

## CRITICAL NOTICE

### **Wittgenstein and Analytic Philosophy**

*Essays for P.M.S. Hacker*

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At the beginning of his essay on 'The Private Language Argument', the sixth in the present volume, Bede Rundle expresses some not uncommon misgivings about the methodological strategy that Wittgenstein appears to be adopting in relation to the privacy of the mental:

Wittgenstein is not a behaviourist, in that he allows that our mental lives may, on a given occasion, be in no way apparent to others, but there is nothing that may not in principle enter the public domain, which means, in this context, nothing which cannot be manifested in behaviour, verbal or non-verbal. We may well have an opposing picture whereby a person's mental state could be unfathomable to others, that there should be no behaviour that might clinch a hypothesis concerning that state, but without prejudice to the fact that he himself should know all along how things stood. For Wittgenstein, however, where we might say that he alone knows, the inconclusiveness of the behavioural evidence means no more than that there is an indeterminacy in the language game.

*(Op. cit., 133)*

This indeterminacy in the language game to which Rundle refers is the important feature of Peter Hacker's understanding of the relevant passages allowing an appreciation of Wittgenstein's 'writings as subtle and profound where we might otherwise have found little more than a questionable conflict with common sense.' (*Ibid.* 134). That there is such a questionable conflict is an assumption central to Rundle's paper, even if he wishes not to question in general what he sees as 'Wittgenstein's analysis', at least as understood by Hacker, but only whether his

description of what he is doing applies in *this* instance. Rundle almost inevitably sees *that* description as very much in doubt 'given the elements of justification, explanation, and possible departure from our ordinary beliefs that his penetrating analyses involve' (*Ibid.*)

So there are certain ordinary beliefs about the privacy of the mental that Wittgenstein would appear to be putting in question. Uncertainties about Wittgenstein's intentions in this context extend into his exposition of the argument for the impossibility of a private language, because Rundle once again encounters a certain ambivalence over the question whether that argument 'is simply making articulate conceptual connexions which we implicitly recognise, and not contradicting views which stem from generally held beliefs.' (*Ibid.*) These beliefs for Rundle evidently include beliefs about our ability to 'identify and reidentify' our sensations 'privately', so it is perhaps hardly surprising that he should conclude his paper by reiterating his earlier point that if we can be said to be able to remember sensations we have had in the past, then this must lead to doubt about the viability of the argument over the impossibility of a private language:

But if I can remember how [the sensation] felt, can I not say that it felt just like what I am experiencing now, where 'just like' is explicable in terms of indistinguishability? As intimated at the outset, Wittgenstein's attack on privacy is sometimes felt to be at odds with everyday beliefs, beliefs which come naturally to us, without any philosophical motivation. If the suggested comparison can be coherently made, it would appear not only that there is such a conflict, but that the understandable misgivings which his critique provokes may not be misplaced. (*Ibid.*, 151).

That Rundle is expressing a fairly common misunderstanding here, one based on conflating an ordinary notion of privacy with the super-privacy which Wittgenstein is really attacking, is perhaps more easily realisable today than it might have been at a time when philosophers were only beginning to find their feet with the *Investigations*; but the questions at stake go much deeper

even than this, and touch upon the very idea that Wittgenstein is in some sense putting in question common convictions to which we naturally adhere prior to bringing them into the philosophical arena. Indeed, it is a characteristic of Wittgenstein's method that he is not putting in question anything that people would normally admit (*Investigations* § 109 and §§ 124 -129), and whilst Rundle may appear to be making a salient point in claiming that for Wittgenstein there is nothing that cannot be manifested in behaviour, as opposed to his own view that a person's mental states can often be unfathomable to others, Wittgenstein's main contention would rather be that Rundle is operating here with a philosophical distinction between mental states and outward behaviour that is at the root of the very misunderstandings to which we all almost inevitably become party when doing philosophy, because this is a *picture* that whilst directing the course of the philosophical investigation, is nevertheless incidental to the practice in which we attribute mental states to others according to behavioural criteria.

Consequently, although Wittgenstein does point out that when seeing someone writhing in pain with evident cause we certainly do not conclude that his feelings are hidden from us, just as we are normally prone to claim that there *are* people whose behaviour we find transparent, he is equally careful to stress that at *this* level it is also true that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. But in saying this, Wittgenstein, unlike Rundle, is not intending to make a philosophical point about the inviolability of the mental as distinct from reminding us that our talk about mental states and behaviour is ordinarily intertwined in a way which we need not find to be at all perplexing (*Investigations*, Part II, xi, 223):

‘I cannot know what is going on in him’ is above all a *picture*. It is the convincing expression of a conviction. It does not give the reasons for the conviction. *They* are not readily accessible. (*Ibid.*)

This is followed by the well-known dictum that if a lion could speak, we could not understand him, so that in *this* context, the claim that I cannot know what is going on in him is being given an ordinary, as distinct from a philosophical application. But this means only that

whereas in both cases the doubt may have the appearance of being interminable, at least in the ordinary situation we can imagine circumstances in which it would have no application. What Rundle would appear to require, on the other hand, is that our doubts could have the kinds of philosophical implications that would allow the owners of mental states to have the last word on what these states are *because* these owners have a direct access to them which Wittgenstein's stress on *our* acquaintance with behavioural criteria alone would deny to ourselves. But the only sense in which Wittgenstein would actually grant this to be true, is that in which a person can often be said to be free to keep his feelings to himself; and this is quite compatible, as he goes on to point out in the passage already referred to, with someone else's having a better grasp from his (expressive) behaviour of his *real* motives and intentions than he may have himself.

