55). Of course, no living individual can fully overcome estrangement, only Jesus as the Christ is "the manifestation of the New Being in time and space" (ST-II: p.144), an historical reality, someone who is an "essential being under the conditions of existence, conquering the gap between essence and existence" (ST-II: p.136). Thus, New Being should not be viewed as a being beside other beings, but rather "it is grace conquering sin … it is the ground of being", and "out of this ground we can get the courage to affirm being, even in a state of doubt, even in anxiety and despair" (ThC: p.213). In short, on Tillich's account Jesus is the salvific figure for us, because to "experience the New Being in Jesus as the Christ means to experience the power in him which has conquered existential estrangement in himself and in everyone who participates in him" (ST-II: p.144); so through participation in him we receive the gift of divine grace,[405] and overcome or get closer to overcoming our own estrangement,

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[403] A criticism of kairos is that it can be used as an excuse to overlook or justify the wrong committed throughout history. For instance, the ethical violation committed under the banner of slavery or those committed by Nazis could be justified based on the argument that the right kairo (the right level of maturity) had not appeared for the people committing such acts.

[404] For a detailed discussion on Jesus as the New Being (see ST-II: pp.136-159).

[405] Tillich writes: "The concept of the New Being establishes the meaning of grace" (ST-II: p.125).

morally will be transformed and become a "new creation" and a "new being". Tillich writes: "The New Creation - this is our ultimate concern; this should be our infinite passion - the infinite passion of every human being. This matters; this alone matters ultimately" (NB: chap.2 para.6).

For Tillich religion, and this includes Christianity, is not important; what is, however, very important is our union with the New Being that has appeared in the person of Jesus (NB: chap.2 para.2). The significance of Christianity lies in being the bearer of the message of New Being.[406]

Here an unlikely parallel seems to emerge, between Tillich's "New Being" as manifested in the person of Christ, the saviour of man, and Nietzsche's Ubermensch. Although the genesis of "New Being" and Ubermensch are diametrically different, the survival and the spiritual rebirth of humanity comes to depend upon such a unique being. I can also extend this parallel to Marcel's "sage" or wise man and perhaps even to Weber's "cultivated man". All four philosophers articulate the figure of a unique individual to be a moral ideal, the appearance[407] or cultivation of whom is the answer to the ethical crisis of humanity.

Critique

Tillich has been accused of being either a Christian apologist[408] or an anti-Christian,[409] hence there have been many criticisms levelled against not only his attempt to correlate theology with philosophy but also on his theological views alone.[410]

The method of correlation employed by Tillich's revaluation of values is to provide a response to the existential problems facing human beings using the Christian message and revelation; but given this be the case, it could be asked whose interpretation of the existential problems is

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[406] According to Tillich, Christ is "the name which Christianity applied to the bearer of the New Being in its final manifestation" (ST-II: p.88).

[407] Clearly, New Being cannot be cultivated, but perhaps it could be said that his appearance at a kairos is meant to act as a guiding lamp attracting others to be like him.

[408] According to Smith (2003a), "Tillich sought to be an apologist for Christianity. To that end, he wanted to interpret the truths of the Christian faith in a way to safeguard them from the embarrassingly erosive effects of scientific pursuits", and Thiselton (1974: p.86) also believes that "Tillich thinks and writes as a Christian apologist."

[409] "Conservative scholars have long accused Tillich of not being a "true" Christian, ..." (Rodkey 2008: p.41). Examples of Tillich's anti-Orthodox Christian views abound, his understanding of human being's "fall from essence to existence", for instance, is disputed as being in conflict with the Christian view of the goodness of creation (Cooper 2006: pp.69-70). He also rejects the supernatural nature of God, claiming that such a view "separates God as a being, the highest being, from all other beings…" (ST-II: p.6), rather than his own view of God as being-itself. His view that everything is united in their essence with God, that "essentially all creatures belong together" (EPMA: p.249), has also given rise to the charge of pantheism levelled against him.

[410] It may be of note to point out here that Tillich has even been criticised as someone whose "theological language is 'contradictory', 'obscure', ambiguous and diffuse', 'confusing', …" (Rodkey 2008: p.59).

this revelation addressing? In other words, isn't Tillich's articulation of the existential problems in terms of his concept of estrangement derived from his own ontology, and hence nothing but one interpretation among other potential interpretations? Furthermore, whilst Tillich claims that "ontology precedes every other cognitive approach to reality" (LPJ: p.20), clearly his understanding and acceptance of human being and his relation to God as the ground of his being, and his subsequent "fall" from his initial state of unity, indicates that "revelation clearly comes first, then ontology" (Kendall 1999). Indeed, as Kendall (1999) argues, not only Tillich's ontology is anti-Christian for negating the goodness of existence, his attempt at correlating this with Christian revelation is "an ideological lie". Furthermore, Tillich's degradation of existence and consideration of life as a sphere of ambiguity is exactly the charge Nietzsche had levelled against religions.

To escape from the arbitrariness of relativism, Tillich resorts to certain absolutes, stressing that "one cannot escape them", and goes on to identify "being-itself" as the most fundamental absolute that "underlies all the other absolutes…." (MSA: chap.2 para.50); in other words, he identifies this absolute as the foundation for other absolutes!; in effect undermining their absoluteness.

Another problem arises in Tillich's relating God, the ground of our being, with the "silent voice" within us that issues the moral command; however, as Thiselton observes, this seems more like a change of our image of God as well as a change of the language used to talk about God, "so that language about God 'up there' may be replaced by symbols pointing to God 'within'. But these are not simply two alternative ways of speaking about the same God." Tillich seems to have fallen into the same trap that he wanted to avoid, "making God in man's image" (Thiselton 1974: pp.101-102) rather than keeping Him "as the God above God".

Tillich takes love as the ultimate moral principle without sufficiently tell us why this is the case; suffice to say that love is meant to be the desire for reunion, which is what every creature, according to Tillich, must long for. This may make sense, of course, if we accept the estrangement proposition in the first place.

In formulation of his ethics, whilst the notion of "ultimate concern" appears to suggest a religiously neutral stance, increasingly the "theonomous ethics" proposed by Tillich seems to be hostage to his Christological views. For him, ethics in a changing world is determined by kairos, which appears throughout history, making the gradual maturation of man possible by

placing the accumulated wisdom of the past at man's service through revelation. Putting aside the argument and criticism that could be mounted against such a proposition, Tillich's strong religious views come to the fore here, because he seems to place an undue significance on one particular kairos, namely that of the appearance of Christ, that he takes as the final kairos. The notion of finality of kairos, which implies the end of accumulation of wisdom, flies in the face of his ethics, that claims to be adaptive and a solution for a changing world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the philosophy of Tillich to show that, although he accepts Nietzsche's diagnosis of the problem of nihilism, his revaluation of values offers a very different response. Where Nietzsche takes God and the death of God as the cause of nihilism, Tillich not only puts the blame back on the shoulder of human beings, he also finds the solution in God Himself; and although Tillich is in accord with both Marcel and Weber in laying the blame on human beings, his reliance on the "method of correlation" meant that, unlike Marcel, who ended up finding God as a result of his philosophy, Tillich knew from start that the solution needs to be sought outside the realm of human existence.

I argued that, for Tillich, the prevalence of "the spirit of industrial society" and the rise of capitalism in our "man-created world" foster nihilism and anxiety of meaninglessness, which are themselves the manifestations of the loss of "the dimension of depth" in our encounter with reality and our estrangement from the ground of our essential being. This estrangement, Tillich believes, is the real cause of the problem of values and meanings we face today. His revaluation of values, then, lies in attempts to reunite us with our essential element, with the source and the ground of our being. The moral imperative, to become a person, is to be back in a state of unity with our essence. The motivation for morality is our awareness and affirmation of our belonging to such a transcendent union, which can take place within the light of divine spirit and through the recognition of the manifestation of "New Being". For Tillich, "the ultimate resolution can occur only beyond history, for man can reach his essence only in the Kingdom of God, through Christ" (as quoted by Clary 1994: p.369).

The fruit of Tillich's revaluation is a theonomous ethics synthesising both autonomy and heteronomy and sustained by our hold onto our "ultimate concern". Everyone has an "ultimate concern", and for some God is the content of this concern; but the fact that everyone has an ultimate concern gives morality it's imperative and religious character.

For Tillich, as it was for Marcel, the moral act is the act of self-constitution in encounter with other persons based on participation in the transcendent unity. Both philosophers are in agreement with Nietzsche in taking self-affirmation as necessary for a moral life; the difference, however, is in the fact that, where for Nietzsche self-affirmation takes place in the context of life-affirmation, for Marcel it needs to be within the context of the affirmation of the "absolute thou", and for Tillich it is the affirmation of "being-itself" as the ground of our being.

Since I find myself in agreement with Taylor (2009: p.205), that Tillich's ethical philosophy "is a complex and comprehensive effort" making the task of summarising it difficult, I leave it to Tillich himself to summarise the source of morality in his theonomous ethics. He writes:

> "... the religious source of the moral demands is love under the domination of its agape quality, in unity with the imperative of justice to acknowledge every being with personal potential as a person, being guided by the divine-human wisdom embodied in the moral laws of the past, listening to the concrete situation, and acting courageously on the basis of these principles" (MB: p.46).

I believe that Tillich's revaluation of values, guided by his belief that there should be a correlation between theology and philosophy, and that the solution to the crisis of nihilism could be found in Christian revelation, ends up making his project heavily reliant on his Christological views and appear more like a relapse into the safety of religion and religious absolutes, albeit in the guise of Tillich's own unique interpretation of it.[411]

In the next chapter, I turn to the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, who in attempting to respond to Nietzsche's call for a "revaluation of all values", dismisses both Tillich and Marcel's insistence that ontology should be the starting point for such an endeavour; and who in claiming that a revaluation of values should not be about bridging the gap between essential and existential selves, rather widening the gap between the self and the Other, ushers in what he calls a Copernican revolution in ethics.

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[411] It may worth noting that Tillich himself views Nietzsche's Zarathustra "as a religious prophecy, but a prophecy with a distorted Christianity in mind, a sentimentalized Christianity" (UC: 2nd. dialogue).

Chapter 6 - Emmanuel Levinas: Ethics as First Philosophy

> "… it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality."
>
> (TI: p.21)

Overview

As I demonstrated in the previous chapters, Tillich's theonomous ethics was squarely underpinned by the notion of God, and Marcel's ethics relapsed on the need for recognition and acceptance of our existential assurances; both seem to have surreptitiously appealed to an absolute ground on which ethics could stand. But if Gantt (2001: p.2) summation of the views of many postmodern[412] thinkers is correct, namely, "that any formal attempt to understand the world of human experience that locates the source of its own validation beyond or outside that world … will ultimately lead to metaphysical absurdity ….. epistemological skepticism …. and nihilism", then the unique and novel ethical philosophy of the French phenomenologist,[413] Emmanuel Levinas,[414] should be of considerable interest to us, as he attempts to do away with any epistemological, rational or ontological grounds for ethics.[415]

We see an interesting and perhaps unexpected affinity between Nietzsche and Levinas,[416] two philosophers who in many respects occupy the opposite poles of the philosophical spectrum, in that, in their revaluation attempts to combat nihilism, we are urged by Nietzsche to go "beyond Good and Evil", and face Levinas' insistence to look for ethics "Before … Good and Evil" (GDT: p.176). Levinas embraces Nietzsche's nihilism, pointing out that "there is a new epoch, marked by the death of God and the end of onto-theo-logy", and contends that this "leaves a chance for the thinking of being, which would no longer be ontology" and heralds a new way

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[412] I am taking modernist philosophers as those of the positivistic tradition that follow the natural scientific mode of enquiry, making a clear distinction between the subject and the object of the enquiry. In contrast, Postmodern philosophers are critical of such dualism and attempt to dissolve this distinction by bringing the object within the realm of the subject itself. So where Descartes and Kant would be considered as modern, Nietzsche, Marcel and Tillich would fall in the camp of the postmodern philosophers.

[413] Levinas has been criticised for lack of purely phenomenological approach in his philosophy, starting from his second major work "Otherwise than Being", by increasingly introducing and considering metaphysical notions such as God, Infinity and passivity.

[414] It has been claimed that Levinas is "one of the most significant ethical thinkers of the twentieth century" (Kearney and Rainwater 1996: p.122) and "the greatest moral philosopher of this century and as one whose thought 'can make us tremble'" (As quoted by Trezise and Biesta 2009: p.47). His philosophy has even been taken as the "obligatory reference point in a range of disciplines from philosophy and theology or psychology…" (Perpich 2008: p.2).

[415] As Trezise and Biesta (2009: p.49) suggest, "Levinas's ethics then provides one of the best avenues to think through the consequences of the postmodern situation – that of an ethics without foundation…"

[416] Although Levinas insists that "the ethics of Nietzsche is not my ethics", he believes that "Nietzsche is an entirely wonderful example, in his own way, of how to speak to madness as a way to transcendence" (IRB: pp.149-150).

of looking at being and ethics (GDT: p.124). The source of meaning, he argues, is not being or ontology, as perceived by Marcel,[417] or "Being of beings" or onto-theology,[418] as conceived by Tillich. Even the Kantian ideal of pure reason, according to Levinas, is an appeal to "the existence of a Supreme Being", thus yet another attempt to find meaning in ontology (CPP: p.176). He asserts that morality is more than a domain of knowledge that can be acquired, but rather it is the context and the condition within which our relationships take place. Our lived experience in the world and our relations with other human beings are where meaning is formed, so such relationships or "ethics is not a category of knowing, it is a condition for knowing…" (Vandenberg 1999: p.33); and Levinas aims to reveal the essentially ethical nature and structure of these human relations, not the structure of human being himself as conceived by Tillich in terms of his fallen state, or in terms of human incarnation as contended by Marcel. In that sense, Levinas seems to come closer than other philosophers in offering a response to Nietzsche, by establishing what he calls an "'inverted world', an '*Umwertung aller Werte'* [a 'revaluation of all values']" [italics and brackets in original].[419] His ethics is not a set of rules or abstract principles to regulate our behaviour with, nor is it a situation or context based ethics that get tangled in the arguments of relativity that render them impractical and useless. As Derrida points out, "Levinas does not want to propose laws or moral rules…it is a matter of [writing] an ethics of ethics" (Derrida as quoted by Bergo 2013). His ethics is descriptive rather than prescriptive, as he writes: "My task does not consist in constructing ethics, I only try to find its meaning" (EI: p.90). Ethics, he argues, is a call to us to see and respect the infinite good in the other person, and the solution to nihilism offered by him is grounded in an ethics of responsibility and obligation far more primordial than those proposed by other philosophers. The response of Nietzsche to nihilism is for man to find the courage to face nihilism, find the solution in himself and create his own values. For Nietzsche, a person needs to be fully integrated with his own life-affirming instincts, as out of such an integration could an authentic basis for morality emerge; in other words, the instinct of man is considered as good and noble in itself and in need of no improvement through morality; in effect a return to this instinct is sought by Nietzsche. Such a position is in stark contrast with the position taken by Marcel, and more specifically and emphatically by Tillich, the latter for whom man's nature is inadequate and flawed, estranged from the good and hence defective and in need of a third element, some absolutes. Tillich contended that man is the problem not the solution, and though there is

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[417] With regards to the philosophy of Marcel, Levinas writes: "Marcel is also very close to me, but I find that in Marcel dialogue is finally overwhelmed by ontology" (IRB: p.179).

[418] Levinas defines onto-theology as consisting in thinking of God as a being *[etant]* and in thinking being *[etre]* on the basis of this superior or Supreme Being.

[419] (See Conversation avec un juste' (interview by D. S. Schiffer), in L'évènement du jeudi, 1996, no. 585: 76-79, as cited by Burggraeve 1999).

interdependence between a problem and its solution, there is no dependence, so the solution lies not in man but outside of him. Marcel, on the other hand, argued that ethics, a metaphysical problem, requires a metaphysical solution; and ended up locating the solution in the recognition of our ontological exigence, the need that there be God. Both Marcel and Tillich, while acknowledging Nietzsche's nihilism, did not see the solution in a perfect man, an Ubermensch. The solution sought and offered by them lies outside of man, in ontology and onto-theology. Levinas, on the other hand, sees such responses to Nietzsche's nihilism as a failure of nerve to tackle the problem by recourse to outside absolutes,[420] and considers his own revaluation of values as nothing short of a "Copernican revolution" (CPP: p.138) in ethics.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I describe Levinas' notion of "totality", which for him is the dominating cause of not only the problem of nihilism facing human beings but also the philosophies that attempt to address this problem. It could even be said that Levinas' revaluation is a reaction and a response to this totalisation tendency. I will then explain his conception of the self, the I, as well as the Other, before describing the idea of Infinity through which the totalisation of the Other by the I can be resisted. To this end, Levinas revaluates the relation between the two parties as a "relation without a relation", resistant to thematisation, and argues that such a relation has to be "for" the other person and not "with" the other. Such a relation can only be maintained through the important notion of "face", which I will explain.

