

Wittgenstein And Nagarjuna — The World In Front Of Us (1)

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Introduction

There is a striking connection between Wittgenstein and Nagarjuna.

The 2 books cited:

Tractatus Logico Philosophicus
by Ludwig Wittgenstein

The Fundamental Wisdom Of The Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika
by Nagarjuna
translated by Gudo Wafu Nishijima

Text — Nagarjuna

FWOTMW (Chapter 7: Examination Of The External World)

verse 16

Things and phenomena existing clearly one by one are the world, and this world is subjectively thought of as a very stable existence.

Therefore situations that can be seen in front of us as very stable are just real existence, which is actually seen in front of us.

verse 17

What can never exist in this world can never be thought to exist at all.

Even when existence is not clear in concrete situations, such situations are accepted as what is not real, and even the word *existence* can manifest itself as not real.

verse 18

When we have begun to notice that the facts that manifest in front of us must be just the [true] phenomena, then the external world manifests as it is.

When the world manifests as phenomena, then we prefer to grasp the phenomena themselves [rather than our concept of the external world].

verse 19

If the world manifests as different [from what is described in the previous verse], the world of phenomena would actually become a very unstable world.

In such a situation what has not manifested seems to have manifested already, and then it is necessary to take the view that all things and phenomena have manifested already since the beginning.

verse 20

To the same degree as real phenomena manifest themselves in the real world, all that is abstract is never restricted by anything in the world at all.

Before anything subjective or anything objective has yet appeared in this world, what has been realized already manifests itself in front of us as the real world.

Text — Wittgenstein

[Wittgenstein here uses a numbering schema to indicate relationship, heading, and subtopic.]

- 1 The world is everything that is the case.
- 1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things.
- ...
- 1.13 The facts in logical space are the world.
- 1.2 The world divides into facts.
- ...
- 2 What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts.
- 2.01 An atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things).
- ...

Notes

Study this, the texts above.

Note the fact/s (Wittgenstein and Nagarjuna 7.18), and the world “in front of us” (Wittgenstein, Nagarjuna 7.18 and the rest), and the stability that Nagarjuna indicates (when such a situation is the case — what are the situations for this, and the atomic facts (for this, and to be seen in front of us?)).

What about concepts? Nagarjuna indicates these lead to unstable situations — inventing entire worlds then (and these may not be reality) requiring explanations to beginningless time of all (these) possibilities. What of Wittgenstein’s world of facts? How does one ask how does that move (me) to center, and also provide for a same-type stable situations? (A natural step, then, (also) to no-self, then the self considered with insight.)

What if you had the time, focus, and attention indicated here, that which is before you, being very stable — and the facts (so seen).

That is, this is like a latent effect, and external cause — and function before us. Are there exceptions? Are they part of this? Consider Nagarjuna carefully; and note what is the Wittgenstein.

I recommend consideration of the text of Wittgenstein in the book itself (TLP). Note that some Nagarjuna is more difficult than others, but that one can consider more of this chapter (Examination Of The External World), then ch. 1, and work from there (the four reliable facts) (FWOTMW). Or whatever order you want.

You may want to consider meditation and study; to study, meditate, and carefully; and/or a little at a time, then to re-consider; or to read it strictly as philosophy. (I meditate zazen. I wonder if Vipassana wouldn’t do fine.)

Nagarjuna was a Buddhist philosopher and meditator ca. 150-250 CE. Nishijima is a Zen Buddhist roshi.

Wittgenstein was a German philosopher from the early 20th century. Wittgenstein wrote TLP in both German and English.