Once again, the argument turns on the important point that Wittgenstein has no desire to make philosophical capital out of the fact that there are indeed circumstances in which we can apply a perfectly ordinary notion of privacy in relation to the mental. Indeed, it is the fact that Wittgenstein's real targets in the relevant passages are the misleading *pictures* to which Rundle is appearing to adhere, rather than any ordinary notion of privacy *per se*, that lies at the heart of the references throughout his paper to the feeling that Wittgenstein is denying our right to talk about private experiences in a way to which we are naturally drawn (*Ibid.*, 135), that 'the identification which I give of my sensation is simply unavailable for others to exploit' (*Ibid.*, 143) and - even more dangerously - that the peculiar position of the private linguist is distinguished, not specifically 'in terms of knowledge, but simply in that there is something he *has* which, as far as we know, no one else does'. Rundle continues:

This touches on one of the seemingly counter-intuitive aspects of Wittgenstein's approach. Think how much there is in our experience that we find ourselves unable to put into words. How can we possibly get across the subtle differences in taste in different kinds of fish or fruit, the differences in people's voices, the different scents of flowers, and so

on endlessly ? And yet our lack of an adequate vocabulary in no way detracts from our recognitional capacities. (*Ibid.*)

But this suggests that Rundle is connecting, if not directly attributing Wittgenstein's rejection of the possibility of a private language to his failure to acknowledge the reality of those recognitional capacities, when Wittgenstein's point would be that our understanding that we have them at all is already parasitic upon our prior acquaintance with a public language. Far from denying anything, Wittgenstein is rather confirming that the temptation to which Rundle has become subject when he moves towards the assumption that our ordinary sensations are intrinsically meaningful, constitutes one of the traditional moves philosophers tend to make against which his entire methodological strategy is actually being directed:

Whether or not one has the requisite vocabulary, there are difficulties in speaking of knowledge with respect to one's sensations, but, as just intimated, in the case of tastes and so forth it might be said that the subject knows what a particular taste, as of pineapple, say, is *like*.....he is capable of recognising the taste, can identify it correctly when he comes across it. So does the diarist know what his novel sensation is like ? Well, by hypothesis he cannot *say* what it is like in any useful way, but he can recognise it, tell when he has it rather than something else. (*Ibid.* 144).

At this point Rundle returns to his concept of *indistinguishability*, the concept most favourable to his so-called private linguist, albeit that in wishing to give Wittgenstein the benefit of the doubt, he recognises that this may itself embody one of our notions 'of sameness already there in the public language for us to exploit.' (*Ibid.*) This ambivalence in Rundle's presentation is entirely consistent with his intention to present his paper as no more than a footnote to Peter Hacker's commentary in *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, yet one which is intended to reflect the evident puzzlement he continues to feel over Wittgenstein's approach. (*Ibid.*, 134). Whilst his paper does not come close to providing anything like the whole story about Wittgenstein's intentions in the diary and related passages, it remains a sufficiently

stimulating response to Wittgenstein of a rather traditional kind to make it worth comparing with the later non-doctrinal approaches to these passages that have since come to predominate.

The homage paid to Peter Hacker's 'comprehensive and illuminating exegesis and commentary' at the beginning of his paper (*Ibid.*) is a reminder that Bede Rundle's is only one of 13 contributions to this book provided by philosophers generally sympathetic to his approach to Wittgenstein's work. Published on his 70th birthday, the editors in a glowing Preface remind us of the historical background surrounding Hacker's contribution to Wittgenstein studies, whilst the volume's contents offer an extraordinarily wide-ranging assessment of the variety of his interests, so that readers who specialise in at least some of those many different aspects of Wittgenstein's work are almost certain to find something to satisfy them.

In an equally stimulating paper immediately preceding that provided by Rundle, John V. Canfield in 'Back to the Rough Ground: Wittgenstein and Ordinary Language' reminds us that some of the things Wittgenstein appears to imply when appealing to 'what we ordinarily say' can seem repugnant to the philosopher intent on investigating weighty issues in the philosophy of mind. Why, for example, should Wittgenstein rule out 'I *know* that I am in pain' on the basis of the *rule* that knowing requires the possibility of error in a case where the notion of being in error is senseless, if this merely begs the metaphysician's question whether he has 'indubitable epistemic access to, or immediate awareness of, the inner object *pain*' ? (*Ibid.*, 110). Surely the metaphysician can easily introduce a word 'know\*' which will still capture all that he really wants to say ?

The proper answer is that whilst there have indeed been philosophers who would have argued that even if a claim to knowledge in this case is to all intents and purposes redundant, it does not follow that it is invalid, Canfield misleads us here in suggesting that 'I *know* that I am in pain' can be regarded merely as an infringement of an established rule of ordinary usage: for all that ordinary usage can be understood to imply on the matter, a person's being in pain could very well be claimed to be one of the things that he has every right to say that he knows, and with a certainty that is lacking in most of his other statements about ordinary matters of fact. But this means that

Wittgenstein's position in rejecting a claim to knowledge in this case is actually much stronger than Canfield would appear to allow, for what has become known as the criterionless aspect of first person sensation ascription can already be seen to be undermining the kinds of foundationalisms which would take one's immediate awareness of one's own sensations to be the most fundamental example of something that one could claim indubitably to know.

If there is a problem in Canfield's presentation here, it turns on the distinction Wittgenstein is seen to draw between 'a description that does not accord with established usage or one which does not accord with the practice of the person giving the description', where it is said that only in the second case does a philosophical conflict arise. (*Ibid.*, 109 *et seq.*) For it is not exactly clear what distinction is actually being drawn here. As it turns out, Canfield does not pursue the issue of knowing that one is in pain any further at this point, and turns to his second example, that intentions are *mental* entities, arguing, surely correctly, that 'the development of a language of intention-talk requires a context of human interaction.' (*Ibid.*, 112). Canfield concludes that the idea of an intention as some kind of *mental* object conflicts not merely with some imagined rules of syntax or semantics, but with how the word 'intention' functions in our day-to-day lives, an example he wishes to distinguish from that of 'I *know* I am in pain' where the metaphysician can reply that because the supposed inapplicability of this claim follows merely from a rule of established usage, its significance is presumably no more than verbal. But this is precisely what has already been shown not to be the case.