A key pillar of Levinas' revaluation attempt is the concept of "passivity", through which he offers a revaluation of subjectivity, one in stark contrast to that of Nietzsche's. The subject, for Levinas, is not master of her own identity but a "hostage" of the other, and is characterised in terms of its pre-original nature or "passivity". The examination of "passivity", the seat of ethics for Levinas, as well as his revaluation of subjectivity in terms of it, allows me to describe the anxiety or the horror faced by a subject in resisting totalisation and anonymity. Levinas' attempt to avoid totalisation leads him to assert that ethics is first philosophy, not a derivative and not mediated by anything else. As first philosophy, it is an ethics of responsibility originating in passivity and motivated by desire for the Infinite. The Infinite or "transcendence" is revaluated by Levinas in terms of "a desire …for alterity" (EE: p.10) or the otherness of the Other. I will continue the discussion on ethics by examining "true heteronomy", through which Levinas attempts to reconcile autonomy and heteronomy, showing how the idea of Infinite comes through the face of the Other. The result is a form of ethical humanism, what Levians calls the

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[420] As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, Marcel relied on "existential assurances" and "ontological exigence", and Tillich on "essences".

"humanism of the Other", which I will describe. Although Levinas insists that he is not trying to create a transcendental foundation for ethics (GDT: p.200), religion and God are recurring themes in his philosophy and considered inseparable from ethics,[421] requiring some elucidation. Levinas' revaluation of all values attracts its own fair share of criticisms, which I will point to before concluding the chapter by suggesting that, despite the critique levelled against both his revaluation as well as his general philosophical and social views, by insisting on the primacy of ethics and locating values in "passivity", in the "before … good and evil" dichotomy, Levinas is the philosopher whose revaluation of values comes closest to what Nietzsche would have demanded or hoped for.[422]

During the course of my examination in this chapter, I try, where possible, to draw comparison and contrasts with other philosophers I considered in previous chapters, in particular Tillich and Marcel, in order to provide more clarity to Levinas' stance.

Totalising World

Levinas is in complete accord with Marcel, Tillich and Weber in seeing the moral problem of modernity as the consequence of depersonalisation and dehumanisation, the reduction of the human being to an object of use. However, where these philosophers attributed the problem to the rise of technology and a technical mindset, to the dominance of "the spirit of abstraction"[423] and "the spirit of industrial society"[424] and prevalence of instrumental rationality,[425] where human beings come to be defined and understood in terms of science and technology, Levinas goes even further by arguing that even attempts to understand human being with reference to ontology, onto-theology, epistemology and the like all have the same dehumanising effect, so Marcel's ontologically based ethics and Tillich's onto-theologically based ethical philosophy are also in a sense the perpetuation of this same problem.

In his first major work, "Totality and Infinity", Levinas uses the term "totality" to refer to the attitude or experience in which what confronts us is universalised, reduced and abstracted by us in order to be encapsulated and grasped by our knowledge and our understanding, in effect manipulated or used for our need. The consequence of this mode of comprehension in our

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[421] Kosky (2001: pp.xvi-xvii) argues "that an understanding of religion and religious life is essential to understanding his [Levinas'] work".

[422] In this sense, Leahy (1998) may well be right that "Levinas stands with Nietzsche on the side of life which requires and is capable of no justification whatsoever."

[423] Marcel's term to refer to prevalence of technology and its dehumanisation effect.

[424] Tillich's term to refer to problem of modernity and its dehumanisation effect.

[425] Weber sees instrumental rationality fostering dehumanisation.

intersubjective relationship is the loss of the uniqueness of the individual other before us, because the other person in the relationship is treated as an object or an abstract entity, understood not in terms of who he/she is but in terms of his relation within a category or concept of my mind. The fact that the other person is unique in his or her own right, completely detached and other than me, and not referenced to my thoughts and conceptual understanding, is ignored. When I take the person in front of me to be a "finite" being and hence graspable by the finite being that I am, and view him in terms of properties, concepts and themes of my own rational mind, that is to say when I understand the other person through some mediating terms, I have thematised the other person, I have brought him into a system through "reduction of the other to the same [to I]" (TI: p.43); I have totalised him[426]. The I-It relation of Marcel also meant to show this totalisation of the other person in the relation, reducing "Thou" to "It", a concept understandable by I; whereas in the I-Thou relationship, the Thou or Other in Levinasian terms, does not allow totalisation, the Thou resists and imposes a limit on the I. Although Levinas has no problem with totalising as a mode of inquiry and investigation in the scientific field or where we deal with objects, he finds it inappropriate in human relationships and ethics. He asserts that the relation between human beings is direct and unmediated, as it goes "only from man to man, not crossing distances to get to the places where events and forces unfold!" (IRB: p.207). Any attempt to mediate by any means is to totalise, and destroys genuine relationship.

The concept of "totality", according to Levinas, "marks the direction of and defines the whole of Western philosophy" (TI: p.45), as it attempts to encompass all reality and all human relationships within one single comprehensible system that can be grasped.[427] "From its infancy", Levinas writes, "philosophy has been struck with a horror of the other that remains other…" (TTO: p.346) than the I; and in order to assuage this horror, attempts have been made to remove the otherness of the other, leading to totalisation and hence objectification of the other. Levinas is critical of the philosophical views of many, including those of Marcel[428] and in particular Heidegger,[429] who give primacy to ontology, contending that, indeed, the ontological approach is in effect a totality thinking method, because it makes the unique existence of an individual being conditional on another being or on being part of a bigger whole,

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[426] Levinas refers to all philosophies that produce such totalisation as "the philosophy of the Same" (PII: p.50).
[427] Such a system, for Heidegger and Marcel, is 'ontology', for Descartes 'epistemology', for Tillich, 'onto-theology', for Kant 'reason'.
[428] While critical of reliance on ontology, Levinas has glowing remarks regarding Marcel and Buber on their pioneering work on intersubjectivity and the I-Thou relationship.
[429] Levinas points to "the absence of concern for the other in Heidegger …" that he disagrees with (IRB: p.186).

and so in effect destroys the individual's uniqueness.[430] Thus, Heidegger's "being in the world" or Marcel's "being with the other", as a way of describing the condition of a subject, are also mediation of the relationship with others, and hence a form of totalisation.[431] Even traditional theology, according to Levinas, has not been immune from this totalising tendency, due to its treatment of the idea of the relation between God and His creature in terms of ontology (TI: p.293), "making being or beings intervene" in this relation and failing to see "God as a beyond-being"[432] (GDT: p.160). We see such clear totalising effect in the philosophy of Tillich, where the unity of God, the being-itself, with man, a being, is disturbed through estrangement and separation from his ground of being.[433]

While there are points of similarities between the ethical philosophy of Levinas and those of Marcel and Tillich, as should become clear during the course of this chapter, clearly, unlike Marcel, he rejects ontology as the starting point for philosophy, because it cannot account for the uniqueness and otherness of the other person in the relationship, and he would even have harsher words for Tillich, as Levinas argues that theology treats "creation in terms of ontology - God leaving his eternity, in order to create" (TI: p.293), in effect dethroning God from his transcendence. We could say that Levinas' revaluation begins as a protest to totality thinking and as a critique of the way philosophy by and large has approached the idea of the individual self and his encounter with the other person, placing the emphasis on radical individualism and ego-centrism, where the autonomous and free subject considers himself to be the hub of the relationship, permitting himself to reduce and grasp the other person in the relationship. Levinas refers to such characteristics as "egology";[434] and although he has not directly pointed to this, we could say that Nietzsche, with his emphasis on autonomy and mastery of the Ubermensch, subordinates ethics to freedom and encapsulates and thematises the other person in the relationship, and would also be regarded by Levinas as a philosopher who totalises the other person in his philosophy. Levinas, on the other hand, places great emphasis on the uniqueness, the unencompassableness of the other person, and for him "the only absolute value is the human

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[430] Levinas writes: "Western philosophy has most often been an ontology: a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being" (TI: p.43), and he voices his concern regarding the preoccupation with ontology elsewhere, writing, "… the famous question of being, around which all of philosophy in the West developed" (IRB: p.105).

[431] Because, in the relationship with the other, a human being "begins to get mixed up with the being of all the others and to understand itself in terms of the impersonal anonymity of the 'they'...." (OTO: p.213).

[432] In so doing, theology has run up "against the difficulty of understanding that an infinite being would border on or tolerate something outside of itself, or that a free being would send its roots into the infinity of a God" (TI: p.293).

[433] Here, since the love of the other person always takes second place to the love of God, "ethics … would never equal the true essence of the relation to God", and as Kierkegaard also concluded, "would be considered something we have moved beyond" (AT: p.95).

[434] (See CPP: p.50) or (see PII: p.49).

possibility of giving the other priority over oneself" (OTO: p.109). His entire revaluation project is an attempt to safeguard the uniqueness of the other human being from being reduced or absorbed by the identity of the self, making "alterity the principle of ethical life" (Bergo 2002: p.100).

Revaluation of Values (Levinas' Response)

Levinas would view the revaluation offered by Nietzsche, Marcel and Tillich as mere examples of totality thinking and not a solution to the problem of nihilism; and as I hope to make clear in what follows, his own revaluation project grows increasingly distant to those offered by these philosophers. Whilst Levinas and Nietzsche agree on the asymmetrical nature of relationship with the other person, the type of relationship and the subjectivity of the subject in terms of unlimited responsibility for the other person is anathema for Nietzsche. On the other hand, Levinas's view on the asymmetrical relationship is contrary to those held by Marcel and Tillich, and although some parallel could be drawn between these three philosophers on the role played by the notion of transcendence, their contrasting views of subjectivity sets them apart even further.[435]

In Marcel, the ontological question of "who am I?", and in Tillich "what is being-itself?", formed the most important question and the starting point of their philosophy, and we saw their revaluation of values project came to reveal the need for a transcendental dimension linking the two beings in relation. For Levinas, on the other hand, the question that takes the centre stage is "who is the other person?"; and where Marcel argued that only the I can answer the "who am I?" question, Levinas asserts that the other person in the relation cannot be known or defined by the I nor through concepts known to the I, because the other is so unique and so otherwise than I. To know or define the other person in terms of the I is to totalise the other; and Levinas attempts to rescue the Other from this totalising tendencies by insisting that the relation between the I and the Other cannot and should not be mediated, because in mediating, the Other's alterity and uniqueness is dissolved (CPP: p.50). On this note, I turn to describe Levinas' conception of human beings in their encounter.

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[435] Among other things, Levinas blames the reliance on ontology as a problem with Marcel's and Tillich's views of subjectivity. He writes: "The end of subjectivity began with the twentieth century. The social sciences and Heidegger …, sending the subject, the individual, his unicity and his election back into ideology, or else rooting man in being, making him its messenger and poet" (CPP: p.144).

The Same and the Other

"The I is different because of its uniqueness, not unique because of its difference."

(OS: p.156)

Levinas rejects both the modernist as well as the postmodernist view of being and knowing. In the first case, he opposes the traditional Cartesian dualism, where the subject, the cogito, stands alone, detached and against a world conceived as object that is reduced and known by the subject. Descartes' "I is uncovered and certain, at the horizon of the world" (OS: p.157); it is the I that ascribes meaning to the world, and individual subjectivity is taken to be the fundamental undergirding of our humanity. With regard to the second case, Levinas stays clear of the postmodern views, including those of ontological persuasions, by insisting that the uniqueness of the human subject cannot be understood as the residue of an abstraction, defined in terms of some properties or discerned from without, but rather it must be viewed by "the suspension of all reference" (OS: p.117). In that sense, he differs from Marcel's conception of the self as a being in reference and relation with another person; and would oppose the views of Tillich, because he does not see the uniqueness of the I as testimony to "the ideal unity of the kind, to which the individual belonged"[436] (OS: p.156), which is yet another attempt at defining the "I" in reference to something else, albeit God.

Levinas' conception of the self, "the Same" (or the I), is not that of a nomad in isolation from all others. "The human I" he writes, "is not a unity closed upon itself like the uniqueness of the atom, but rather an opening, that of responsibility, which is the true beginning of the human ..." (IRB: p.182). As such, while Levinas shares a postmodernist view of Marcel in contending that the I is always in a relation with the Other and that the I cannot exist without the Other, he deviates substantially from Marcel by arguing that the Other cannot and must not be defined or understood in terms of his relations[437] with I, because the Other is a unique human being, an "existent".[438] The separation between the I and the Other should be maintained, because "to be human means to live as if one were not a being among beings" (EI: p.100), not a member of a genus. Levinas holds that "to seek and to obtain truth is to be in a relation not because one is defined by something other than oneself, but because in a certain sense one lacks nothing" (TI: p.61). Thus, although it "is only in approaching the Other that I attend to myself...this does not

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[436] This is a reference to the notion of estrangement of man from God, as proposed by Tillich.

[437] Levinas writes: "It is necessary that a being, though it be a part of a whole, derive its being from itself and not from its frontiers (not from its definition), exist independently, depend neither on relations that designate its place within Being nor on the recognition that the Other would bring it" (TI: p.61).

[438] The human subject is an existent that assumes existence (EE).

mean that my existence is constituted in the thought of the others" (TI: p.178); nor does it mean that my being can be shared or grasped by the other; after all, my being "is what is most private; existence is the sole thing I cannot communicate; I can tell about it, I cannot share my existence" (EI: p.57). The uniqueness of the "I" means that it can neither be identified from outside nor its identity can be considered in respect of others. Levinas writes:

> "The I …or 'me'… in my singularity - is someone who escapes his concept…..The 'me' … is an identity of oneself that would come about by way of the impossibility of letting oneself be replaced…" (GDT: p.20).

The Other resembles me, but is in no way another myself; indeed, "the Other is what I myself am not" (TO: p.83), and "the other is other because of me, unique" (IRB: p.106), and this uniqueness signifies that the other is "the infinitely other in the other person" (AT: p.97), worthy in himself and not reducible nor definable in relation to some context or in terms of my comprehension and perspectives. Indeed, knowledge of the Other "supresses the otherness and a described Other has lost its otherness."[439] The difference between I and the Other is also not due to the difference of character, physiognomy or the like, but due to the otherness of the Other, the Other's very alterity, the strangeness of the Other, "an strangeness which cannot be suppressed" (PAX: p.179). Levinas calls the relation between the I and the Other, an "atheism" (TI: p.60), because this is a relationship and an encounter between two truly separate beings; and asserts that the fact that the Other's "entire being is constituted by its exteriority…" means that my "relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery" (TO: p.75).

As we saw in Chapter Four, Marcel's ontological approach to the I-Thou relationship argued for the necessity of the existence of "an underlying unity" or a primordial link between the parties.[440] Levinas, on the other hand, insists on the necessity of separation for the survival of ethics. For him, "the social is beyond ontology" (EI: p.58); hence, where in Marcel the relation and ethics takes place in the common space between the two parties, what he also calls "between", in Levinas the notion of a "between" is a characterisation of "the I-Thou relation in terms of being" (OS: p.23) and part of the process of mediation and totalisation.[441]

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[439] (Levinas (1996) 'Ethik und Unendliches: Gesprache mit Philippe Nemo. Transl. by D. Schmidt. Wien: Passagen', as cited by Woo 2014).

[440] Tillich also argued about the prior unity of essential and existential elements.

[441] In elaborating this stark difference between his philosophy and those of ontological persuasion, Levinas writes: "Despite the theses of the philosophy of existence, this contact is not nourished from a prior enrootedness in being. The quest for truth unfolds in the apparition of forms. The distinctive characteristic of forms is precisely their epiphany at a distance. Enrootedness, a primordial preconnection, would maintain participation as one of the sovereign categories of being, whereas the notion of truth marks the end of this reign" (TI: p.61).

A prior connection destroys the distance between the I and the Other; hence, where Marcel extolled such pre-connection, asserting that "I am" is really a "We are", Levinas warns that "I am" must never be reduced to a "We are", as indeed any attempt to define the Other in terms of the self or vice versa is in fact an attempt to possess and totalise the Other, which he vehemently opposes because "the relationship between men is certainly the non-synthesizable par excellence" (EI: p.77). For Levinas, intersubjectivity is not unity of participants, but rather it is an ultimate pluralism, where there is a paradoxical relation between a subject with what is utterly other than it. An intersubjective relationship is not a kinship; rather, such an encounter takes place between strangers (AT: p.97), where an insurmountable difference between the I and the Other remains despite their proximity in their relation.[442] Every proper and genuine human relationship, then, is in fact a presentation of the I and the Other without any mediating element, where the relation between the two "does not totalize them; it is a 'unrelating relation,' which no one can encompass or thematize" (TI: p.295).

In drawing the distinction between his I-Other and the I-Thou relation of Marcel and Buber, Levinas writes: "I am destined for the other not because of our prior proximity [Marcel's view] or our substantial union [Buber's view], but because the Thou is absolutely other" (OS: p.29). The Other is neither the opposite or inverse of the I,[443] nor just another I, but "the infinitely other in the other person" (AT: p.97); and since the Other is a being unlike the I, if I is a being, the Other is "other than being" (CPP: p.70) or "otherwise than being". Levinas insists that even distinguishing the I and the Other based on qualities "would precisely imply between us that community of genus which already nullifies alterity" (TI: p.194).

