"A philosopher is a man who has to cure many intellectual diseases in himself before he can arrive at the notions of common-sense."

"Philosophy hasn't made any progress? If some scratches the spot where he has an itch, do we have to see some progress? Isn't it genuine scratching otherwise or genuine itching? And can't this reaction to an irritation continue in the same way for a long time before a cure for itching is discovered?"

Ludwig Wittgenstein

I.

With Wittgenstein the very doing of philosophy became problematic. His critique of the enterprise—something keenly brought to our attention when his *Philosophical Investigations* first appeared and then quickly forgotten—runs very deep indeed. Richard Rorty has given a distinctive reading of Wittgenstein's turn here and has built on it a critique of philosophy as a kind of *Fach*: as any kind of disciplinary matrix or science. However, he has also argued that there is a rudimentary sense of 'philosophy' (a kind of ur-philosophy if you will) which is as old as the hills and is not part of any disciplinary matrix and is, Rorty would have it, utterly unproblematic. It is the attempt to see how things hang together where that conception is construed in the broadest possible sense. Rorty contrasts a foundationalist sense of 'philosophy'—a conception which

he takes to be a thoroughly problematic — in which we seek to determine 'the foundations' of knowledge and morality (we attempt to determine what knowledge, truth, belief, rationality and value really, and essentially, are) with what he takes to be the unproblematic though surely taxing enterprise of attempting to see how things — in the broadest sense of 'things' — can be fitted together into a coherent whole.

It has in turn been argued that Wittgenstein's later work, if taken to heart, makes both conceptions — the foundational and the synthetic — thoroughly problematic. In that way, it is claimed, Wittgenstein cuts deeper than Rorty.

Wittgenstein seeks to show with his emphasis on the extensive diversity of our practices and language-games that we must do, if we are to have anything like a perspicuous understanding of things, without synthesis as well as without foundations. We are never in any significant sense going to come to understand how things hang together. This ancient and compulsively persistent philosophical wish cannot be met. There is in Wittgenstein a passive and almost religious acceptance and acknowledgement of the vast diversity and contingency of things. "My life," as he puts it, "consists in my being content to accept many things." While Wittgenstein was as deflationary about philosophy as any of the positivists, he, like Rorty, and unlike Russell, Carnap and Ayer, was also a resolute opponent of scientism: the belief that what science cannot tell us humankind cannot know. Moreover, again unlike the positivists, Neurath perhaps aside, Wittgenstein, after the Tractatus, is not a metaphysician in spite of himself. There are — or so the claim goes — on his view of things neither foundations to be uncovered nor the possibility of an Arnold-like seeing of things together and seeing them whole.

Here I explicate and explore Wittgenstein's underlying rationale and, against his very deep probing, argue that Enlightenment conceptualizations, chastened from superficiality by the counter-Enlightenment and freed from scientific and foundational fetters, are not undermined by Wittgenstein's critique. The power of Wittgenstein's obsessive but all the same powerful philosophical critique