Matters improve with Canfield's discussion of three examples in which Wittgenstein may appear to be totally at odds with ordinary usage, or with our ordinary inclinations, and these not surprisingly are firstly, and rather paradoxically, that the standard metre in Paris is not one metre long, that ' $2 + 3 = 5$ ' is not true, and that the 'I' of 'I think it will rain' does not stand for anything. Canfield easily shows that in the first example, *contra* Kripke, what is acting as a means of representation cannot be said to be measurable as the length it is intended to represent, and it is in this sense that the standard metre *qua* standard cannot be said either to

be or not to be one metre long. Is Kripke nevertheless right to say that it is 39.37 inches long? Canfield's answer is that 'the fact that we can say the stick is one metre long within the inches language-game does not imply that one can say that within the metre language-game' (*Ibid.* 117). Yet if it is already accepted that the distinction which ought to be drawn here is that between treating the metre rod either as an *object* of measurement independently of its role as a means of representation, or as a means of representation *per se*, then it is surely incidental whether Kripke uses an imperial rather than a metric ruler - no doubt with an element of paradox - either to measure the metre rod as an *object*, or as a means of revealing to us the role the metre rod as a means of representation is actually playing in defining one method of measurement amongst, and directly comparable (1 metre = 39.37 inches) to others. Admittedly, this may seem academic, insofar as in neither case is any justification provided for introducing Kripke's notion of the contingent *a priori*.

Canfield's standpoint on the arithmetical ' $2 + 3 = 5$ ' is rather more complex, for even if our normal inclination to say that ' $2 + 3 = 4$ ' is false, would appear to Everyman to provide a good ground for saying that the first statement is true, it nevertheless fails the test of bipolarity in that it cannot be said to have a sensible negation. It is for this reason that Canfield classifies it as a grammatical statement, like 'red is a colour' - a statement that 'cannot' be false - and he argues with Daniele Moyal Sharrock against Peter Hacker's view that 'proposition' is a family resemblance concept, that grammatical truths of this kind do not count as propositions. The failure to recognise this is for Wittgenstein a major cause of philosophical confusion (*Ibid.*, 122).

That first person present tense psychological utterances are immune from errors of misidentification because, unlike normal cases in which, say, one picks out one referent from amongst others in one's immediate surroundings, they fail to constitute examples of referring uses of language altogether, constitutes Canfield's primary justification for treating as innocuous Wittgenstein's - on the face of it - paradoxical claim that he is not picking out one person from amongst others in saying that *he* is in pain (*Investigations*, § 404). From this perspective, the point is a technical one insofar as it need not be thought to be in conflict with the ordinary view that in

saying I am in pain I am genuinely saying something about one person amongst others. It is for this reason that John Cook's diarist, as quoted by Canfield, who writes about hearing distant thunder can be ordinarily understood to be saying something about himself even if in doing so his use of the first person personal pronoun would commit him on Wittgenstein's assessment to be actually referring to no one in particular.

John Canfield ends his paper by comparing the appeals to ordinary language common throughout the 1950's and 1960's and now 'long out of fashion', with what he refers to as the intuition-centered theory construction epitomised in Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, taking for the purposes of his exposition the classic claim that if water is H<sub>2</sub>O, it is so necessarily, with the consequence that any substance which lacked this microstructure would fail to be water even if it should share all the normal manifest observable properties we attribute to water in what Kripke would refer to as the 'actual world':

For example the age-old criteria for whether something is water are not taken as governing the question, 'Is this stuff water given that it is not H<sub>2</sub>O but XYZ ?' A new criterion governs here, namely what 'intuition' dictates. (*Ibid.*, 127).

It is perfectly obvious that if the argument is to continue at this level, with one party stipulating that, according to *its* intuitions, the term 'water' is tied to the observable properties of the substance, and the opposing party stipulating that it is tied to its inner constitution, then we are simply going to go round in a circle. Canfield concurs with a refreshing candour:

I cannot claim to have demonstrated that intuition, in the Kripke cases, cashes out as implicit stipulation. But when his intuition-guided judgements are seen to lack justification in terms of ordinary criteria or by appeal to fact, it is hard to imagine what else they could be. If not stipulations they must amount only to bare statements of preference - and the practical difference between fiat and mere acknowledged

preference seems non-existent. (*Ibid.*, 129)

Consequently, if one philosopher following Kripke says that this stuff lacking atomic number 79 is not gold even if it meets the everyday criteria by which we would normally identify the substance, then another philosopher may justifiably say that it is gold after all, and that gold comes in two forms: 'That decision about what to say can have friends too.' (*Ibid.*) (1)

Yet one way of breaking out of the circle is to point to the fact that in taking an empirical statement like 'water= $H_2O$ ' to be *necessarily* true, Kripke is succeeding in *reflecting* a central feature of the *role* we attribute to these equations, even if it is dressed up in a misleading 'identity across possible worlds' terminology that fails to give due weight to the important fact that the observations, predictions, calculations and measurements by which we arrive at these equations are integral to the role they perform within a strictly scientific context. Indeed, if Kripke/Putnam can rightly be said from this perspective to provide us with a *misleading* picture, it is primarily because he treats those discoveries about inner constitution resulting from scientific investigation, in the course of considering various counterfactual possibilities - a substance with the same observable properties as water but XYZ *etc.* - as if they were entirely independent of the observable phenomena which crucially enter into the conclusions at which we arrive in determining what those internal microstructures really are. Yet it is a sound Wittgensteinian principle that if there is anything we might be prepared to regard as meeting the tribunal of experience as a *body* of evidence, it is the Periodic Table of Elements, with the consequence that should a statement like water =  $H_2O$  be put in question it would force us to reconsider our entire way of looking at things.