Considering the I-Other relationship within Levinas' framework, it could be said that it is the uniqueness of the Other, the otherness of the Other, that is of importance and significance, which calls and demands responsibility and obligation from the I, not the similarities or the common interests that the I and the Other may share. Indeed, "the relation between me and the other commences in the inequality of terms, transcendent to one another....." (TI: p.251). Thus, this alterity of the Other needs to be maintained in order for the relation, and hence ethics, to endure. Levinas insists that my "relation with the Other does not nullify separation. It does not arise within a totality nor does it establish a totality, integrating me and the other" (TI: p.251).

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[442] This "distance in proximity is the marvel of the social relation" (AT: p93).
[443] That is to say, the Other is "not formed out of resistance to the same [the I]" (TI: p.38).

To resist "totality" and totalisation of the Other by the I, Levinas introduces "the idea of infinity" into ethical relations.[444]

Infinity and the Idea of Infinity

The idea of "totality", Levinas argues, must be substituted by "the idea of a separation resistant to synthesis" (TI: p.293); so that the uniqueness of each being in relationship is maintained, and no unity through participation is formed, as this destroys the relationship and with it destroys ethics. To this end, Levinas introduces and affirms "the philosophical primacy of the idea of infinity", and explicates how "infinity is produced in the relationship of the same with the other…" (TI: p.26) and how it "is to be found in my responsibility for the Other" (LR: p.5), in ethics. Levinas contends that it is the idea of infinity alone that "maintains the exteriority of the other with respect to the same", and in doing so prevents totalisation despite their relation (TI: p.196). "The idea of Infinity designates a height and a nobility, a transcendence", it is "the idea of the perfect", and as such can never become less perfect (TI: p.41). It refers to the case where "the ideatum ... that is, what this idea aims at, is infinitely greater than the very act through which one thinks it" (EI: p.91). I, a finite being, contemplate something I cannot embrace or grasp in my thoughts, namely the "infinite". As opposed to totality then, infinity "is the experience of what is always more than. . ., always more than what I can reduce to know, use, and enjoy" (Sayre and Kunz 2005: p.227). It should be borne in mind that infinity is not the experience of some gigantic object or something limitless that we may locate on the outside; to think of it in this way is to totalise it, defining it in reference to something that we can actually comprehend and measure and reduce to a finite. Infinite is also not the opposite of finite, the "in" is not supposed to be taken as negating the "finite"; rather, it is to show that infinite is otherwise than finite. "Infinity is the mode of being" that is produced where "the same, the I, contains in itself what it can neither contain nor receive solely by virtue of its own identity" (TI: pp.26-27). But how is such a paradox possible? How can a finite being, a finite consciousness, produce even the idea of infinite and perfection in itself? According to Levinas, Descartes took this as one proof of God's existence, because "thought cannot produce something which exceeds thought; this something had to be put into us" (EI: p.91). In other words, since infinity cannot be the object of contemplation, the idea of infinity must have been introduced in us finite beings from outside. Such an idea is also not a reminiscence, and could not have come to the I from within, because a subject cannot surpass himself by creating (CPP: p.54). Levinas calls the relationship between the I and the infinite, that is between I and what is

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[444] Williams and Gantt (1998: p.263) refer to Levinas' philosophy as "the phenomenology of the idea of the infinite".

otherwise than I, where despite the relation nothing connects or binds the two, "the idea of infinity in us" (CPP: pp.53-54). The Other in the relationship can be identified with the idea of infinity because the fact that I cannot contain or grasp the Other means that the Other has no bounds. The Other in this sense produces in me "the idea of infinity". On the other hand, without a radical separation between the I and the Other, there can be no idea of infinity. Levinas asserts: "To have the idea of Infinity it is necessary to exist as separated" (TI: p.79). Thus the relations of the I are in fact relations with the infinite, and this is how Levinas locates "the presence of the Infinite in a finite act" (EI: p.92), namely in human relations or ethics. "The infinite is given only to the moral view … it is not known, but is in society with us" (DF: p.10); and since "the idea of Infinity is transcendence itself" (TI: p.80), the infinite in our intersubjective relations implies that these relations have a transcendental, unconditional, ethical and religious character.[445] For Levinas, then, "...the idea of infinity, far from violating the mind, conditions nonviolence itself, that is, establishes ethics" (TI: p.204), by preventing the relation between the I and the Other from degenerating into totality, which is the denial of the Other of its individuality and a form of violence[446] against the Other by the I. Such a relation, in which the parties are kept separated through the idea of infinite, is "a relation without relation", for which Levinas also reserves the term "religion" (TI: p.80, OTO: p.7). Now, on the one hand, it is within and from our intersubjective relationship that "the Infinite rises up gloriously" (GDT: p.162), and on the other, "Infinity is characteristic of a transcendent being as transcendent; the infinite is the absolutely other" (TI: p.49). These two points are quite significant, because "by virtue of the idea of the infinite … Levinas is able to make a connection between two worlds which depend on each other for their meaning: the world of the social relation [ethics] and the world of religion" (Riessen 2007: p.133).

Since the Other in the relationship is not just another being, "his gaze must come to me from a dimension of the ideal. The other must be closer to God than I. This is … the first given of moral consciousness". (CPP: p.55) My responsibility and obligation towards the Other, then, has a transcendental dimension, what Levinas refers to as the "trace",[447] because "in welcoming the Other I welcome the On High to which my freedom is subordinated"[448] (TI: p.300). He

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[445] Levinas writes: "The relation with the Other alone introduces a dimension of transcendence, and leads us to a relation totally different from experience in the sensible sense of the term…" (TI: p.193).
[446] By "violence" Levinas means treating the other person as a thing, or committing an unethical act. He writes: "Violence is to be found in any action in which one acts as if one were alone to act: as if the rest of the universe were there only to receive the action…" (DF: p.6).
[447] "The conceptual figure of the trace allows Levinas to think of a relationship to the other which does not convert the other into the same, and a relationship to a transcendence which is not convertible into immanence" (Robbins 1995: p.176).
[448] This "trace lights up as the face of" the Other (OB: p.12).

writes: "The trace of the infinite is inscribed in my obligation toward the other, in this moment that corresponds to the call" (AT: p.107); so although Infinite is not a phenomenon and does not appear, nor is it present, "the subject is inspired by the Infinite" (OB: p.148). Marcel had also established the same connection by arguing that the unconditionality found within intersubjective relationships points to transcendence, to God. Marcel, Tillich and Levinas thus introduce the sacred in the language of ethics; however, and importantly, Levinas argues that ethics is not the consequence of "the vision of God, it is that very vision" (DF: p.17). Since our relationship with God crosses our relationship with other human beings,[449] it is within and through our relationship with others that we can experience the presence of God, and the Infinite. Furthermore, whereas for Marcel and Tillich infinity or transcendence is revealed in the common link between the two beings, in the participation and encounter of the two, for Levinas the beings share nothing in common, not even a boundary that would demarcate the separation. The infinite is the Other.

Levinas can locate the idea of Infinity in analysing intersubjective relationships such as hope, desire or love, where thought overflows its limits.[450] He argues that, unlike intentional relationships where thought is limited by a content, such genuine relationships are "thoughts that think more than they can think, more than thought can contain" (GDT: p.172), and this is the idea of Infinity. It is worth noting that Levinas is not trying to construct a transcendental foundation for ethics nor does he claim that the analysis of human relationship should lead one to affirmation of the existence of God.[451] The idea of infinity neither resides in or outside of relationship, nor does it come "from our a priori depths - it is consequently experience par excellence" (TI: p.196). This is not an ordinary experience; indeed,

> "There is no ethical experience; there is an intrigue. Ethics is the field sketched out by the paradox of an Infinite in relation, without correlation, to the finite. A relation such that there is no encompassing but rather an overflowing of the finite by the Infinite, which defines the ethical intrigue" (GDT: p.200).

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[449] Levians writes: "The first relation man has with being passes through his links with man…. he finds a meaning to the earth on the basis of a human society" (DF: p.22).
[450] As explained in Chapter Four, Marcel had also affirmed the presence of infinity or unconditionality in his consideration of experiences such as fidelity, hope and love, concluding that "the only true authentic hope [or fidelity] is one that relies on something that does not depend on us" (TS: p.57).
[451] Nordtug (2013: p.253) describes Levinas's ethics not as a set of rules or principles but as an attempt to explain "the kind of orientation to the Other that is necessary if we shall be able to meet the Other in her Otherness."

This "ethical intrigue" is made possible by the idea of the Infinite that manifests through the "face" of the Other, a notion I turn to next.

Face

In the encounter of the I with the Other, Levinas calls the way in which the Other presents himself to the I, "face"[452] (TI: p.50). The face of the other person is the entry point into ethical relation "through which man comes to me via a human act different from knowing" (PAX: p.171), and his face serves as the emblem for all that resists totalisation, categorisation or comprehension of him by me. Although, for Levinas, "the face is a fundamental event", he concedes that "...it is very difficult to give an exact phenomenological description" of the face (PAX: p.168), because it is not a phenomena that can be contained in words or thoughts. It cannot be described in terms of certain biological features, it is not a form of knowledge, a theme or a representation, because the object of representation or thematisation is interior to thought, it is dominated by the power of thought, and this is exactly what the "face" is not. Levinas insists that the Other is not a phenomenon, as it "cannot appear to a consciousness. He is a face..." (GDT: p.173); indeed, the appearance of the face suspends or relegates consciousness (CPP: p.97, TTO: p.352). The face is not an image; rather, it "is meaning all by itself. You are you" (EI: p.86). It "is an irreducible mode in which being can present itself in its identity" (DF: p.8), an identity that is not the form or shape of the face, not one's countenance, something that can be portrayed in a painting or picture, after all, "the other is invisible" (TI: p.6); rather, it is the way someone who is other than me expresses himself with his whole body. Indeed, by manifesting himself in a face, the Other in effect divests himself of the shape and form that represents him. In contrast to a face, a thing or an object is recognised or identified through its forms and properties, and in that sense "a thing can never be presented personally and ultimately has no identity" (DF: p.8). In our intersubjective relations, the moment the Other is taken and treated as an object, a thing that can be grasped, "he loses his face" (GDT: p.196), in the same sense that the I-Thou relation of Marcel can degenerate into an I-It relation.

The face cannot be spoken of in terms of an ordinary experience, because to do so is again to turn it into an object of thought, which is precisely what it is not. Levinas contends that the face appears as a face rather than an object or a mask only when it comes from the infinite, from the "beyond". This "beyond", however, is not some background from which the face solicits us, that is to say it "is not 'another world' behind the world. The *beyond* is precisely beyond the

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[452] A close parallel to the notion of "face" is Marcel's notion of "presence", which I considered in Chapter 4.

'world,' that is, beyond every disclosure" (CPP: p.102). The face of the Other, then, encapsulates the idea of infinity, which is within me; so in effect it "enters our world from an absolutely alien sphere" (TTO: p.352), and in so doing it "maintains the exteriority of the other with respect to the same, despite this relation" (TI: p.196).

In my encounter with the Other, the face "speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation" (TI: p.198), a relationship that "is not a togetherness of synthesis, but a togetherness of face to face." (EI: p.77) For Levinas, the face of the Other, as "the original locus of the meaningful" (AT: p.23), is the shortest, most direct and non-mediated way through which each being presents itself in their encounter. Such a direct relation is straightaway ethical (EI: p.87) or has an underlying ethical dimension.

For Levinas, the face of the other is also the entry point for the sacred, the way through which "the trace of Infinity, or the Word of God", or transcendence, is expressed (AT: p.169). The face of one's fellow human being is the "locus of the Infinite", and the "locus in which transcendence calls an authority with a silent voice…" (AT: p.5). To seek the Infinite or God, then, is to seek Him in one's experience in an encounter with another person, to look for Him in the face of the Other. Again, this is to say that "the idea of infinity, …, is concretely produced in the form of a relation with the face" (TI: p.196). From this, Levinas concludes that the authority of moral command becomes manifest through the face of the Other, and ethical responsibility for the Other is demanded from me because "the face orders and ordains" (EI: p.97). The face demands from me, despite its poverty, frailty and vulnerability,[453] its "extreme immediate exposure - total nudity" (GDT: p.138), and though the face "is not a force… It is an authority. Authority is often without force" (PAX: p.169). But the face to face encounter "can be … a moral summons" (TI: p.196), a demand that comes to me from the Other if, in the face of the Other, I see God commanding me to act ethically.[454] Levinas writes: "There is, in the face, the supreme authority that commands, and I always say it is the word of God. The face is the locus of the word of God" (AT: p.104), and "it is as if God spoke through the face" (PAX: p.169). But again, it needs to be stressed that this is not the voice of God coming from outside obliging me to obey, but rather "I hear an order in my own voice" (GDT: p.201) as "the infinitely exterior becomes infinitely interior, in the guise of my voice…." (GDT: p.197). The moral command comes from within me, making it difficult for me to break my own command.

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[453] The Other appears as frail, vulnerable and defenceless in so far as it can easily be reduced and totalised by me on the basis of my own perception of him.

[454] "The needs of the Other cannot be denied, not because of any rights, but simply because the Other exists" (Knights and O'Leary 2006: p.136).

Levinas argues that "the face is something one cannot kill" (EI: p.87) unless it is treated as an object not a face, because the Infinity revealed in the face of the Other makes a demand from me, a demand that is primordial, and its first word is "thou shalt not kill" (EI: p.87). This is "the very moment of the ethical command" (Gantt 2001: p.12), where the Infinity revealed in the face has provided an "ethical resistance"[455] that forbids me to commit an unethical act or violence towards the Other. This "ethical resistance" indicates that "the epiphany of the face is ethical" (TI: p.199). The significance of the distinction of identity, between face and faceless, becomes clear here, because "violence is applied to the thing, it seizes and disposes of the thing" (DF: p.8) by usurping and encompassing or capturing the thing and in effect destroying its identity, by totalising it. Thus, violence, including killing, is possible "only when one has not looked the Other in the face" (DF: p.10), when one ignores the face of the Other, avoids his gaze and fails to catch "the *no* inscribed on a face by the very fact that it is a face", which becomes a "submissive force" (CPP: p.19). Of course, this does not mean that one cannot or does not kill, "the impossibility of killing is not real, but moral" (DF: p.10); and Levinas concedes that "one can kill the other; the ethical exigency is not an ontological necessity. The prohibition against killing does not render murder impossible" (EI: p.87); however, the face of the Other, if the Other is not objectified, provides an opposition, not one of force[456] but "a pacific opposition", where violence is not forcibly contained yet not committed (CPP: p.19).

While "there is no evidence with regards to the face;" yet there is "an order in the sense that the face is commanded value", and this commanded value, according to Levinas, "is believing that love without reward is valuable"; so "the idea of the face is the idea of gratuitous love, the commandment of a gratuitous act. Commanding love" (PAX: pp.176-177). This moral command, this gratuitous love in the face of the other, is a universal commandment, and valid and independent of any religion.

The idea of Infinite is revealed in the face of the Other; but where does the idea of the Infinite come from? In the next section I discuss Levinas' response to such a question, by examining his notion of "passivity".

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[455] "Ethical resistance is the presence of infinity" (CPP: p.55), (see also TI: p.199). This "resistance is Levinas's name for the 'no' with which the Other confronts me" (Staehler 2010: p.97).

[456] The authority that comes from the face of the Other "cannot compel me to anything, but can only ask and appeal, an authority that requires only by beseeching" (Burggraeve 1999: p.31).

Passivity

Unlike many who consider passivity as a lack, a deficiency or a state of inactivity, a key feature of Levinas' revaluation is his unique view of the concept of absolute passivity.[457] His critique of ontological philosophy revolves around the idea that such philosophy assumes that meaning and intelligibility coincide with the manifestation of being, as if the very doings of being lead to clarity and creation or discovery of meaning. Since infinity cannot be comprehended by a finite, as pointed out earlier, in the idea of Infinity, the thought of Infinite must have been put into us from outside, and put into us at the same time as our creation, because this thought cannot arise as a result of our conscious deliberation at some later stage. It needs to come to us prior to any consciousness, prior to any notion of time, prior to the ontological level, prior to appearance of freedom, in the non-intentional region where "subjectivity is prior to Ego" (HO: p.51); that is to say, before the subject or "the existent contracts its existence" (AT: p.43) in the world. This is Levinas' pre-original passivity, and he asserts that "the idea of the Infinite, *Infinity in me,* can only be a passivity of consciousness" (CPP: p.160). God can also be described in terms of this passivity, since God is non-being, not a thing or "no thing", "transcendent to the point of absence" (CPP: p.165). God is passivity. According to Levinas, ethics is transcendental, because to rise above "the universality of structures and the impersonal essence of being",[458] as well as ethical relativism, "there has to be a point that counts for itself…. there needs to be a cell that is in itself sober" (HO: p.49). Such a point is found in this radical passivity of the human, at the pre-ontological level. Here we seem to locate an unlikely concurrence between Levinas' notion of passivity and Marcel's and Tillich's notion of grace,[459] as passivity, like grace, can only be located in the dimension of height, in transcendence. This concurrence is significant, because it indicates that, despite the palpable differences in their philosophies, not to mention that Levinas would consider any philosophy founded on ontology or onto-theology a culprit in "totalisation" problem, the three ethical philosophies seem to converge on the reliance on the notion of transcendence. However, and significantly, where for Marcel and Tillich ethics arises out of the relationships between the parties, passivity implies that the relationship comes after or built upon ethics. For Levinas, ethics arises in passivity, from the dimension of beyond, unsolicited and unintended.