That this is a distinctly Wittgensteinian point comes out most clearly if we reflect that any inclination we may have to say that whilst water =  $H_2O$  is an *empirical* claim, we nevertheless want to treat it as being *necessarily* true arises, not because it is true 'in all possible worlds', but instead because it is so well-established and attested to within a *system* of related propositions that it has become exempt from doubt. The observations, predictions, calculations and measurements by which we arrive at this equation are integral to the role it plays in the system (*On Certainty* § 105, § 167),

to the extent that were it to be put in question it would make this entire framework unworkable. This point finds its expression by Wittgenstein in his statement that 'Further experiments cannot *give the lie* to our earlier ones, at most they may change our whole way of looking at things (*On Certainty* § 292). It is captured by Peter Hacker in his claim, *contra* Kripke, that wild counterfactual speculations about varying microstructural properties proposed for a given substance as a means of stressing that our substance terms are 'tied' to microstructure instead of to manifest observable properties like taste, weight, texture and colour, only serve to misconstrue the practice of scientific investigation:

Were it discovered that a substance might be identical in all its properties and powers with water, yet differently constituted, then the whole of our chemical theory would collapse, and with it the very reasons we have for ascribing importance (let alone criterial status) to the molecular constitution of substances. (2)

Consequently, although Kripke and Putnam have other reasons for adopting what has become known over the years as the (now hardly) new theory of reference, in its application to natural kinds at least there is a secondary and highly plausible underlying reason which helps to explain what may have led to its evident popularity. Insofar as Canfield is prepared to leave opinion on this matter to the tribunal of individual intuition, it is arguable that he fails here to investigate a central and deeper aspect of Wittgenstein's thinking. His paper ends with a brief discussion of Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Anthropology', claiming that Wittgenstein's aim 'is not to construct a theory but to map the customs or language-games governing those words'. (*Ibid.*, 132). Yet when we study how he would treat the role of scientific equations within their proper context, a context in which our 'intuitions' have no proper bearing, the conclusions at which Wittgenstein arrives have a distinctly Quinean ring.

The comparison with Quine is also made by Sir Anthony Kenny at the beginning of his paper on 'Cognitive Scientism', a paper already published elsewhere (3), where he echoes the now

fairly common observation that in the middle to latter part of the 20th Century the tidy analytic *a priori* vs synthetic *a posteriori* distinction previous thought to have been written in stone was undermined firstly by Quine in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' and later by Saul Kripke in *Naming and Necessity*; although Kenny understandably chooses not Kripke but Wittgenstein who in *On Certainty* introduces what Kenny refers to as a special class of propositions that are neither analytic nor empirical. Stressing the holism which Wittgenstein and Quine shared, he asks whether there are any propositions which are immune from revision in the light of experience. If we take it that at a certain time and place 'No one has ever been on the Moon' is the kind of statement 'of the form of an empirical proposition' that stands fast for us, and so plays this quite peculiar role in our lives, it is evident that with the passage of time this role will become reversed as interplanetary travel becomes commonplace. (*Ibid.* 252 and *On Certainty* §§ 95-100).

The positive features attending this comparison with Quine, however, have to be contrasted with what Kenny sees as those distinctly negative features that characterise one of Wittgenstein's permanent bugbears, the creeping scientism that follows from the failure to distinguish between factual and conceptual investigation, leading to the misguided conclusion that scientific discovery reveals not merely the real underlying nature but the real meaning of our day-to-day utterances when referring to our ordinary motives and intentions. Kenny sees these errors at work particularly in current neuroscience, where the 'goal is precisely to amalgamate the philosophy of mind with the scientific investigation of the brain.' (*Ibid.*, 253). Yet Kenny believes that the pretensions of cognitive science are wholly the result of *philosophical* confusion. Following Peter Hacker and Max Bennett in their *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) Kenny castigates those who see Wittgenstein's investigations of thought, motive and intention as nothing but the adherence to an antiquated folk psychology which is replaceable by proper underlying causal explanations of our mental faculties.

Those already familiar with Kenny's work will find themselves in very familiar territory here, and Kenny handles the issues with his usual aplomb, pointing out in a Rylean manner that the

identification of mind and brain is a category mistake, that the brain is a material object and the mind a capacity to acquire intellectual abilities, and that human mental capacities are possessed by the human being of whom Wittgenstein said that it and it alone can properly be said to have sensations, to see or hear or be conscious or unconscious (*Investigations* § 281). Indeed, after reading Kenny one might come to wonder how anyone could ever have been taken in by the idea that ordinary explanations of our behaviour in terms of reasons, intentions and motives could ever have been thought to be *replaceable* by explanations of a radically different kind. Part of the answer is that when doing philosophy it is the easiest thing in the world to see notions like *consciousness* and *thinking* in isolation from the surroundings in which they are normally applied, so that the mental states to which these terms are presumed to refer take on the appearance of processes that have a distinct and identifiable source in the physical makeup of the cerebral cortex. Associated with ideas like these is, of course, the naive notion that there *must* be a one-to-one correlation between *individual* thoughts and feelings and processes in the brain.

So powerful can the grip of these naive ideas actually be that it may appear to the reader that even Kenny cannot be immune from their paralysing hold when, at the end of his paper and in a section entitled 'Aristotelianism in Excess?' he finds himself prone to suspect that Wittgenstein succeeds in providing a negative answer to the question whether 'every mental ability does have a physical vehicle?' Yet if we closely study those now extremely familiar passages in *Zettel* (§§ 608-11), we will find that Wittgenstein is *not* questioning whether in Kenny's terms every mental capacity must have a physical vehicle. He is instead reminding us that we have an only too naive conception, following the prejudice in favour of psychophysical parallelism that dominates our thinking, of how the causal dependence of our mental lives on neurophysiological processes may come to manifest itself. Yet this prejudice is the result of a primitive interpretation of our concepts. We are once again in the grip of a *picture*, a typical picture, say, of one-to-one correspondence, because the language we use to talk about those psychological phenomena is already highly object-orientated. Yet our thoughts and feelings,

intentions and motives find their expression in concrete situations, so that what it is that one may expect to be going on in the human brain could only be understood to be *related* to these complex phenomena of human psychology in highly diverse and unexpected ways, depending indeed on what it is that one even thinks one is setting out to explain. Yet in certain obvious instances where it can be shown, for example, that an effect of light he experiences *is* the result of stimulating a particular part of the brain, Wittgenstein has no hesitation in treating this as a direct example of the causal dependence of a particular mental event on a neurophysiological process (*Investigations* § 412). So, rather than treat Wittgenstein as a renaissance Aristotelian, holding back the tide of Galileo's revolutionary scientific method, it might be better to see him as having justifiably grave doubts about a certain current *picture*, to which we almost unavoidably cleave, of the relationship between mind and brain.

In his essay 'Hard and Easy Questions about Consciousness' John Dupre expands on some of Kenny's concerns by considering the 'Hard problem of consciousness' originally brought to our attention in Thomas Nagel's seminal 'What is it Like to be a Bat?' from 1974. This paper served as a *de facto* foundation for the consciousness industry to which Dupre refers in paying homage to Peter Hacker's deflationary 'Is there Anything it is Like to be a Bat?' from 2002, a paper to which he states he is indebted in the course of expounding his belief that the so-called Hard problem is an illusion. To say that there is no such problem is to take an entirely different stand to that of Colin McGinn, who regards consciousness as a permanent and impenetrable mystery. It is an important feature of Dupre's paper that he should find himself asking why the destructive arguments he takes Hacker to have propounded have not been given the attention in the current philosophical climate that they undoubtedly deserve.

Part of the reason is that philosophers do not enjoy being told that what seems real and important to them is no more than the result of staring at a *picture* that has no application. Yet that is the central feature of Wittgenstein's thinking that underlies Hacker's and Dupre's analysis that there is no Hard problem of the kind to which philosophers like David Chalmers

and Colin McGinn have attempted to direct our attention. Aside from investigating those features belonging to the human brain which are causally responsible for our ability to discriminate between different colours, say, and what neural deficiencies may account for the failure in particular instances to exercise it, there is no *separate* underlying problem of consciousness which would allow us to treat this astonishing feature of our mental lives as an epiphenomenon that eludes physical explanation, not because we do not innocuously enjoy conscious experiences, but because when doing philosophy there is a permanent tendency to view concepts in isolation from the surrounding circumstances in which they find their ordinary application.

Consciousness finds its expression in human behaviour, but it does not lie *behind* it as an accompanying process which we are free to imagine as something that may or may not be present on any particular occasion. That is the *picture* supporting the so-called logical possibility of zombies, yet it is a picture that has no application. This is why *Investigations* § 419 presents us with the amusing possibility of the chief who surely must have *consciousness* as an adjunct to his ordinary behaviour, just as we can readily *imagine* as in § 420 the people around us going about their business as usual yet lacking consciousness. Surely this is a logical possibility, one which occurs to us quite naturally when doing philosophy? But as Wittgenstein points out, if we try to take this seriously we have to import some criteria which would serve to differentiate this case from a normal one, *e.g.*, the people are seen to walk about with fixed looks as if in a trance, for without criteria of this kind, these examples evaporate before our eyes and lose whatever sense they may initially appear to have. In normal circumstances we have quite definite criteria by which we determine that someone lacks, or is without consciousness, for these are the circumstances in which we say quite simply that he is unconscious, *e.g.*, he is lying prostrate on the floor, or in the boxing ring he is 'out for the count'. He requires to be prodded or stirred from his slumber in order to be brought back to consciousness. But there are no criteria by which we could determine whether the people around us 'lack consciousness' in the sense required by the philosophical proposal that they might be zombies, and that is why Wittgenstein

treats these cases as examples of staring at a *picture* for which we have no use. Similarly, in the case of the evolution of the higher animals and of man, and the awakening of consciousness at a particular level (*Investigations*, Part II, vii, 184) we are reminded that this is a picture whose use remains obscure in spite of the fact that it appears to carry its own application along with it; yet it does so only insofar as we are already thinking in this example of evolution *as* the evolution of creatures who develop ever more sophisticated faculties and ways of thinking in their reactions to the world around them. But this is something which is expressed in their behaviour *as* creatures who participate in a common world.

Exactly the same principle holds in the case of the now famous quality of *what it is like* said to accompany, and even to define what it is about our experiences that provides them with that subjective character or 'qualitative feel' integral to our understanding of consciousness. The idea is that there is something going on in the bat, say, which is unique to the bat, and that the very claim that it *has* conscious mental states derives from our understanding that it enjoys experiences exhibiting these distinctive 'qualia'. But in practice we determine the nature of the bat's conscious mental states and its possession of a sonar detection system by studying the bat's expressive behaviour. In *that* sense we know a great deal about *what it is like* to be a bat, and consequently what kinds of subjective experiences the bat enjoys, because we have objective criteria by which we determine what these experiences must actually be like. In the same way, we know *what it is like* to be a dog because we have objective criteria by which we can determine how keen the dog's hearing or sense of smell is relative to our own. What we *cannot* have are objective criteria by which we can determine what it is like to enjoy the uniquely *subjective* experiences enjoyed by the dog in the sense proposed by philosophers like Nagel, because beyond what we can discover from the expressive behaviour which provides us with our understanding of the real nature of the dog's experiences, the supposition that there *are* those subjective experiences with their distinctive 'qualitative feels' makes no sense. Peter Hacker in his paper may appear to make rather heavy weather of the fact that phrases of the

form 'what it is like' when misused in the way he identifies, leads only to philosophical confusion, and no doubt there is something to be said for being thorough. But in the final analysis the Wittgensteinian point is simply that this is yet another example in which we have this vivid *picture* which seems to carry its own application along with it. Yet what sense the picture has for us is derived from the fact that, precisely because it *has* been segregated from the surroundings which normally would provide the concept of consciousness with any application, we have no objective criteria in terms of which it might be applied. But that of course is precisely what enables Colin McGinn to reach the conclusion that the Hard problem of consciousness is beyond the capacity of the human mind to solve.