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[457] William Flesch writes that "any philosophical understanding of Levinas's ethics, … must begin with an understanding of a 'logic' of passivity…" (cited in Wall 1999).

[458] According to Levinas, "universality presents itself as impersonal; and this is another inhumanity" (TI: p.46).

[459] For both Marcel and Tillich, grace provides the moral motivation, and as both philosophers argued, grace is neither dependent on human merit nor the result of human effort or will, but rather it is given as a divine gift to man.

The concept of passivity provides a demarcation of a present and a past in "me". Levinas writes: "it is as though there were in the 'me' a past, always irreducible to presence, on this side of every past; an absolute and unrepresentable past"[460] (GDT: pp.176-177). The present is where I exercise my freedom to choose, "it is the site of initiative and of choice" and of consciousness. On the other hand, I have no access to the past because I live in present. This past is "a passivity prior to all receptivity, a past that was never present. This passivity transcends the limits of my time and is a priority prior to any representable priority" (GDT: p.177). It is in this passivity, before I come to be present, that is in my non-being or the being "beyond being", that I am endowed with the Good, with ethics, as if the Good were before being and before presence (GDT: .177, OB: p.122). This passivity "is transcendent" (OB: p.122).

Here we may be able to draw an affinity with Tillich's theological conception of human being and his notion of estrangement, where, having drawn a distinction between the elements of existence and essence in human being, he conceives of existence in present as being estranged from essence, from one's true being that is good. Levinas, while not referring to any estrangement, sees the past, the non-being, the time before time, as the time of passivity where there is no dichotomy between good and evil, there is only goodness; and since goodness cannot accept multiplicity, there is only one goodness. The transition from past to present is the point at which goodness, the only thing there is, is endowed upon human being. I, a human being, have no choice or say on this, as I am only a passivity. If we resemble the transition from passivity to present as creation, we could then claim that I am created noble from the start. Levinas writes:

> "Ethics slips into me before freedom. Before the bipolarity of Good and Evil, the I as 'me' has thrown its lot in with the Good in the passivity of bearing… The 'me' has thrown its lot in with the Good before having chosen it" (GDT: p.176).

Indeed, it could be said that the Good is not even "the object of a choice for it has taken possession of the subject before the subject had the time…" (CPP: p.134); that, in fact; the Good has chosen the subject, making him a hostage "to which the subject is destined, which he cannot evade without denying himself, and by virtue of which he is unique" (OB: p.122).

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[460] In reference to passivity, Levinas also writes: "There was a time irreducible to presence, an absolute unrepresentable past" (OB: p.122).

Clearly, Levinas is in complete accord with Nietzsche in being dismissive of the good and evil dichotomy as well as intentionality and free will; and although Nietzsche rejects anything that is not part of this world of existence, that is any non-being, "otherwise than being", Infinity or passivity, the revaluation of values for both philosophers lies in the realisation of the falsehood of this dichotomy.

Although there is a convergence of thought between Levinas and Tillich on the issue of the point of infusion of ethics in human being, there seems a greater and far more important agreement between the two and Nietzsche on the question of what ethics is. If there is no good and evil dichotomy in the state of passivity because goodness can only be one, as Levinas insists, and good is endowed onto existence from the source of goodness, from God as Tillich argues, or in passivity in Levinasian terms, and if we take these to be a reiteration of Nietzsche's argument that the dichotomy of good and evil is a human fabrication born out of resentment, then may we not conclude that evil has no independent existence in its own right, that there is indeed no evil at all? That evil is only the absence of good? That it is only the product of resentment and negation of good? Or, in Levinasian terms, it is "responsibility in spite of itself for refusing responsibilities" (HO: p.56). Evil can perhaps then best be described as a shadow, which is only there due to the absence of light, and this may to a degree explain and confirm Hannah Arendt's assertion regarding the "banality of evil"[461] (Arendt 1971: p.7).

For Levinas, "goodness is transcendence itself" (TI: p.305), and passivity is the locus of Good[462] and a new way of defining subjectivity.

Passive Subjectivity

My responsibility and obligation towards the other does not arise from my initial understanding and acceptance of the Other as someone just like me, another human being like me who as a result should be treated as I would want to be treated. This was the case with Marcel, as he considered subjectivity structured as I "with" the other with reciprocal responsibility; but for Levinas, subjectivity starts from oneself, and though I am a separate being, to remain separate I must have a relation with something or someone other than myself. I cannot remain separate if I have a relation with something that I totalise, like a relation with an object. Only when I have a relation with what is infinitely other than me, an "otherwise than being", can I remain

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[461] Arendt believes that the banality of evil "contradicts our theories concerning evil…" (Arendt 2003: p.xv).
[462] Levinas writes: "Good is Good *in itself* and not by relation to the need to which it is wanting; it is a luxury with respect to needs. It is precisely in this that it is beyond being" (TI: p.103).

separate and a subject. For Levinas, "the fact of starting from oneself is equivalent to separation", and subjectivity derives its features in separation; that is to say, "separation is the very act of individuation" (TI: pp.299-300). Being derived from separation means that subjectivity is affected through the idea of Infinity,[463] and it is affected by passivity, because to have a relation with the other it is necessary that "there be *someone* before the other, *someone* facing the other" (Longneaux 2008: p.55) [italics in original]. Thus, for Levinas, there is something else in subjectivity before and "besides being in the world; there is a relationship …with the light" where "an existence finds itself … prior to awakening to the world" (EE: PP.9-10). The subjectivity of the subject comes from this light or the Infinite, and the difference between the two accounts for intentionality, because the Infinite cannot be indifferent towards the finite; this difference "is a non-indifference of the Infinite to the finite, and is the secret of subjectivity" (CPP: p.162). This non-indifference is also the seat of responsibility, a point I will consider in detail later in this piece; suffice to say that, for Levinas, "the humanity of man, subjectivity, is a responsibility for others" (CPP: p.149), a responsibility that is before any intention or freedom, and before consciousness, because "the subject is born in the beginninglessness of an anarchy and in the endlessness of obligation, gloriously augmenting as though infinity came to pass in it"[464] (OB: p.140). Levinas' subject is responsible in his passivity, and subjectivity is a "passive subjectivity" (CPP: p.166), as it "is passively structured as for the other, as the *one-for*-the-other. My basic posture is the for-the-other" (GDT: p.158).

Clearly, passive subjectivity is diametrically different to the Cartesian view of the subject; it "reverses the position where the presence of the ego to itself appears as the beginning" (OB: p.127). It "is not the *I think*", but rather, subjectivity arises in passivity, making me responsible for the Other regardless of whether or not the Other is responsible for me; indeed, "it is precisely insofar as the relationship between the Other and me is not reciprocal that I am subjection to the Other; and I am 'subject' essentially in this sense"[465] (EI: p.98).

Through the notion of passivity, Levinas in effect extracts the subject from the concept of ego, where the self can hide or shelter behind forms and concepts. Subjectivity, for Levinas, "is not reducible to intentional subject but, in the form of waking up" (GDT: p.145), where, in the nakedness of passivity, the subject cannot refuse its obligation and responsibility for the Other.

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[463] Separation is "necessary for the idea of Infinity, the relation with the Other which opens forth from the separated and finite being" (TI: p.148).

[464] By "anarchy", Levinas describes the way the Other is approached without any mediating term, such as a principle, concept.

[465] "subjectivity…is… a subjection to the other" (CPP: p.165).

The significance of passive subjectivity lies in the fact that here "the ethical is the condition of my existence whatever the worth or worthlessness of my actions" (Trezise and Biesta 2009: p.49). This of course is different to both Marcel and Tillich, who viewed subjectivity in ontology, as being. Marcel, for instance, describes subjectivity as that of "being-with-others" in the present. For Nietzsche, also, the subject is an ego in the present, as there is only existence, no other world and no "other than beyond" or other than "being".

Subjectivity comes in passivity, but is grounded on ''sociality''(EI: p.60); that is to say, subjectivity is in the fact of being in a relation of responsibility when coming face to face with the Other.

Anxiety (Horror)

The violence of totalisation results in depersonalisation, the deprivation of the subject from her individuality and particularity, and anxiety over such a possibility. Levinas' conception of subjectivity in terms of passivity leads him to articulate anxiety not in terms of the fear for one's death or non-being, but rather the "fear of Being".[466] A subject, or an existent, "is constituted in a movement of taking on the existing" (EE: p.10), of emerging from existence, which involves a relationship by which the existent makes a contract with existence and bears the risk and suffers the anguish of knowing that there is no turning back. In a face-to-face encounter, one needs to experience the otherness of the other in order to have "a relation without a relation" with the other, a relation with the nudity of the face of the other. In other words, I need to experience this nothingness of this relationship; but can I be an existent, a subject, where there is nothing? Can I have a relation with the other without any communication, communion, or participation, and free from any perspective?[467] According to Levinas, "the absence of perspective is not something purely negative. It becomes an insecurity" (EE: p.59). The fear of this insecurity, which affects the subject "before the very otherness of the other", is considered unhealthy and removed by social life and through mediating terms that allow participation (EE: pp.40-41); in doing so, however, totalisation rears its head again. When a subject participates in existence, it arouses horror (Franck 2000: p.15), because participation "turns the subjectivity of the subject, his particularity qua entity, inside out" (EE: p.61), and brings back the violence of anonymity. Levinas speaks of anxiety in terms of "horror", the horror that a subject "is stripped of his subjectivity, of his power to have private existence. The subject is

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[466] Levinas writes: "Is not anxiety over Being - horror of Being - just as primal as anxiety over death? Is not the fear of Being just as originary as the fear for Being?" (EE: p.10)

[467] As Levinas concedes, "All the concrete relations between human beings in the world get their character of *reality* from a third term. They are a communion" (EE: p.41).

depersonalized" (EE: p.61). He maintains that "there is horror of being and not anxiety over nothingness, fear of being and not fear for being..."[468] (EE: p.62). He writes: "it is precisely in this relation to others" that a human being "begins to get mixed up with the being of all the others and to understand itself in terms of the impersonal anonymity of the '*they'....*" (OTO: p.213) [italics in original]. This is the horror of being submerged and lost in the impersonality of Being. The horror arises "from the difficulty of being faithful to the an-archy of passivity", because passivity is constantly being threatened "by the possibility of an activity, a freedom, being posited behind this passivity" (Cambridge 2004: pp.238-239).

However, this horror of existence, this possibility of losing one's particularity and becoming a "being in general" (EE: p.57), is not something to be avoided, as it is a prerequisite for an ethical encounter.

Ethics

For Levinas, the central point in ethics is not a set of principles or codes of morality, nor would he consider knowledge of ethical theories as a necessary condition and requirement for moral decision making; indeed, for him, ethics is not about moral decision-making by an autonomous moral subject at all.[469] His "ethics is the opposite of a moral system" (Corvellec 2005: p.33), neither involved in a Kantian concern about what ought one do nor about the calculations of the consequence of an action (Trezise and Biesta 2009), and not about "the cultivation of virtues" (Bergo 2013).

Levinas conceives ethics as the context within which the relationship between an I and the Other, between I, a finite being, and what is otherwise than I, an Infinite, can take place,[470] without the I violating or totalising the Other. He writes: "to think the other as other, to think him or her straightaway before affirming oneself, signifies concretely to have goodness" (IRB: p.106).

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[468] Levinas writes: "We are opposing, then, the horror of the night, 'the silence and horror of the shades,' to Heideggerian anxiety, the fear of being to the fear of nothingness. While anxiety, in Heidegger, brings about "being toward death," grasped and somehow understood, the horror of the night 'with no exits' which 'does not answer' is an irremissible existence" (EE: p.63).

[469] Trezise and Biesta (2009: p.46) argue that "the model that is implied in the common approaches to the teaching of business ethics relies upon an understanding of ethical action as a process that follows from rational ethical decision-making by an autonomous moral subject… [it assumes] that ethics has a rational basis and that ethical action follows from taking the 'right' decisions"; in brief, "the idea that ethical being follows from knowing ethics rests upon a very specific set of assumptions about ethics and human action".

[470] Perhaps it is best to say that ethics, as developed by Levians, "is not really a relationship at all, but a certain vigilance with respect to any relationship" (Wood 2005: p.168).

The Infinite in such relation appears through the face of the Other and as Infinity awakening me to my responsibility for the Other.[471] Such a definition of ethics has clear parallels with those of Tillich and Marcel, for whom the notion of God, Transcendence, Ontological Exigence, or Ultimate concern, is indispensable and underpins ethics. In other words, transcendence is the ethical structure in all three philosophies. For Levinas, the structure of ethics is "the one for the other" (GDT: p.157); for Marcel, "the one with the other"; and for Tillich, the prior unity with one's essential being. It could be said that, for all three philosophers, ethics is the relationship in which the Ultimate concern, the Unconditional or the Infinity, is realised; and although subjectivity is viewed and expressed differently in each philosophy, for all "the understanding of transcendence takes on an ethical meaning" (CPP: p.171), and all in their own way actually affirm the Platonic notion of "the Good beyond being", or to be more precise, in the case of Levinas, the Good before being.[472] In Levinas, the contrast with Tillich and Marcel lies in his insistence that ethics must be given priority over ontology,[473] that it "does not supplement a preceding existential base" (EI: p.95), otherwise it ends up being a derivative and a construct of the human subject. For Levinas, ethics is first philosophy.

Ethics as First Philosophy

"Morality is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy." (TI: p.304)

The pivot round which the entire ethical philosophy of Levinas revolves is the assertion that ethics is not a branch of philosophy, but rather it is given as "first philosophy" (AT: p.xix, TI: p.304). Before we begin to talk about autonomy or heteronomy of the subject, before considering categorical imperative, utilitarianism, rationality, justice, virtue ethics or any other form or method of ethical decision making, we should realise that all these are secondary, as they are built on top of our individual lived experiences, our relationship with the other person, on ethics. For Levinas, this lived experience, or the ethical relationship, is the idea of infinity, a relationship with a face, a relation with the absolutely Other, the unique and the infinite, and as such is not a cognition but an approach; and it can only be one of responsibility, which is "love without concupiscence" (IRB: p.108, OTO: p.103). The relationship with infinite cannot have "the structure of an intentional correlation" (CPP: p.73) and cannot be grasped by "the finality and reason of the system" (GDT: p.52), nor can it be found on ontology; and since, in

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[471] "…the 'in' of infinity … awakens subjectivity to the proximity of the other" (CPP: p.166), and this is "an awakening that signifies a responsibility for the other who must be fed and clothed, my substitution for the other, my expiation for the suffering, and no doubt, for the wrongdoing of the other person" (OTO: p.63).

[472] "Levinas draws his idea of the 'Good beyond being' from Platonic philosophy and from the idea of infinite in me developed in Descartes's *Meditations*" (Katz and Trout 2005: p.2).

[473] "ethics is before ontology" (IRB: p.211).

Levinas' account, "the beginning of philosophy is not the cogito, but the relation to the other" (AT: p.xxi), this primordial relation or ethics cannot be grafted on another antecedent relationship of cognition. Levinas contends that it would be comical and tragic for a being to bestow meaning upon himself, because "there can be meaning in being only through him who is not measured according to being" (CPP: p.138), so it is not the I that can or should determine values and meaning, but rather it is this meaning, ethics, which must and does come first.

Marcel argued that, without the other person, the I cannot exist, that the I-Thou relation is dependent on the pre-existing participants; but Levinas shifts the emphasis by arguing that, without the gap between the I and Other, that is without the relation between the two, without ethics, neither the I nor the Other can exist. Thus, rather than presupposing the primacy of the I over the Other, which is the problem of totalisation, the ultimacy and the otherness of the Other needs to be taken as the condition for our relationships and life experiences. In other words, the starting point for any phenomenological or existential analysis is the ethical standpoint, our relationship with the other, and not the being of I or the Other. It is on this basis that Levinas argues for the primacy of ethics over ontology (TI: p.42, IRB: p.211).

The emphasis on the primacy of ethics should not be viewed as "a gratuitous or vain quest for some kind of chronological priority" (AT: p.174); rather, it is to show that ontology, rationality, and all other forms of acquiring truth, arise out of ethics. It is ethics that needs to account for these. "What is meaningful does not necessarily have to be" (GDT: p.125), and "one does the good before knowing it - ethics lies in this 'before'" (EI: p.11). The title of his book, "Otherwise than Being: beyond Essence",[474] testifies to his belief in non-ontological nature of the obligation and responsibility called for by ethics. Levinas' specific attack on ontology was directed at Heidegger as the representative of the philosophy of ontology.[475] He writes:

> "To affirm the priority of Being over existents is to already decide the essence of philosophy; it is to subordinate the relation with someone, who is an existent, (the ethical relation) to a relation with the Being of existents, which, [is] impersonal,…" (TI: p.45).

Ontology as first philosophy, Levinas further contends, is "a philosophy of power" (TI: p.46), a philosophy of tyranny and injustice, because it "subordinates the relationship with the Other

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[474] The title of this major book is to convey the point that the other person is not just very different to me, but is otherwise than me.

[475] Gans (1972) points out that, if Levinas' analysis of the problem of ontology is correct, then the link between Heideggerian philosophy and Nazi politics is established.

to the relation with Being in general", which is a relation to what is anonymous and impersonal (TI: p.47). Ontology, and indeed, phenomenology, according to Levinas, are in effect both an egology, which "promotes freedom - the freedom that is the identification of the same, not allowing itself to be alienated by the other" (TI: p.42); and by claiming such absolute freedom and essential self-sufficiency for the I, totalise the Other and destroy the relationship. Levinas, however, speaks of "finite freedom", to signify the uniqueness of my responsibility towards the other. My responsibility is unique, because no one else can take my place and fulfil the responsibility on my behalf, I have been "singled out to answer by the eyes that face [me]" (CPP: p.XXIII). My freedom is limited by the Other, and it is the Other who gives meaning to my freedom, enabling me to be moral. Freedom has no meaning in a world that entirely belonged to me, that is in pure subjectivity; and that is why "the free man is dedicated to his fellow; no one can save himself without others" (HO: p.66).

Although ontology, according to Levinas, could also appropriately be called a theory of "the comprehension of Being", such comprehension is impossible, because my relationship with the Other is always prior and commands and dominates Being. I cannot disentangle myself from the relation with the other "even when I consider the Being of the existent he is" (TI: p.47). In an ontological approach, the recognition of a known being by the knowing being, that is the recognition of the Other by the I, necessitates a prior relation, and this is done through the mediating power of a third entity, namely a thought or concept, a "neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being" (TI: p.43); and this for Levinas is problematic, as he asserts that "such a recognition happens beyond being, beyond essence…" (IRB: p.106). In Marcel's philosophy, for instance, the mediating relation was the "intelligible background"; and as both Marcel and Tillich argued, without such prior unity the intersubjective relationship cannot take place, in effect confirming Levinas' critique that the necessity of this unity destroys the distance, the very relation, that binds the parties. Now, if there is no distance between the I and the other, if the alterity of the other is overcome through the notion of unity, there can no longer be an intersubjective relation, and hence no ethics. Ethics disappears, because it is gobbled up by the notion of Being, by ontology. Thus, in an ontological approach, the ethical obligation of I towards the other is sacrificed in favour of the relationship with the Being; and this, according to Levinas, inevitably leads to tyranny. He writes: "*Being* before the *existent,* ontology before metaphysics, is freedom … before justice. It is a movement within the same before obligation to the other"[476] (TI: p.46) [italics in original].

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[476] By "existent" Levinas refers to a person, an individual.

Levinas asserts that "the terms must be reversed" (TI: p.47): ethics, the relationship and our obligations towards the other person, should take priority over ontology, because ethics can exist only when the I takes the irreducible Other into account rather than reducing the Other to the Same. Levinas calls ethics "an optics" (TI: pp.23 & p29), to stress the point that ethics is not just a secondary function overlaid or derived from other disciplines, that it should not even be approached through philosophy, but rather it is philosophy that is or should be approached through ethics.[477] He writes: "... morality comes not as a secondary layer, above an abstract reflection on the totality and its dangers; morality has an independent and preliminary range. First philosophy is an ethics" (EI: p.77).

As first philosophy, it means that our relationship with others is inherently ethical, hence our primordial relational context with one another entails responsibility for the other.[478] Ethics is not something that is first figured out or calculated, learned or acquired and then added to human activity to regulate our relationships; rather, human activity itself is primarily ethical, "what makes us ethical is what makes us human" (Ferreira 2006: p.482).

Levinas is in accord with Marcel, that human being is not an isolated individual, but rather he is relational, always in a relation with another human being, and hence always in an ethical context; but he differs from him from this point on, because whereas Marcel took the subject as the foundation and locus of the relationship and ethics, Levinas reverses this by arguing that, indeed, the relationship itself is the foundation for our subjectivity. As such, all our intersubjective relationships entail ethical responsibilities. This distinction is very significant, because for Levinas, it is not the subject who is the determiner of the ethical decision, weighing a number of options and deciding the right one; that is to say, there is no ethical choice to be made by the subject. Ethics is already determined. The I is already responsible and has an obligation toward the Other, otherwise there would be no relationship between the two in the first place. It is not the subject who needs to make a distinction between good and evil from a neutral position, because the subject is already dominated by the good, by ethics and excluded from "the very possibility of choice". As pointed out earlier, it is the good that elects the subject in passivity, hence it is this "unimpugnable election by the Good that for the elected, is always

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[477] As Crowell (2012: p.564) explains: "…'ethics is an optics'… means that my ethical response to my fellow human being is the lens through which all other philosophical questions must be addressed." As an optic, ethics even finds primacy to God "such that everything I know of God and everything I can hear of His word and reasonably say to Him must find an ethical expression" (DF: p.17).
[478] Ethics "is 'first philosophy' because it is beyond our power to conceptualise without effacing all responsibility" (Mansell 2008: p.567).

already accomplished" (HO: p.53); and since the nature of our conduct is fundamentally ethical, "we cannot escape values, no matter what our stance..." (Vandenberg 1999: p.42).

Not only ontology, but also epistemology, reason,[479] or any other form of acquisition of truth, need to be subordinated to ethics, because ethics is not something I could hold at a distance from myself in order to evaluate it. It is not the product of rational thought and "does not belong to culture [even though] it allows us to judge it" (HO: p.36). Levinas asserts that,

> "ethics begins before the exteriority of the other, before other people, and as I like to put it, before the face of the other, which engages my responsibility by its human expression, which cannot-without being changed, immobilized-be held objectively at a distance" (OS: p.35).

Ethics as first philosophy further indicates that the distinction between an ethical "is" and an ethical "ought" is non-existent, because "ethics slips into me before freedom. Before the bipolarity of Good and Evil..." (GDT: p.176). The immediate experience of another person in a face-to-face encounter is the root of ethical commands, and my responsibility for the other person; that is to say, it is the presence of the other person that "reveals to me the basis and the primary sense of my obligations" (Peperzak 1991: p.442).

If Marcel's ethics is one of hope, and Tillichs' that of love, then Levinas' ethics is one of responsibility, a responsibility that I have for the Other prior to my freedom and choice, a responsibility I have assumed in pure passivity. "Pure passivity preceding freedom is responsibility" (HO: p.55).

Responsibility

Levinas understands ethics as an "unlimited initial responsibility" for the Other (GDT: p.138, OB: p.128), and defines "the good" as the condition in which "the existence of the other is more to me than my own" (IRB: p.54). He asserts that ethics is moved by an endless obligation and responsibility for the Other, as the relation between the I and the Other "is knotted only as responsibility" (EI: p.97). The Other in my encounter is unique and puts the idea of Infinite in me, manifests Infinity through his face; and since "to approach someone as unique to the world is to love him" (IRB: p.108), the Other in fact calls me in his silence and demands love, he calls

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[479] Levians writes: "A universal thought dispenses with communication. A reason cannot be other for a reason. How can a reason be an I or an other, since its very being consists in renouncing singularity?" (TI: p.72).

me to respond, which "is not just a response but a responsibility" (PAX: p.169). Levinas believes that love is the only attitude in a relation with what is unique. Love is responsibility for the other person, because "What is a loved one? He is unique in the world" (PAX: p.174). Thus, genuine "love is possible only through the idea of the Infinite" (CPP: p.164), which makes the Other unique for me.

The command "thou shall not kill", coming through the face of the Other, "is not just a prohibition against murder, but a call to an incessant responsibility" (IRB: p.236); and coming from the Infinite it imposes an infinite demand and calls for infinite responsibility from me (Corvellec 2005). However, being a passive subject means that responsibility for the other "resounds in this passivity, this disinterestedness of subjectivity…"[480] (OB: p.15), coming from "prior to every memory, … from the non-present par excellence, the non-original, the anarchical, prior to or beyond essence" (OB: p.10). Responsibility is not the outcome of my commitment[481] towards the Other or the result of my calculated decision made on the basis of my freedom and choice, because "*freedom is not first. The self is responsible before freedom...*" (GDT: p.181) [italics in original]. In short, responsibility precedes freedom, as it arises in passivity[482] (GCM: p.166).

I do not choose to be moral and responsible, but rather I am already morally committed to and responsible for the other person. According to Levinas, a "responsibility which owes nothing to my freedom is my responsibility for the freedom of others. Nothing is theatre anymore, the drama is no longer a game. Everything is serious" (HO: p.55). This important statement finds an unlikely ally in Sartre, who also claimed that "when we say that man takes responsibility for himself, we say more than that - he is in his choices responsible for all men" (Sartre 1960: p.291). A responsibility that arises in passivity, and not the outcome of my freedom or deliberations,[483] is not a responsibility for my own deeds, but for the deeds of the Other.[484]

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[480] Levinas also writes, "disinterestedness means 'to be responsible for the other'" (IRB: p.151).
[481] The purpose of responsibility "is not mine: I do not agree to it, but I find myself responsible" (Manderson 2005: p.700).
[482] "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." (OB: p.114) Indeed, the "thought of unique is only concrete, and hence originary, when it goes from the one to the other…" (IRB: p.108).
[483] Levinas writes that "the pre-original responsibility for the other is not measured by being, is not preceded by a decision…" (HO: p.56).
[484] As Sartre (1960: p.291) states, our responsibility is vast, because a person "in choosing for himself he chooses for all men."

The appearance of the face of the Other jolts me into the realisation that "there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other" (PAX: p.172); and that in encounter with the Other, I am a "chosen one", chosen by the Other and hence unique myself, this "election of the I, its very ipseity, is revealed to be a privilege and a subordination" (TI: p.279). It is a privilege because "to be an I means not be able to escape responsibility" for the Other (CPP: p.97); in other words, the fact that I am unique in my responsibility towards the Other, that no one can take my place and answer for me in my relation with the Other, allows me to become an I.[485] Without the Other, I lose my identity; not that my identity is in reference to the Other or derived from a totalisation of my identity, but that I am dependent on the Other for my own existence. Levinas writes: "I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable I" (EI: p.101). Here is the birth of subjectivity: I am a subject in so far as I am responsible "for the Other", and not "with the other" as suggested by Marcel.

On the other hand, by demanding infinite responsibility and obligation, the Other in the relationship makes me a hostage,[486] "a hostage in his very identity of being called irreplaceable"[487] (GDT: p.173). Thus, my "uniqueness is that of a hostage for whom no one could substitute himself without transforming that responsibility into a role played on a stage" (GDT: p.158). As a hostage, I am an innocent "who is found responsible for what he has not done" (AT: p.105) and whose subjectivity lies in this unconditional, non-dischargeable responsibility as a hostage (GDT: p.138).

For Levinas, responsibility for the Other "has no cognitive character. [It] is not a knowledge" (GDT: p.186); rather, it is prior to it and arises "within the I, like a command heard by… [me], as if obedience were already being … listening for the dictate" [488] (AT: p.101). As such, this responsibility is like an "*obsession*" (GDT: p.173) [italics in original], an obsession based on the fact that a human being is a "being who has already heard and understood the commandment of saintliness in the face of the other man" (AT: p.180).

Contrary to the notion of responsibility in many other ethical philosophies, including Marcel's, Tillich's and Nietzsche's, the call or demand for responsibility is initiated from the Other;[489]

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485 As though my uniqueness "were the gravity of the hold of the other upon me" (GDT: p.176).
486 (See GDT: p.138, and IRB: p.66).
487 Being a hostage is not to be taken as a form of slavery, but rather it indicates that my uniqueness "is required by and in this responsibility: no one could replace me" (GDT: p.152).
488 As if there is a claim laid on me "by the other in the core of myself, …" (OB: p.141).
489 "We do not choose to be responsible. Responsibility arises as if elicited, before we begin to think about it, by the approach of the other person" (Bergo 2013).

and since "responsibility … is a passivity more passive than all passivity…" (OB: p.15), this demand arises prior to one's intentions; hence, it could be said that "No one is good voluntarily" (OB: p.11). Intentionality is not adequate in the relationship, because it is the Other who initiates and provokes ethical movement in the consciousness of the I.[490] Here intentionality is overwhelmed by the idea of infinity, and "this is the wonder of infinity in the finite" (CPP: p.98). For Levinas, "ethics contrasts with intentionality, as it also does with freedom: to be responsible is to be responsible before any decision" (GDT: p.172).

The fact that Levinas puts ethics and responsibility out of the reach of human choice and freedom, and as a transcendental condition of human being, aligns him in rather an odd way with Nietzsche and his rejection of "free will". For Nietzsche, what comes before choice is our "type-fact", our physiological constitutions, which define us and determine or delimit the choices we make. Levinas, while infinitely distant from any suggestion of a naturalistic conception of human being, asserts that we are chosen by ethics before we choose ethics. What differentiates the two philosophers here is that, where for Levinas responsibility is a transcendental condition of human being,[491] Nietzsche positions responsibility within the realm of the human will.

Reciprocity

Levinas' ethics is that of "the one for the other", where the subject is infinitely and unconditionally responsible for the Other,[492] whether this responsibility is "accepted or refused, whether knowing or not knowing ..." (EI: p.97), or whether the responsibility is reciprocated or not. The Marcellian view of the I-Thou relationship with the necessity of reciprocity considers the response as a condition of responsibility; but such an expectation, according to Levinas, compromises the distance between the I and the Other and is a form of totalisation. Levinas asserts that responsibility for the other is not a matter of ethical correctness (OS: p.34), hence reciprocity is not an element of his ethics. In fact, I need to feel more responsible for the other than the others' responsibility towards me, and in any case irrespective of the others' responsibility. Levinas writes: "Reciprocity is a structure founded on an original inequality. For

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[490] "Moral consciousness" is this "privilege of the Other in relation to the I" (DF: p.294).
[491] "Responsibility is transcendence from the one to the other…" (IRB: p.108).
[492] Since I can never satisfy the infinite, my obligation and responsibility towards the Other in the relationship would also need to be infinite, and where there is an infinite responsibility towards the Other, reciprocity or equality between the I and the Other are no longer valid propositions. "Responsibility is truly responsible only when it is against my interests, against 'our' interests, beyond all such calculations. If one is responsible for something … One is not responsible to a point. One does not cease to be responsible when it is no longer 'worth it'. To think of responsibility in those terms is already to be irresponsible" (Manderson 2005: p.711).

equality to make its entry into the world, beings must be able to demand more of themselves than of the Other…" (DF: p.22). As soon as I hope or expect that my relation or responsibility be reciprocated by the Other, the relationship degenerates into a "commercial relation, the exchange of good behaviour"[493] (AT: p.101); whereas my responsibility towards the other person should be as if I owe something to him, an infinite debt and duty that I could never completely discharge.

Asymmetry

The relation and obligations between unequals would also be unequal and asymmetrical.[494] This obligation and responsibility is asymmetrical because I can never assume to be an Other for the Other[495] and hence demand infinite obligation and responsibility of the Other for myself. Levinas writes: "… what I permit myself to demand of myself is not comparable with what I have the right to demand of the Other. This moral experience, so commonplace, indicates a metaphysical asymmetry…" (TI: p.53).

This of course is in clear contrast with the symmetrical I-Thou relationship articulated in Marcel's [496] philosophy, where the Thou is also an I capable of replying, and both parties are equal in relation to one another. In Levinas, I am responsible for the Other, but whether the Other is also responsible for me or not "is his affair" (EI: p.98). I do not wait for the Other to reciprocate my responsibility. A Marcellian symmetrical and reciprocal ethics, for Levinas, becomes subject to calculations and degenerates into utilitarianism. For Levinas, not only the "intersubjective space is not symmetrical" (TO: p.83) but the otherness of the Other in the relationship is vital and needs to be maintained, otherwise no intersubjectivity can exist, and with this the possibility of an ethics is eliminated.

Responsibility here should not be confused with the common view of it in terms of notions of accountability, equality or reciprocity, as Levinas looks to explicate "a new orientation of the inner life" (TI: p.246) in which the I is called to infinite responsibility by the Other.

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[493] A similar argument was made by Marcel regarding the unconditionality of the ethical relations. See Chapter 4.
[494] The relation between I and the other person, from a neutral, third party perspective, may appear as a relation of equality, symmetry and reciprocity, but "when I am within the relation, then the other is not my equal and my responsibility toward them is infinite" (Critchley 2008: p.84). So here "the ethical relation is not so much a type of relation between two subjects … but a quality of relationality, whereby susceptibility to absolute difference defines how we relate to each other" (Todd 2001: p.69).
[495] Because it is impossible to see "oneself from the outside and of speaking in the same sense of oneself and of the others,…" (TI: p.53).
[496] (See OS: p.22) for a detailed treatment of Marcel and Buber's I-Thou relationship as given by Levinas.