In what proves to be a rather discursive if nevertheless absorbing paper, Avishai Margalit in 'Wittgenstein's Knight Move: Hacker on Wittgenstein's Influence on Analytic Philosophy' explores as an exercise in the history of ideas the complex topic of Wittgenstein's influence, employing as he proceeds the twin tools of causal explanation and conceptual elucidation, in the course of reaching the conclusion that many more philosophers would appear to have been impressed by Wittgenstein than were actually influenced by him. He expresses the belief that the Wittgenstein who really succeeded in exerting an influence on analytic philosophy firstly in Cambridge and then during Oxford's 'Golden Age' was not the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* but the Wittgenstein of the prior and much circulated *Blue and Brown Books*. Using as the basis for his discussion Peter Hacker's work *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy*, Margalit mentions in passing his disagreement with Hacker on the significance of Kripke's treatment of rules and private language. He regards Elisabeth Anscombe as someone clearly influenced by Wittgenstein, Peter Strawson as a philosopher much impressed no doubt by Wittgenstein but hardly influenced by him at all, and Rudolf Carnap as someone who was influenced by Wittgenstein in different and rather complex ways. Full of asides, Margalit's paper mentions the self-abusive reference Wittgenstein made concerning the Jewish reproductive mind, and treats as dreadful nonsense the Weininger/Wittgenstein contrast between the passive nature

of the female and the creative, productive nature of the male. He also finds rather ironic Wittgenstein's reference to Ramsey as a 'bourgeois' thinker when Ramsey's famous maxim that the truth involves the discovery of a 'middle way' between often opposing alternatives would appear to provide an ideal assessment of Wittgenstein own approach. As someone who is sympathetic to analogies between the histories of art and philosophy, Margalit concludes by posing the question whether Hacker is correct to think of Wittgenstein as the Picasso of philosophy, although Wittgenstein did compare himself to Mahler as someone whose presence as a conductor managed to raise the quality of work produced by his pupils to a height that could not be sustained during his absence from the classroom.

In his complex essay 'Wittgenstein and Frege's *Logical Investigations*' Wolfgang Kunne provides a very interesting biographical account of Frege's relations with Wittgenstein covering a period from the three years prior to the outbreak of the First World War and up to what he believes was Wittgenstein's last letter to Frege on 18th March 1919 (*Ibid.*, 32). Relations between the two men were for the most part cordial and reveal a great deal of mutual respect. Frege - who was 41 years older than Wittgenstein - appears to have taken a shine to the young man from Vienna, whom he advised in the Autumn of 1911 to study with Russell at Cambridge, and Frege's extant letters and postcards to Wittgenstein reveal more affection in correspondence than he displays to anyone else. Yet in the final analysis, following a letter from Frege dated 3rd April 1920, which according to Kunne Wittgenstein may never even have answered, the exchanges between the two ended with mutual disappointment. Whilst it is known that Wittgenstein later referred on occasion to Frege's greatness (*Ibid.*, 34), Frege's down-to-earth approach to the *Tractatus* resulted in his having become stuck at the very beginning of the book over conceptual and methodological unclarity regarding the work's ontology of facts and states of affairs. This inevitably frustrated Wittgenstein who complained to Russell that Frege did not understand a word of it. (*Ibid.*, 31). Perhaps this only goes to show that to an individual with a certain prosaic cast of mind, the kind of remark, for example, that Wittgenstein once made to Ficker in the

course of recommending his book for publication, *viz.*, that the most important part of it is the one that is *not* written, will appear to have the character not of depth, but of patent absurdity.

Readers are bound to find interesting Kunne's reference to Frege's 'Nobody else has my pain' together with his notion that ideas are owner-individuated, and the further extreme claim that 'it is impossible to compare my sense-impression with anyone else's'. This has the consequence that if the word 'red' is used to characterise sense-*impressions* belonging to one's own consciousness, it can only be applicable within the realm of one's own consciousness. The related idea of a private language, Kunne sees Wittgenstein attacking in *Investigations* § 273, just as Wittgenstein further attacks the philosophy of mind in 'Der Gedanke' when he questions Frege's idea that pains are owner individuated. Yet Kunne finds reason to be less than committed to Wittgenstein's stance:

I do not think that Wittgenstein's reflections in this section and the next really succeed in undermining Frege's contention (and that of Strawson and that of many other philosophers) that pains are individual accidents of those who suffer them....Which throbbing headache is *mine* ? Well, the one that prevents me from falling asleep, the one I can reasonably expect to be removed by my taking an aspirin etc. There are various criteria for deciding whether my pain is the same *kind* of pain she has. (*Ibid.*, 39.)

Kunne refers in a footnote to the fact that this is an argument with which Peter Hacker certainly would not agree. Yet here Hacker has the better of the argument: if the sole reason for saying that a feeling of pain belongs to me is that I am actually experiencing it, from which it may be taken to follow that two people can then be said to be experiencing two separate pains of their own whether these pains are of the same or of different kinds, then it is clear that these pains fail to attain the status of individual objects in any interesting sense, and certainly not in the sense required by Strawson that it is logically impossible that a particular pain experienced by one person could have been experienced by anyone else (4). The final paragraph of § 252

explains that this bears comparison with striking one's self on the breast and saying that no one else can have *this* pain. But this is said by someone who is in the grip of a *picture* that has no application, for there are no objective criteria which could determine the uniqueness of this pain *as* the pain of its possessor beyond the fact that it is the *kind* of pain that could be possessed by others as well as by himself. Like the bright blue of the sky to which Wittgenstein refers in § 275, there is never normally any thought that this constitutes a colour-*impression* belonging solely to the person who experiences it, for this is a form of expression for which we have no application. The reference in § 276 to detaching the colour-*impression* from the object as if it were a membrane captures the idea that this is the kind of thing that is done only in a philosophical context. There are no criteria by which I determine that *I* am in pain *or* for my truly remarking that the sky is blue, and once this is accepted, the idea that one could identify *individual* sensations of particular kinds amongst others of that kind according to criteria (§ 288) dissolves, and from this it does indeed follow according to § 258 that 'whatever seems right is right', and therefore that there is no *right* sensation of a kind to identify from amongst others of that kind. This is how Wittgenstein *defines* the privacy of the private object - as an individual sensation with its own criteria of identity - a privacy which has no sense in relation to our prior understanding that we do not ascribe sensations to ourselves by applying appropriate criteria.