Desire (The Ethical Motivation)

The unlimited responsibility towards the Other, an Other with an absolute alterity and exteriority with regard to me, raises the question as to the source of the moral motivating power in Levinas' ethics. Why would I feel an infinite responsibility towards the Other without even expecting a degree of reciprocity on the part of the Other? If, in my relation with the Other, I am a hostage to the Other, as Levinas holds, then where can I as a hostage find the motivation to be responsible for the Other? And given that "responsibility for the other comes from what is prior to my freedom" (LR: p.180), in my "passivity", should there not still be an agency that determines the type of response I take? Can I respond in a negative way? Levinas makes a distinction between the primordial responsibility and the act of fulfilling this responsibility, as he writes: "I can recognize the gaze of the stranger, the widow, and the orphan only in giving or in refusing; I am free to give or to refuse" (TI: p.77). In other words, although the Other calls the I to responsibility, the I is "capable of shutting itself up against the very appeal that has aroused it, but also capable of welcoming this face of infinity with all the resources of its egoism…" (TI: p.216). Thus, for Levinas, not only there is distinction between response and responsibility, but the response given can be negative or positive. However, as Ferreira (2006: p.464) notes, "The other's need as such does not explain why we are motivated to allay it, nor does the fact of our being responsible account for the motivation...". Being "hostage" of the Other and being summoned and commanded by the Other is also not sufficient basis of motivation (Ferreira 2006: pp.464-465). Therefore, where does the ethical motivation come from?

To respond to such questions, we should note that there appears to be two elements to Levinasian conception of ethical motivation, a passive and an active element. The first is the assertion that "there is a claim laid on the same by the other in the core of myself…" (OB: p.141), that I as a "hostage" to the Other have no freedom in the exercise of my ethical response. On the other hand, Levinas leaves some room for an active response originating in the I itself, because although the Other "commands me as a Master", this "command can concern me only inasmuch as I am master myself; consequently this command commands me to command" (TI: p.213). The Other orders me as well as investing me with the authority to serve him, "the face orders and ordains" (EI: p.97).

The question of ethical motivation is further addressed as a positive response in terms of "desire", which is how Levinas conceives the relation between the I and the Other. This is a metaphysical desire that "tends towards … the absolutely other" (TI: p.33), towards the Infinite,

rather than a "need", which is a nostalgia, a longing to go back, which is in fact egoism. There is a clear distinction between "desire" and "need" in that, unlike need, desire can never be satisfied.[497] Water satisfies the need of the thirsty, love satisfies the hunger of the beloved, etc.; but metaphysical desire cannot be satisfied, as "it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it" (TI: p.34). The desire for the Other comes from a being who no longer has needs, that is to say, "the desire for the other, sociality, is born in a being that lacks nothing..." (CPP: p.94). The idea of Infinity, the infinite in me, is a desire for the Infinite, because desire is a thought that needs to think more than it can think, and this is an "endless desire for what is beyond being", for transcendence, which is a "desire for the Good" (CPP: p.163). Clearly, the desire for the Infinite, by virtue of the infinity of the Infinite, can never be satisfied, the desire is absolute.[498]

The source of my desire lies beyond me, because "desire is an aspiration that the Desirable animates; it originates from its 'object'; it is revelation - whereas need is a void of the Soul; it proceeds from the subject" (TI: p.62). Thus, the source of the desire for Infinite is outside me and comes through the face of the Other, "the face as a source from which all meaning appears"; and this affirms that "…Desire rather than need commands acts… metaphysics - is the desire of a person" (TI: p.299). In I-Other encounter, metaphysical desire understands the alterity, the absolute separation between I and the Other, a separation that can never be bridged, a desire for union that can never be accomplished. This desire, however, appears as a movement, as a moving away from the I, the known and familiar towards the Other, the unknown and otherwise and the Infinite.[499] The desire for Infinite is the motivating force or impulse that makes the I open to the Other, to his neighbour, to the finite other. This desire is the "good" or obligation to responsibility for the Other, which is obedience to a unique value that elected the subject, "a value that is named God"[500] (HO: p.54). God as this unique value already puts the demand and obligation to be responsible for the other person in me.

The ethical motivation can also be found as a negative response in Levinas' notion of "death": death understood not in terms of existence and non-existence or being and non-being, but understood within the intersubjective relationship, in ethical terms, as "what is for me the

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[497] The Tillichean conception of re-union, that is a return from the state of separation to the state prior to estrangement, is characteristic of need not desire, that is to say, Tillich views God as a need, satisfied in reunion, rather than an insatiable desire.

[498] "Desire is absolute if the desiring being is mortal and the Desired invisible" (TI: p.34).

[499] According to Levinas, this is a forward or outward movement that never comes to rest: "The I in relationship with the Infinite is an impossibility of stopping its forward march, the impossibility of deserting its post" (CPP: p.98).

[500] Levinas has been criticised by some for introducing religious language into his philosophy, in particular in his later writings. The use of God in this statement is an instance of such theological influence.

impossible abandonment of the other to his solitude, in the prohibition addressed to me regarding that abandonment" (AT: p.25). A person who dies is "a face that becomes a masque" (GDT: p.12), but I cannot have a relation with a masque, my relation is only with or through the face of the Other. My relation with a masque is a relation with an object based on totalisation of the object, so "the death of the other is an *end,* the point at which the separated being is cast into the totality..." (TI: p.56). This death is a turning point for me, because it is only through my encounter and my relation with the Other that I become an individual, so "the death of the other who dies affects me in my very identity as a responsible 'me'…" (GDT: p.12). Both Tillich and Marcel also affirm the same point, by attributing existence to others.[501] The dying of the Other, then, is the dying of myself, a point at which I am called to act and to respond. The recognition that "the death of the other is more important than mine, that it takes precedence over mine, is …. the basis of all obligations" (IRB: p.111).

Since my uniqueness arises in my responsibility for the Other, in being a hostage to the Other, without this responsibility I lose my uniqueness and my subjectivity, as Levinas writes: "The 'me' … only surfaces in its uniqueness in responding for the other in a responsibility from which there is no flight, in a responsibility from which I could not be free" (GDT: p.20). Death of the Other marks the end of my responsibility in relationship to the infinite. The face of the other "summons me, demands me, requires me" as if the "invisible death" of the other, which is captured in the alterity of the other, is "my business" (AT: p.24). I cannot be indifferent to the Other, I cannot shut the Other off, because in my indifference I will indeed be condemned as the accomplice of the death of the Other. This "invisible death" of the Other is invisible to the Other but visible to me. The Other has no say in it, but I am called to responsibility, I am summoned "to answer for that death of the other, and not leave the other alone to his deathly solitude" (AT: pp.24-25).

True Heteronomy

Levinas considers his ethics as "true heteronomy"[502] (CPP: p.16); after all, the subject for him is defined as "for the Other", and the command to act ethically comes through the face of the Other, it is the Other in a face-to-face relation, who demands responsibility from the subject.[503] The subject has no say in it, because he has been made responsible in passivity, he is a hostage.

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[501] Marcel writes: "Not only do we have a right to assert that others exist, but I should be inclined to contend that existence can be attributed only to others, and in virtue of their otherness, and that I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others: and so as other than them" (BH: p.104).
[502] Or "a thesis of heteronomy" (CPP: p.59).
[503] The responsibility for the other, which is "radically heteronomous", is characterised by Levinas as "goodness" (Burggraeve 1999: p.34).

However, and despite the radical language used by Levinas, such as "being a hostage", this is not heteronomy as is commonly understood, where the tyrannical law from an outside source demands obedience, and Levinas insists that the presence of the Other in the relation is "a privileged heteronomy, [and] does not clash with freedom but invests it" (TI: p.88); and here "obedience precedes any hearing of the command" (OB: p.148). True heteronomy is Levinas' attempt to reconcile and overcome the arbitrariness of pure autonomy as well as tyranny of pure heteronomy, by finding the possibility of "the order in the obedience itself, and of receiving the order out of oneself, this reverting of heteronomy into autonomy, is the very way the Infinite passes itself" (OB: p.148). He writes: "This allegiance before any oath is the Other in the Same; that is, it is *time,* the *coming to pass ...* of the Infinite" (GDT: p.201) [italics in original]. The subject becomes the author of his own commands, commands that have slipped through to him without his own knowledge, in passivity. "The infinite … commands me with my own voice. The infinitely exterior becomes infinitely interior, in the guise of my voice …" (GDT: p.197).

Here we see a parallel with Tillich's attempts to do the same thing. Tillich's solution was in placing God (theo) as the wellspring of ethics, offering theonomous ethics. In Levinas, it is the idea of Infinity that allows reconciliation between autonomy and heteronomy. True heteronomy "begins when obedience ceases to be obedient consciousness and becomes an inclination" (CPP: p.16); so heteronomy, or being a hostage of the Other, does not mean being subjugated by the Other, but rather it is about being awakened and sobered up by the Other through its alterity and the idea of Infinite.[504] This "waking up is the intrigue of ethics or the nearness of the other man" (GDT: p.144), where "responsibility is the contact of the I with a dimension of infinity" (CPP: p.XXIII) in this awakening. Levinas writes:

> "Ethics requires a subject bearing everything, subjected to everything, obedient with an obedience that precedes all understanding and all listening to the command. Therein lies a reversal of heteronomy into autonomy, and this is the way in which the Infinite comes to pass. It is inspiration: to have received from who knows where, that of which I am the author" (GDT: p.200).

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[504] This is "an awakening by the unabsorbable alterity of the other *[lautre],* or an incessant sobering up of the Same intoxicated with itself" (GDT: p.22), and this sobering up "is a thought more thoughtful than the thought of the Same..." (GDT: p.143).

The subject is inspired by the Infinite and in the approach of the Other. This inspiration is found in any face-to-face encounter, which acts as "the transcendental framework for our intentional relationship" with others (Smith 2006: p.200).

The convergence of ethical philosophies of Levinas and Tillich, despite their diametrically opposing beginning, cannot be overlooked. Both offer ethics that is a form of autonomy through heteronomy. For Tillich, "autonomy which is aware of its divine ground is theonomy" (HCT: p.323), and this divine ground is man's essential nature. In ethics, man re-unites with his essential nature, with God. Levinas, on the other hand, while dismissive of any notion of "essence", considers "true heteronomy" in terms of an autonomy that is illumined by the idea of Infinity. It could be said that, whereas in Tillich, man's essential self meets the divine and has an ethical experience, in Levinas, the subject comes in contact with Infinity through the face of the Other and is immersed in an "ethical intrigue" (GDT: p.200). The intrigue "denotes that to which one belongs without having the privileged position of the contemplating subject" (GDT: p.197). Levinas uses the term intrigue in place of experience to maintain the distance between the subject and God; but despite this, there is a clear similarity between "true heteronomy" and Tillich's theonomy. The use of intrigue further underlines that "goodness without certainty … is the hallmark of Levinasian ethics" (Perpich 2008: p.14).

The Humanism of the Other

Both Levinas and Marcel refer to their ethics as humanism; however; there is a clear contrast between the two forms of humanism. In Marcel, as for many other philosophers, humanism is identified with the idea that human being is first and foremost the author of his own moral rules, and hence the origin of ethical conduct is in the autonomous self. Sartre's claim that "existentialism is humanism" puts existentialists within this framework of understanding. Levinas, on the other hand, refers to his ethical philosophy as the "humanism of the Other", placing the locus of ethics not on the autonomous self but on the other person in the relation.[505] In this sense, the conventional view of humanism that gives primacy to the human subject, for Levinas, is "not human enough. In fact, only the humanism of the other man is human" (GDT: p.182). Levinas condemns modern humanism on two accounts, firstly for placing the autonomous value creating self at the centre of humanism, and secondly for failing to see that the responsibility and obligation for the other person is and needs to be prior and pre-original (HO: pp.56-57). "Humanism of the Other" is ethical humanism, grounded on ethics as first

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[505] Levinas writes that he wants "to show that the relationship with the Other is as entirely different from what the existentialists propose" (TO: p.79).

philosophy; it is a humanism that neither relies on essence and ontology nor on higher principles. It is a humanism based on the recognition of "the priority of an irreducible alterity" (IRB: p.106) and a pre-ontological binding of humans, a prior fraternity, not a chance meeting of fraternal souls that greet one another and converse. In other words, Levinasian form of fraternity is not the result of our similarities, as Marcel perceived, but rather it is the realisation of our dissimilarities and individual uniqueness.[506] "Man, after all, is not a tree, and humanity is not a forest" (DF: p.23). Since the "love of the stranger [is] holier, higher than fraternity" (IRB: p.108), Levinas insists that true fraternity "finds universality…starting with absolute singularities" (CPP: p.122). Responsibility for the Other arising in passivity also indicates that such responsibility does not come from fraternity, but rather responsibility is fraternity itself and is prior to my freedom (CPP: p.168, OB: p.116). To be human is to be responsible for the other, and for this "one need know nothing, learn nothing, and remember nothing in order to be human" (Gehrke 2006: p.435). "We are human", Levinas writes, "before being learned and remain so after having forgotten much" (OS: p.3). Moral conscience is this relationship between the I and the Other,[507] which enables us "to catch sight of the dimension of height and the ideal in the gaze of him [the Other] to whom justice is due" (CPP: p.59) and for whom we are responsible.

For Levinas, "ethics does not have an essence, its 'essence', so to speak, is precisely not to have an essence, to unsettle essences" (EI: p.10); so being ethical is not about having an innate inclination or predilection or a particular disposition toward an act that is considered good, but rather being ethical means being responsive towards the other and being responsible for the Other. This responsibility is played out in our relationships; intelligibility and rationality do not come into play here, because the "relationship is meaningful ... by itself and not by the effect of a theme or a thematization" (GDT: p.157); the relationship is neither defined in terms of the I and her understanding nor purely in terms of the context or the milieu where the encounter takes place.

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[506] Because "fraternity precedes the commonness of a genus" (OB: p.159).
[507] "the meeting of the face - that is to say, moral consciousness…" (OTO: p.11).

Religion and God

"…the essential of ethics is in its transcendent intention…" (TI: p.29).

The notions of religion and God are enmeshed in Levinas' ethics, so much so that one cannot be separated from the other. In fact, he is clear that "the divinity of God is played out in the human", and it is God that "transcends in the 'face' of the other" (IRB: p.236). Indeed, for Levinas, ethics is not a moment of being, but rather "the very possibility of the beyond" (CPP: p.165). God, religion and ethics all refer to the "passivity", the "beyond world", the "Otherwise than being", the pre-ontological plane. God as passivity or non-being finds a parallel with Tillich's view that God cannot exist because existence is synonymous with estrangement, which is the condition of evil and sin. However, I should hasten to point out that, in Tillich's view, there is a correlation between man and God through the notion of being; which is contrary to Levinas' insistence that there can be no correlation between the two, but rather man or "the subject is … inspired by the Infinite" (GDT: p.200).

Marcel's "absolute Thou" is the "wholly Other" in Levinas, and for both philosophers the notion of God would make any sense only within the relationship with another person. Levinas asserts that one can experience the presence of God "through one's relation with man" (EI: p.16), so "going towards God is meaningless unless seen in terms of my primary going towards the other person. I can only go towards God by being ethically concerned by and for the other person" (DG: p.23); so much so that; in my relationship with God; "the neighbor is an indispensable moment" (GDT: p.199).

Levinas defines religion without resort to any theology. For him, what constitutes religion is ethics, the primordial relationship between the I and the other person. He writes: "We propose to call 'religion' the bond that is established between the same and the other without constituting a totality" (TI: p.40). Religion, understood as this "face to face" relation as "the idea of infinite" in the face of the Other, enables Levinas to give an ethical meaning to religion and effectively show "that religion is ethics and ethics is religion" (Gehrke 2006: pp.432-433). Since ethics is first philosophy and "is the latent birth of religion in the other" (CPP: p.168), prior to having any religious experience or being touched and effected by any emotions, we could say that religion also comes first, that is to say "religion … is the ultimate structure" (TI: p.80) in human relationships. Not only human being is an ethical being, she is also religious. Such a formulation of religion has affinities with Tillich's conception of religion as "ultimate concern", and both "idea of Infinite" and "ultimate concern" signify an infinite and unconditional concern for the

other. Marcel speaks of "natural moralities" and "religio" as the under-structure upon which revealed religions sit,[508] making us all moral beings and explaining why even non-believers can act morally. Clearly, Marcel's notion of "religio" is the notion of religion as viewed by Levinas. It is the idea of Infinity, the dimension of height, discovered in ethics for both philosophers, that ordains being and introduces a sense into being. The revealed religions, then, as Marcel noted, are built upon this primordial dimension of height, a point confirmed by Levinas.[509] For both philosophers, religion can only be found in genuine intersubjective relationship, and any relation that is not such an "interhuman relation represents not the superior form but the forever primitive form of religion" (TI: p.79). Religion is the motivating force in Levinas' ethics, because "religion is Desire and not struggle for recognition. It is the surplus possible in a society of equals, that of glorious humility, responsibility…" (TI: p.64).

Levinas would agree with Nietzsche's claim that even consciousness "is secretly influenced by … instincts", but the meaning of instinct for Levinas is in the fact that God has already spoken and spoken in passivity. He writes: "Even when it is said that at the origin there are altruistic instincts, there is the recognition that God has already spoken. He began to speak early. The anthropological meaning of instinct!" (AT: p.180).

Thus, it is through religion, in the face-to-face encounter and through "the face of the other that he [God] speaks to me for 'the first time.' It is in the encounter with the other man that he 'comes to my mind' or 'falls beneath the sense' ..." (AT: p.175). Levinas agrees with the death of God announced by Nietzsche; but Levinas' God is not the visible God of Nietzsche[510] nor the God of ontology or onto-theology, instead, his is the God of ethics that cannot die because ethics is first philosophy. The relationship between human beings is referred to by Levinas as "curvature of space", and this is "perhaps, the very presence of God". The other person in the relationship comes to me from outside and in his alterity, revealing to me the idea of infinity, he is "separated-or holy-face. His exteriority, that is, his appeal to me, is his truth" (TI: p.291). The message of Levinas' ethical philosophy is that this infinity or "outside is the necessary remainder or supplement to any system of meaning whatsoever" (Manderson 2005: p.711).

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[508] See footnote 294.

[509] This dimension of height, Levinas writes, "leads human societies to raise up altars. It is not because men, through their bodies, have an experience of the vertical that the human is placed under the sign of height; because being is ordained to height the human body is placed in a space in which the high and the low are distinguished…" (CPP: p.100).

[510] Levinas writes: "The God of Nietzsche who is dead is the one who intervenes in the world like all other forces in the world, and which had to be oriented like these forces" (IRB: p.101).

Critique

Despite his insistence on the primacy of ethics, Levinas has been accused of excessive use of religious language in his philosophy, to the point of even relegating this primacy, for instance by suggesting that ethics originated in religious history,[511] or by linking fraternity to the question of God when writing, "'Thanks to God' I am another for the others" (OB: p.158), or that "in my relation with the other, I hear the Word of God" (OTO: p.110). All this raises the question whether Levinas' revaluation has not been tainted by his religious ideology, as "it is no longer clear whether ethics is in service to religion or religion in service to ethics" (Bergo 2002). On this point, Badiou goes on to dismiss Levinas entirely, claiming that,

> "In truth, there is no philosophy of Levinas. It is no longer even a philosophy 'servant' to theology: it is philosophy … annulled by theology, which moreover is not a theology but, precisely, an ethics. Taken out of its Greek usage … Levinas' ethics is a category of pious discourse" (as cited in Bergo 2002: p.102).

Levinas's insistence that the face is not perceived is criticised as being "bad phenomenology and has the effect of dogmatically limiting the scope of ethics to human beings" (Crowell 2012: p.580) and excluding what Levinas takes as "faceless", such as animals (TI: p.140). "The Cartesian dualism seems to throw its shadow on this philosophy of the face" (Waldenfels 2004: p.68).

A more contentious issue, however, is the exclusion of the feminine[512] from ethical relations, leading Wood (2005) to suggest that such an stance "shows clearly that ethics is not first philosophy for Levinas; that what comes first is a commitment to other humans, especially those in need…", and his "view of feminine makes it equally clear that Levinas' ethics disguises a further quite specific ontological commitment" (Wood 2005: p.152). In other words, Levians's account of subjectivity as infinite and unconditional responsibility is dismissed on

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[511] Lingis (2012) takes the following passage by Levinas as evidence of this tendency, and refutes it by referring to some paleoanthropological evidence. Levinas wrote: "We assume the unity of the consciousness of mankind claiming to be fraternal and one throughout time and space. It is Israel's history which has suggested this idea, even if mankind, now conscious of its oneness, allows itself to challenge Israel's vocation, its concrete universality" (NTR: p.6). Such tendency or apparent bias by Levinas has also been criticised by Critchley (2004: p.175) in terms of what he calls "the political fate of Levinasian ethics".

[512] According to Chanter (2002) the feminine within Levians' philosophy functions as a facilitator but is excluded from ethical relations, indeed "Levinas's descriptions of the female and the feminine are fraught with disparagement, … For Levinas the female may be a consoling means of realizing the masculine potential by providing a loving family. Although the female is respected as an 'other', the significance of her alterity is defined by her role in the erotic economy of the male" (Hutchens 2006: p.146).

the basis that ethics cannot be separated from ontology, because "how we understand the other is essential to our capacity to honor, respect, and protect them" (Wood 2005: p.156).

Levinas' ethics of goodness and infinite responsibility has also been accused of being "in fact a cheap, romantic, and naive philosophy" (Burggraeve 1999: p.34), that at best may be applicable in a one-to-one situation, but quickly failing in more complex or real ethical situations where more than one subject is involved, raising the question of justice. Such a criticism fails to understand that, for Levinas, the question of choice comes later, and can be addressed by appealing to rationality, utility and the like; but in any case this is considered by some as a weakness of his account of ethics,[513] despite Levinas' insistence that all such situations still "presuppose the for-the-other of responsibility which was the starting point", that is to say, the first and fundamental "exigency of justice is the love of the other man in his uniqueness", which is decisive (IRB: pp.108-109).

Furthermore, although Levinas' ethics aims to combat the violence of totalisation, the significant role played by responsibility in ethics may make us "begin to suspect that responsibility troubles the cause of ethics" and wonder if totalisation is not returning to the scene of relationship, albeit "in a slightly different form, in responsibility" (Kosky 2001: p.194). In other words, despite insistence on the anarchical and asymmetrical nature of relation, is not responsibility in effect totalisation by stealth?

Hofmeyr (2009: p.15) questions "the moral significance of responsible action" if it is imposed in passivity. If Staehler (2010: p.96)'s assertion is correct, that Levinas' ethics "need to be connected to the traditional ethics" to be recognisable as ethics, then since from a traditional and more conventional standpoint "morality applies to acts, and acts are not passive. If my relation to the other is more passive than any passivity, how can it be moral at all?" (Smith 2005: p.69) In other words, despite calling ethics first philosophy, has not this extreme distancing of the meaning of ethics from conventional understanding of it rendered Levinas' ethics useless or impractical? This issue is not helped in that "Levinas's philosophy refuses to be assimilated as something that can be known in order to be applied" (Todd 2001: p.71), and "we don't know exactly how" to relate to his writing (Zhao 2012).

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[513] As Knights and O'Leary (2006: p.138) point out, "despite Levinas prioritising ethics over the self, he is quick to resort to the law or moral rules wherever there is some tension or conflict between different others".

The notion of passivity is also problematic from a Nietzshean perspective, because it introduces another world, and defining the subject in terms of this passivity in effect puts the subject outside of life and hence goes against the very objection Nietzsche had vehemently raised, and is a sign of decadence and passive response to nihilism.

Conclusion

Levinas does not offer a set of ethical values or a blueprint to regulate our conduct; rather, his revaluation is an attempt to reveal goodness. He writes: "'There is neither God nor the Good, but there is goodness'- which is also my thesis"[514] (IRB: p.89). His philosophy begins as a rebuttal of Western philosophy, which according to him has become "a philosophy of immanence and autonomy" with its overemphasis of the self and the comprehension of self at the expense of the loss of alterity of the other person.

The cornerstone of Levinas' revaluation is the claim that ethics is first philosophy, hence attempts to understand or found ethics on ontology, rationality, epistemology or any other premise is misguided. To find value and meaning in the human being, we need to look into his lived experience "without measuring it by ontology, without knowing and without asking", without reason and rationality; this, Levinas suggests is perhaps "the Copernican revolution" (CPP: p.138) in ethics. Since we are fundamentally and inherently ethical beings, the lack of ethics is not due to its absence in us but due to our forgetfulness of our true nature, caused by the objectification and totalisation effects prevalent in society, where the uniqueness of the other being in our relationship is eclipsed by the incessant emphasis on self and ego, preventing the idea of Infinity or the image of God shining through the face of the other person. We are inherently in relation with the Other, and so inherently responsible for the Other; hence, once the totalising tendency to objectify the other person is replaced by the realisation of the uniqueness of the Other, once the dross of human heart is cleansed so that Infinity can be viewed in the face of the Other, the ethical deafness can be overcome, as our relationship will get a transcendent dimension, and our ethical nature, one of responsibility for the other person, will become manifest in establishing a relationship of love.

It would be safe to say that, for Levinas, Marcel and Tillich, the relation with the other person is based on the relation or the approach to God, even though this has been described and considered in various ways. For Levinas, the notion of God or "the idea of Infinite" found in

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[514] Levinas is quoting the character of Ikonnikov in Grossman.

the face of the Other is much closer to Tillich's notion of "ultimate concern" rather than Marcel's more detached, universal God; but unlike the other philosophers, Levinas' God or transcendence does not underpin values and meaning, because ethics still has priority.

Levinas' response to Nietzsche's nihilism is the revelation of the primordial nature of ethics, which is one of responsibility and obligation for the Other. This responsibility is not a matter of choice by the individual, it is not us who choose our ethics and values; rather, we are chosen by ethics. Ethics is before the "good and evil" dichotomy.

Levinas is not trying to tell us how things ought to be, but rather describes how things are; however, the realisation of the transcendental aspect of our relationships would perhaps provide the required motivation to act ethically. He recognises that, in grounding ethics and a fraternal community in the face of the Other and in the incomprehensible idea of Infinity, he is stretching the bounds of reason, moving us towards the acceptance of a utopian state; but he justifies his ethical philosophy by contending that "there is no moral life without utopianism" (PAX: p.178); and if his ethical philosophy sounds abstruse, it is because he is trying to describe the indescribable;[515] after all, "there is no physics in metaphysics" (TO: p.52).

For Levinas, being human "implies fraternity", and ethics as first philosophy means that "society must be a fraternal community to be commensurate with the straightforwardness, the primary proximity, in which the face presents itself to my welcome" (TI: p.214). Although Marcel also advocated creation of community of fraternity as a remedy to the problem of society, Levinas' idea of fraternity is not based on similarity, commonality, sharing or equality of the participants; indeed, "fraternity", he argues, "is radically opposed to the conception of a humanity united by resemblance…" (TI: p.214); and unlike Marcel, Levinas does not attempt to create or fabricate such a community, but rather to bring out this inherent aspect of our being, this responsibility for the other person. He writes: "Concretely our effort consists in maintaining, within anonymous community, the society of the I with the Other..." (TI: p.47), in which genuine human relationship can thrive. Within such relationship, infinite and unconditional responsibility for the Other requires infinite and unconditional love; so ultimately, what sustains ethics and can keep our intersubjective relations in place is faith, that is, "believing that love without reward is valuable" (PAX: pp.176-177).

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[515] "The problem is that Levinas is trying to point out what cannot be pointed out by philosophy - by doing philosophy!" (Smith 2005).

I hope to have demonstrated that, in response to Nietzsche's call for a revaluation of values, Levinas' revaluation reveals that the failure of revaluation attempts offered by Marcel, Tillich and Weber is due to their failure to understand the nature of ethics, that it is first philosophy; and whilst Nietzsche had understood well that the solution lies in going beyond the good and evil dichotomy, what he seems to have overlooked is that, in going beyond, one has already assumed that there was indeed something before to leave behind. Levinas' revaluation reveals that this something is nothing but ethics itself, hence his revaluation is a call to go "before good and evil".

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

This thesis has sought to bring out the view that it is more than businesses that are in ethical crises. It is ethics itself that is in crisis. In order to address the crises in business, the crisis of ethics needs to be addressed. The thinking of Nietzsche underpins the argument of the thesis. Nietzsche's announcement of nihilism makes it clear that it is not only the ethics of business but ethics in general that itself is in crisis.[516] To attempt to resolve ethical crises in business without such an understanding demonstrates a lack of an appreciation of the extent of the crisis in ethics.

To overcome nihilism, Nietzsche called for a "revaluation of all values", hoping to do away with any foundation for ethics.[517] Having examined Nietzsche's revaluation and finding it an inadequate response, I looked to Weber, who identified nihilism within the management and organisational context in terms of disenchantment, offering a new revaluation which, in the final analysis, like that of Nietzsche, failed to fully embrace nihilism. The thesis then sifted through the revaluation of values of the philosophies of Marcel, Tillich and Levinas, in search of a response that could adequately re-enchant a sense of the divine in the context of Nietzsche's death of God claim.

In Chapter Two, I described Nietzsche's genealogical deconstruction[518] of traditional morality, showing that the advent of nihilism marked the crumbling away of all absolute foundations for ethics. Nietzsche revealed the perspective nature of ethics, showing us that the collapse of foundations cannot be remedied by instituting new ones.[519] His revaluation aims at breeding Ubermensch-like individuals,[520] capable of life affirmation through their great degree of "will to power" and creating their own values. But as I demonstrated, Nietzsche's revaluation buckles under the weight of criticisms,[521] and his attempt to build an ethics of "will to power" ultimately fails the criteria set out by himself. Nevertheless, the account of this chapter paved the way for subsequent chapters and a recognition that "Nietzsche's genius has been simply to identify the problem rather than the solution" (Knights and O'Leary 2006: p.134).

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[516] See pp.20, 52-53.
[517] See p.29.
[518] See p.31.
[519] See p.20.
[520] See p.36.
[521] See pp.48, 56.

In Chapter Three, I engaged with the writings of Weber, who broadened the concept of nihilism in terms of a sense of organisational disenchantment[522] and iron cage of rationality.[523] Weber's account of the Protestant Ethics showed how it gave rise to the spirit of capitalism,[524] where instrumental rationality came to take the place of value rationality, giving rise to value relativity, disenchantment and nihilism. Weber believed that moral decision making needs to be made based on what one takes as "ultimate value",[525] but he was also aware that the solution could be found neither in returning to an enchanted past nor in relying on the power of instrumental rationality to create new values and new enchantment.[526] His revaluation then sought to accommodate the operation of both instrumental and value rationalities in the process of value and meaning making, a reconciliation between the ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility, embodied in his ideal of a "cultivated person".[527] However, Weber's reliance on ultimate values and on the power of reason as the arbitrator of such values is a failure to go through with revaluation in a Nietzschean sense and do away with any foundations.[528]

In Chapter Four, Weber's diagnosis of disenchantment and iron cage was re-framed in terms of Marcel's notions of individualism and collectivism.[529] For Marcel, the crisis of nihilism is not due to the falsehood of God as the foundation for value; rather, it is about the severance of human beings from such a source of value. He believes that the rise of a technical world, with its reliance on abstraction and problematisation of human beings and human relationships, has had a corresponding decline on our hold onto the transcendental dimension of our being. His revaluation effort, then, is towards a moral renewal through re-enchantment of a sense of divine or sacred in our relationships.[530] For him, the understanding of the ontology of human being as well as the ontology of God as an urgent need or desire of human beings is the key to a successful revaluation. In that sense, Marcel offers us fresh insights regarding the incarnate nature of values and our being, and their place within intersubjective relationships.[531] He defines a human being in terms of her indispensable relations with others and with God, a triadic relationship.[532] Values are not some abstract entities to be created and added to the relation; rather, the relation itself is already value-laden. These values are encountered within

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[522] See p.73.
[523] See p.71.
[524] See p.63.
[525] See p.87.
[526] See p.84.
[527] See p.86.
[528] See p.90.
[529] See pp.98, 99.
[530] See pp.126, 129.
[531] See pp.108, 117.
[532] See pp.114, 126.

relationships, in the concrete lived experience of an individual, where God is experienced acting as the guarantor of such experiences, turning the relationship into a "spiritual connection". Thus, while he is in agreement with Nietzsche in taking the moral imperative as "to become who you are", this for him also necessitates thou-affirmation, and not self and life affirmation alone as Nietzsche demanded. The ideal moral subject for Marcel is the figure of wise or sage person, who through the power of his wisdom can recognise God in relationships.[533] This over-reliance on God underpinning values, and founding his revaluation on ontology, unravels his revaluation effort.[534]

In Chapter Five, Tillich appears to find a remedy to the failings of Marcel by re-defining God in a more subtle way, as "God above god", and introducing the notion of "ultimate concern".[535] Tillich does not need to discover God in relationships as Marcel did, because he knows at the outset that there has to be a God that cannot die. In believing in the essential unity of religion and ethics, he takes the real cause of nihilism to be our alienation from God, a rupture of our existence from our essence, portrayed in religious imagery as the "fall" from a primordial state of bliss and union.[536] His revaluation, then, lies in healing this rift, in reuniting good and evil. Tillich's belief that there must be some absolutes without which value and meaning would not be possible,[537] and his insistence that the solution to nihilism can only be found through Christian revelation and the salvific figure of Christ, ultimately undermines his entire revaluation attempt.[538]

In Chapter Six, I examined the philosophy of Levinas, who would consider the revaluation attempts of the other philosophers not a solution but the perpetuation of the problem of totality, where ethics disappears because the other person is encountered through concepts and themes known by the self.[539] The other is absorbed and disappears by the ego-centred subject. Therefore, Nietzsche's value-creating Ubermensch relying on his will to power, Weber's "cultivated man" utilising his own rational powers to arbitrate between ultimate values, Marcel's "sage man" seeing the other person as an equal capable of reciprocity, and Tillich's "new being" striving to re-unite with his own essential good nature and deeply concerned with his own "ultimate concern", all are evidences of what Levinas calls egology, the very cause of

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[533] See pp.133, 136.
[534] See p.135.
[535] See p.151.
[536] See p.144.
[537] See p.147.
[538] See pp.178-180.
[539] See pp.185, 186, 205.

the annihilation of the subjectivity of the other, the reduction of the Other to the Same, and the destruction of ethics.