Kunne continues by arguing that Frege's essay on 'Compounds of Thoughts' engages with issues in the Tractarian philosophy of logic, including the idea of understanding new sentences, negation and sense and senselessness. His paper ends with a discussion of the Early Wittgenstein's reactions to Frege's philosophy of logic, and argues that Wittgenstein would appear to have understood Russell's writings on the relevant issues much more than he understood those of Frege since, Kunne claims, his comments on Frege definitely succeed in misrepresenting him; and he attempts to justify this charge *via* discussions of Frege on self-evidence, the judgement-stroke and the True and the False. Sure of his ground, Kunne marshalls the appropriate historical evidence to show that whilst one text favours the claim

that the late Frege no longer commits himself to truth-values as objects (*Ibid.*, 61) - a point in respect of which in a footnote he remarks that he may have misled Hacker - there is also evidence pointing in the opposite direction. Kunne's rich exposition surrounding these issues is not to be missed, and will prove invaluable both to those specialising in the relationship between Frege and Early Wittgenstein, and to those dedicated to elucidating Frege's texts.

Beginning with a reference to the Baker and Hacker claim in *Wittgenstein Understanding and Meaning* that Wittgenstein seems to be committed to the doctrine that names have meanings which identify their bearers, and therefore that explaining who N is, is explaining the meaning of N, an implausible doctrine - comparable to Frege's - which they believe ought to be jettisoned, Joachim Schulte in "'Moses" : Wittgenstein on Names' expresses the view that there are very good reasons for thinking that in § 79 and in § 87 of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein would instead have found it quite natural to speak of their having meaning after all.

It is interesting to compare this with what Scott Soames has to say about Wittgenstein on proper names (5), for he takes what appears to be the perfectly reasonable view that in these passages Wittgenstein is claiming that because the descriptive information associated with a name on any particular occasion of its use is vague and indeterminate, what is conveyed by the utterance of the name is correspondingly open-ended. Whilst he finds what Wittgenstein appears to be saying here unobjectionable, and even platitudinous, he does not see it, unlike Kripke, as the expression of a cluster theory about the meaning of proper names, preferring instead to say that Wittgenstein is really drawing our attention to certain obvious facts about the use of names which any successful theory must accommodate. He does, however, believe that what Wittgenstein does have to say points towards three different possible interpretations, and he eventually settles for one in which, distinguishing between the meaning of a sentence in the language and the information the sentence is used to assert on a particular occasion, the meaning of a name is its *referent* because no matter what information may be thought to be common to competent speakers who assert in different contexts that *N is f*, what they actually do succeed

in asserting on every occasion is uncontroversially that a certain individual  $N$  whose name this is has a certain property expressed by  $f$ .

Whilst it would be quite beside the point here to assess the value of Soames's exposition, largely because Wittgenstein was not in the business of providing any kind of theory of the use of proper names, it is worth pointing out that even if a distinction can be drawn between sentence meaning and speaker meaning, it does not follow from the fact that a competent speaker does use a name like 'Moses' to properly talk about a living or historical personage - no matter what information about this individual he may have at his disposal in explaining if asked his use of the name - that he need have any of this information in mind whenever he refers to its bearer. But the distinction between sentence meaning and speaker meaning is usually supposed to be based on the fact that in the latter a speaker 'associates', in some appropriately vague sense, certain descriptive information with the use of the name. But then we are left with the not particularly satisfactory conclusion that the value of this descriptive information lies in some supposedly psychological role it is playing behind the scenes in contributing - we know not how - to his understanding of its use. Yet in the final analysis this understanding is nevertheless manifested in the practical use he makes of it in talking to others about its bearer, even if it is true that the speaker's command of its use would normally be confirmed in practice either by showing an ability to directly pick him out, or to provide some descriptive information which can serve to identify him.

Dissatisfaction with descriptive accounts of this kind have undoubtedly forced philosophers to move in the opposite direction towards what has become known as causal theories of reference, therefore abandoning these psychological factors altogether; but Schulte prefers not to discuss the issues here in these rather conventional terms, largely because, as he puts it, Wittgenstein 'does not argue for the claim that names have meaning; he simply employs the notion of meaning in connection with names.' (*Ibid.*, 74) The remainder of his paper is spent

working out what Wittgenstein's point is in using the notion of meaning in this way. Schulte, however, does not neglect the argument made by some interpreters including Soames that Wittgenstein in the 'Moses' passages is not committing himself either to a Russellian or to a 'cluster' theory of proper names. Indeed, he points out that if one insists on taking this line, there are actually good textual reasons for saying the opposite:

Besides other clues that speak in favour of describing Wittgenstein's attitude towards the description account as amounting to countenancing some version of it, the manuscript version of the 'Moses' remark uses the fairly explicit phrase 'I surely want to say what Russell expresses by saying that the name Moses can be defined through various descriptions [...]'

(MS 112, 185). (*Ibid.*, 73)

Consequently, if on Schulte's assessment one takes the view that acquaintance with certain descriptions plays a role in an individual's understanding of his application of a proper name, it will then seem natural to conclude that what he understands in using it is the meaning of the name. But as already indicated, Schulte does not wish to see Wittgenstein being forced into the mould of a philosopher who argues for the standpoint that names have meaning, instead preferring to draw our attention to passages in the later writings in which Wittgenstein refers, for example, to the idea that the faces of famous men and their names are fused together (*Investigations*, § 171), or to the fact that we cannot imagine the man who had this face and handwriting not to have produced *these* works, a remark followed by the suggestion that he would find 'embarrassing and ridiculous' the idea of Goethe's writing (Beethoven's) Ninth Symphony (*Investigations*, Part II, vi, 183). (*Ibid.*, 79-80):

There is no doubt that the phenomena I have illustrated under the headings 'being a representative', 'identification', 'personification' and 'close association' are paradigm examples of what a meaning-blind person would find it extremely difficult or impossible to make sense of.