It may seem intuitively obvious that, to have an ethics without a foundation, ethics itself needs to be the foundation or be prior to the foundation! Levinas' "Copernican revolution" in ethics, the key to his revaluation, is giving this primacy to ethics.

I turn now to discuss the research questions, beginning with the central question:

Do the philosophers studied here provide a way beyond nihilism through their own form of a revaluation of all values?

Although Nietzsche, Weber, Marcel and Tillich all agree on the existential problem of nihilism, they take differing views as to the root cause and hence the required revaluation to remedy the problem. For Nietzsche, an existential problem needs to find a solution in existence. This self-referential of existence to itself, for him, equates to doing away with any foundation. However, as I argued, Nietzsche's reliance on "will to power", in particular, undermines his entire revaluation and cannot be considered as a way to go beyond nihilism.

For Weber, on the other hand, the problem to deal with is not just the disappearance of God as the foundation for values, but in the mushrooming out of a plethora of other foundations to choose from in the wake of this disappearance. His revaluation is about reconciliation between ultimate values, a position which is problematic because not only does it suggest the existence of some moral values, but also requires the human subject to rely on reason to determine which value to use in a given situation.

Marcel argued that, since human beings brought nihilism upon themselves, the solution to this problem also lies in their own hands, but requires recognition and strengthening of their bond with God. In other words, he sees nihilism as an ontological problem requiring an ontological mystery to address. This reliance on ontology, and the indispensability of God in intersubjective relationships underpinning values, undermines his revaluation effort.

Tillich, while in accord with both Marcel and Weber in seeing the problem as that of man's own doing, re-frames the problem in terms of his theology, and offers a revaluation in terms of the same theological views, significantly undermining his revaluation effort.

Unlike the other philosophers investigated here, Levinas does not begin with a human subject who may or may not acquire certain moral inclinations; rather, he wants us to shift our view of what it means to be a human subject to an understanding in which being ethical is inherently a part, indeed essential basis for being a subject, and where the founding moment of subjectivity is the appearance of the other in her otherness calling the subject to responsibility. Thus, questions or concerns about "will to power", rationality, ontology or onto-theology, can only arise after the face-to-face encounter with the Other; they are the questions of a post-mortem of ethics. Ethics is first philosophy, the starting point, the "first cause", not an epiphenomena that could be added to the relationship at some later stage. It is by giving ethics this primacy, by going "before … good and evil" dichotomy where subjectivity is grounded in relationship and passively structured as an infinite responsibility for the other, that Levinas manages a revaluation to satisfy Nietzsche's demand for an ethics without a foundation.

The following section addresses the second research question, namely,

To what extent were the revaluations examined here successful in re-enchanting a sense of the divine in the context of Nietzsche's death of God?

Traces of divine are palpable in the revaluations of all three religious existentialists studied here. A transcendental dimension is pivotal in the revaluations of both Marcel and Tillich, to such an extent that it causes the relapse of their revaluations onto the safety of a foundation and thus to a return to a foundational ethics. This is not the case with Levinas who proposes a way beyond the totalising tendencies of foundationalism.

Marcel's revaluation is an attempt to re-awaken the sense of the sacred, and being ethical for him entails the recognition of God. The existential assurances of "human incarnation" and "ontological exigence" point to the need for a transcendental dimension; and although he de-emphasises positive religion by regarding everyone including atheists as religious, God or the Absolute Thou, uncovered within intersubjective relationships, underpins values and relationships. It is this dimension, acting as an "underlying unity", that makes ethical relationships possible.

For Tillich, a human being is created good and in unity with divine life, with the ground of her being. His revaluation is an attempt to overcome estrangement by re-uniting us with the ground of our being, and being ethical requires the recognition of this ground of being, or God. Thus, a sense of divine or holy is central to his revaluation, and moral motivation comes from the experience of divine or the awareness of belonging to such a transcendent union.

Levinas dissolves the relationship between the I and the other in such a way that the other is understood not as an object or other I, but as something on a different plane of conception, access to which is only through the face of the other. The face of the other is not reducible to any image, language or concept. It continually overflows any idea. It is in the context of the way in which the other overflows any idea or image that Levinas introduces the notions of Infinite or God. The Infinite or God is the experience qua metaphysical desire of that which cannot be reduced to an image. This is the experience of that which always exceeds being named. In this way, God appears or is perceived in the relationship through the face of the other; the otherness of the other. The I is called to responsibility for the other where the motivating force behind such responsibility is a metaphysical desire, the desire of the Infinite in the face of the other. As such, a sense of divine is re-enchanted back into the relationship with the other.

In contrast to Nietzsche; Marcel, Tillich and Levinas converge on the idea that values cannot be derived from life or existence, because existence itself is within the domain of values; as such, they open the way for the return of the divine. However, where both Marcel and Tillich find it necessary or evident that values require a transcendental dimension and in doing so revert to the safety of a foundation, Levinas takes values themselves as the starting point and avoids such temptation. The three religious existential philosophers are in essential agreement with Nietzsche, that ethics is not about recognition or determination of good from evil, but rather is about a way of being ethical. For this reason, Nietzsche saw this way of being to be at a point beyond good and evil, Marcel and Tillich saw it at the point where good and evil are united, and Levinas located it at a point before good and evil.

As has been demonstrated, neither Marcel nor Tillich were able to address the question of a non-foundational ethics. And, as has also been demonstrated, Nietzsche in his turn to the notion of the "will to power", fell back into a foundational ethics. It was only the work of Levinas that began to provide a clue for a non-foundational ethics. This was explored in terms of Levinas's insight that the face of the other is irreducible to what we may say of it and this relation of coming face to face with the other means that ethics cannot be articulated in a set of first principles to be applied to situations. His rejection of the possibility of having a foundational ethics that could underpin our normative judgements, set us on a quest for a non-foundational ethics through revaluation, an ethics that relies on no objective, independent or absolute basis upon which ethical decision making could be made. This contained in his notion of the Otherness of the Other. This thesis has opened up the space for a non-foundational ethics to be

researched in more detail as the basis to address not so much the ethical crises in business but to address the crisis of ethics per se.

Having concluded that Levinas' revaluation comes closer than other philosophers studied here to overcoming nihilism, the subsequent research question arising out of this result is,

What are the potential implications of such a conclusion for business and organisational existence?

In Chapter Two, I argued that business, having overlooked the insight offered by Nietzsche, and on the presumption that it has understood the nature of the crisis of ethics treats ethics as a tool for measuring and differentiating between right and wrong, and to this end appeals to various ethical theories as foundations upon which an improved tool of ethics can be re-graphed back onto business and management practice.[540] In other words, rather than heeding Nietzsche's call to go beyond good and evil, business strives to find a better way of distinguishing good from evil; and although embracing such an attitude eases one's existential anxiety,[541] it is a testimony to the weakness of will to face the reality of nihilism, and fuels the perpetuation of ethical problems in business. Since the nature of bureaucracy is to minimise or eliminate the influence of any non-rational element in its operation, as Weber pointed out, it resists any attempt at addressing the crisis of nihilism that does not satisfy the criteria of instrumental rationality dominant in organisation; hence, acceptance or adoption of a Levinasian revaluation that centres on passivity and re-enchantment may indeed be very difficult.

While Levinas' revaluation deconstructed our traditional notions of ethics, he saw his task as revealing the meaning of ethics and not constructing a new one. He left this possibility and challenge for others to undertake; and although such an undertaking is beyond the scope of the present thesis, I can point out how his revaluation may open up such a possibility in the field of business and management.

From what is presented in the present thesis, it should be clear that Levinas' concepts of passivity and prior responsibility call for a reconstruction of ethics as the basis of a reconstruction of an ethics in business. It means going beyond applying ethical theories that have not been subjected to a "revaluation of all values." It means going beyond searching for a foundational ethics that can then be applied to business. This is because to apply ethics into the field of management is to re-define or appropriate ethics for management use, a task that

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[540] See p.52.
[541] See p.28.

necessitates reliance on some criteria or foundation, a moral standpoint, which itself festers qua nihilism. As "first philosophy" ethics can neither be rule based nor rule governed, not something that can be worked out first and then applied to a given situation, hence the overwhelming emphasis on "applied ethics" as a practice or field of study in business and management education would be unjustified. True ethics is not applied ethics. This assertion does not mean that teaching ethical theories needs to be abandoned;[542] rather, it is the acceptance of the fact that an increase in cognitive awareness of such theories and ethical models and frameworks, or the mastering of techniques and procedures for ethical decision making, will not affect the desired ethical transformation in managers. There is a place for such theories within Levinas' revaluation, where multiple others exist and the question of justice is raised; however, what is indispensable is the priority of a manager's responsibility towards the other person over her obligations towards her faceless organisation.

In this Levinasian context the notion of an applied ethics needs to be questioned. For, the notion of an applied ethics presupposes that there is an ethical set of principles to be applied. However, Levinas has allowed us to see that ethics is there before any principles are articulated. In fact, it precedes cognition altogether. And both a foundational and an applied ethics rely on the notion that ethics are drawn out of concepts. The Levinasian critique challenges this by maintaining that we are always and already in relationship to others. Ethics precedes foundations and precedes any notion of application. This means that we are already responding to and responsible for others. Any conceptualisation of ethics emerges out of the ethical relationship. It is a mistake, in terms of Levinas to deal only with the concept of ethics that emerges out of ethical relating. We need to develop a refined attunement to ethics that is already occurring in relating. Only then can we seek to articulate an ethics.

The implication for management is that a manager does not first have a relationship to an-other and then superimpose an ethics onto this, but just by the act of being in relationship, is already within an ethical attunement. It is not that management is first scientific and then ethical. It is ethical in the fact that it presupposes a relationship to the other. Scientific management itself occurs within ethical relating. This ethical attunement embedded in relations of managing, needs to be taken into account in theories of management. Ethics is not an aside. Because managing is a practice of relating, ethics is at the core of managing. Yet, how many business

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[542] Levinas equates teaching with ethics (TI: p.51), rejecting the conventional Socratic maieutic approach to teaching (PII: pp.49-50, TI: p.43, Strhan 2012: p.22, Schroeder 2005: p.285) in favour of a non-maieutic pedagogy (TI: p.89).

schools and theories of managing actually appreciate the central role that ethics as first philosophy plays in managing?

Through the revaluation of values, this thesis concludes by raising this latter question. It is hoped that the implications of a non-foundationalist ethics, an ethics prior to application will be taken up as a theme of further research in management. For it is, again, a way of going beyond assuming that it is the ethics of businesses that need to be questioned. Rather it is ethics itself that needs to be addressed. Levinas provides us with the clue to re-imagining ethics in general. He provides us with a framework for situating business in ethics and not the other way around, that is, it is not so much business ethics or ethics as applied to business. Business as a way of relating is already within the orbit of ethics. Levinas thus allows us to begin rethinking priorities. It is only once business is situated in the context of ethics that any of the so called crises in business ethics can be dealt with. This thesis is a call to take up the challenge of situating business in ethics. This is not in itself a new idea. Although done in a foundationalist way, it has its roots in the philosophy of Plato where business was possible only within an ethical framework and it was the ethical framework that held business together.

It has been the aim of this thesis to see if a way beyond Nietzsche's nihilism can be found and Levinas provides a clue to this way by challenging all forms of ethics that totalise either the self or the other; and in fact the self and the other.

Rather than seeing ethics as a part of organisational life, from a Levinasian perspective, being inherently ethical and inherently good means that life, including organisational life, takes place within an ethical context. Good life, according to Levinas, is a life lived for the other, as an ethical subject represents the "humanism of the other". This humanism is the recognition of our prior relation and fraternity with the other, which is also our responsibility for the other. In such a context, management ethics as something to be formulated and passed on through the organisational hierarchy to the manager for her use and application in daily encounters with others becomes non-sensical.

Management entails relationship with others. From a Levinasian perspective, to understand management as a relational activity is to appreciate the priority of ethics over instrumentality. The face of the other precedes any use a manager may wish to make of him or her. To deny the priority of relationship is to slip into what Levinas would understand as the tyranny of egology, in which the other is reduced to the same, to an object to be used and manipulated.

Levinas, therefore, poses a challenge to business and organisations: to acknowledge the tyranny of that form of business that reduces the other to the same, or to open up the possibility of the primacy of an ethical relationship in which the other is more than the idea that I may have of them. Peter Drucker (2011: p.53) claims that it is the function of management to bring out the best in others. To bring out the best in others is to refuse to allow the other to be contained by the image that we have of them. It is to appreciate the possibilities that have not begun to emerge in employees qua others.

For Levinas, all relations must be circumscribed with a moral responsibility for the other, and his view of the nature of human subjectivity, in terms of "being for the other" with inherent goodness, means that the pre-occupation and indeed the fundamental assumption about human beings as rational self-interested and self-seeking individuals needs to be transcended both in management practice and in research on management ethics. If ethical management and "leadership is impossible without some attempt to transcend the pre-occupation with the self" (Knights and O'Leary 2006: p.129), then Levinas' insistence on an unlimited and inescapable responsibility for the other person would certainly go a long way towards such a leadership.

Since responsibility for the other transcends any and all spheres of human activity, including that of business and organisational life, ethics cannot be in any specific act but is in the holistic act that constitutes the self as a moral subject. To be an ethical subject is to be responsible in every moment of life. An ethics of management, then, needs to be understood as management in ethics; perhaps leaving management and organisations with the task of providing the conditions under which the irreducible relation with the other is not compromised, so that the face of the other is not covered up by the burden of bureaucracy and the demands of instrumental rationality, allowing the Infinite to shine through the face of the other, raising the self's sensitivity to her inherent obligation to oblige the "commandment of saintliness". Once this is achieved, the ethics of right and wrong would sort themselves out. On this note, perhaps the present thesis could serve as an encouragement for other researchers more capable than myself to divert resources and attention toward devising ways and means of removing the impediments that prevent the inherent goodness of a manager to readily surface in her practice. In this regard, the call by Ghoshal (2005) for the abandonment of ideas and "amoral theories" taught at business schools, on the basis that they free "students from any sense of moral responsibility", may indeed be a step in the right direction. Furthermore, while the lack of interpersonal skills in management practice and education has been identified as a contributing

factor to ethical failings (Pfeffer and Fong 2002, Bennis and O'Toole 2005, Abraham and Karns 2009), it is crucial that the quality of such interpersonal skills also be revaluated in the light of Levinasian conception of relationship.

It is my hope that this thesis has contributed to a better understanding of nihilism, and by revealing the challenges faced and the pitfalls trapping the valiant yet failed revaluation attempts of the chosen philosophers studied here, provided a clearer appreciation of the nature of ethics and the required revaluation effort. Although the thesis concludes by identifying Levinas' revaluation as the most successful among those considered here in overcoming nihilism, clearly the weight of critique raised against his revaluation, and the difficulty if not the impossibility of packaging his remedy in a way palatable for use by individuals and organisations, indicates that the search for an ideal response to Nietzsche's call for revaluation might not have come to an end yet. While Levinas' desire was for us to move towards a moral utopian state, perhaps it is for others to take up the revaluation challenge through the writings of other philosophers.

Conference Papers and Awards related to this PhD

Awards

- **Best Paper Idea Award** (4th Australasian Business Ethics Network Conference)
  My paper and presentation at this conference, entitled, "Is Applied Ethics Applicable? A Levinasian Perspective", was chosen as the best paper idea by a PhD student. The paper was presented in December 2014 in Sydney, to an audience of approximately 30 people.

Conference Papers

- Tajalli, P. & Segal, S. 2014, "Is Applied Ethics Applicable? A Levinasian Perspective", paper presented at the 4th Australasian Business Ethics Network Conference, Sydney, Australia.

- Tajalli, P. & Segal, S. 2013, "A Nietzschean Revaluation of Ethics in Management Schools", paper presented at the 3rd Australasian Business Ethics Network Conference, Hobart, Australia.

- Tajalli, P. & Segal, S. 2013, "Circularity of Argument in Marcels' Authentic Humanism", paper presented at the Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy Conference, Sydney, Australia.

- Tajalli, P. & Segal, S. 2012, "Nietzsche and the Moral Crisis of Modernity", paper presented at the International Philosophy of Management Conference, Oxford, UK.

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