And if we grant that this person's difficulty is one which concerns the *meaning* of words, phrases and all kinds of symbols, then we have no reason to withhold the word 'meaning' in other contexts of talking about names and what they signify. (*Ibid.*, 81)

If according to Schulte proper names like 'Schubert' and 'Moses' have meanings which ordinary users of these names can understand and experience but which the ignorant and the 'meaning-blind' cannot, then one has adopted a way of looking at things which can properly be said to represent an important element in Wittgenstein's multi-layered thinking, whether one feels personally drawn to this way of speaking or not. Once again, Wittgenstein's approach is not to be forced into a straightjacket in which he can be understood to adopt some conventional standpoint, say, on description *vs* causal theories of the 'meaning' of proper names. This is one of the major lessons to be drawn from Schulte's essay.

Stephen Mulhall interestingly reminds us in his 'Language-Games and Language: Rules, Normality Conditions and Conversation' that he attended tutorials with Peter Hacker when he was an undergraduate, tutorials which made it possible for him even to retain an interest in philosophy as constituted at that time, and no doubt even now in conventional Anglo-American circles. This suggests that Mulhall may initially have tended towards the not uncommon view that analytic as distinct from so-called Continental philosophy is sterile just to the extent that it makes a point of having little to say about human existence, so that Mulhall's familiarity with well-known figures like Heidegger may put him in a favourable position to realise his desire to effect a reconciliation between two points of view often thought to be in opposition: the Cavell-Rhees way of inheriting the legacy of Wittgenstein as against that provided by his early mentor Peter Hacker.

But the questions at stake here are complex. For Mulhall they centre round the extent to which the analogy between speaking a language and playing a game can be said to be useful and informative, and the extent to which it can be misleading. It is useful insofar as it reminds us that

language is not a calculus operating according to fixed rules and instead has an open texture reflecting its use by human beings acting in concrete situations against the framework of certain general facts of nature and of human nature. As Mulhall presents his case:

The tapestry of our lives in the world may mould the language-games we play in various ways, but it can neither falsify nor justify the rules that make up these games - in part because rules are not descriptions of any kind, in part because rules constitutive of the meanings of the words we employ in descriptions of reality can hardly be falsified by such descriptions. (*Ibid.*, 153).

But this suggests that we discover the rules of the language-game from a philosophical perspective by describing how the game is played, and that the rules are integral to the very nature of the game, to the extent that they ought to be seen as a reflection of the kind of game that is in question. But in that case the idea that 'the tapestry of our lives' could either falsify or justify these rules can make no sense. This is the 'autonomy of grammar'. Yet in describing it in this way, one is already moving away from the idea that learning and speaking a language can be anything like learning the rules that one can apply in playing a game, for speaking is taking part in conversation and this can loosely be compared favourably with the moves of only very few games.

For Rhees as described by Mulhall, the notion of 'conversation' as used here leads to the idea that the various forms of human discourse are the expressions of varying human practices which relate to one another as the various contributions to a conversation. It is then a short step to the conclusion that the various branches of human culture interlock insofar as they all reflect aspects of reality that relate to those varying forms of human life in the world, so that their different subject matters form what Mulhall calls a dialogical unity. Yet the subject matter of philosophy itself is precisely those different aspects of the forms of human life in the world. As Mulhall puts it on behalf of Rhees, if living makes sense, then

language makes sense, and so must philosophy which has its own dialogical unity.

For many these will constitute weighty matters deserving the attention they receive from Mulhall, yet other philosophers will be naturally suspicious of questions that appear to arise at too high a level of generality: the real nature of this subject-matter is not something that everyone will find it easy to assess. It may then come as no surprise that Mulhall's attempt at reconciliation leads him to conclude with the observation that because Hacker tends to emphasise only one restricted aspect of Wittgenstein's language-game method, his philosophical procedures 'are less likely to accommodate any significance that might reside in these reaches of Rhee's and Cavell's thinking.' Appreciative as we surely ought to be of Stephen Mulhall's unravelling of some very complex strands in the web encompassing these apparently opposing viewpoints, he concludes with a tribute to Peter Hacker that although very much classic Mulhall, may also appear to those even remotely tempted by a roughly Rhee-Cavell approach, to court a blatant begging of the question:

But what reassures me is the fact that it is not at all obvious that the alterations in those procedures needed to make such accommodations possible would put at risk the many and various insights they already permit us to appreciate. (*Ibid.*, 174)

Wittgenstein's well-known remark to Ficker, referred to earlier, that the most important part of the *Tractatus* is the part that is *not* written, that he has drawn a limit to the sphere of the ethical from the inside, as it were, and that he has managed to put everything firmly in its place whilst being silent about it, are hardly likely to have encouraged any rather conventional publisher to think that what he would be taking on would prove to be a best-seller. Indeed, from Wittgenstein's perspective, it is those who are *gassing* now who have had the last word, for in spite of the paucity of original material Wittgenstein left us on what would normally be classified as ethics, the volume of commentary on this rather limited amount of text has probably been as high as on any other aspect of his earlier work.

This echoes the claim made by Hans Oberdiek at the beginning of his paper that what for the most part commentators have to rely on in deciding why Wittgenstein thinks of ethics in the way that he does, are the *Tractatus* passages from 6.4, the well-known but short 'Lecture on Ethics' from 1929, and a number of remarks made in conversation and correspondence, to which might be added some comments sifted from *Culture and Value*. Beginning in his paper 'Wittgenstein's Ethics: Boundaries and Boundary Crossings' with a few pages on Wittgenstein the man, a man who lived his life at white-hot intensity and who placed extraordinary demands on himself, Oberdiek importantly reminds us that whilst there is an early and late Wittgenstein on logic, language and metaphysics, there is nothing to indicate that his thinking on ethics in any way altered from what can be gleaned from these earlier sources. This thinking can be expressed in the notion that everything that is of genuine concern to people as human beings, including ethics and aesthetics, religious belief and even philosophy itself as a discipline, lies outside the realm of which anything sensible can be said, with the consequence that once one leaves behind the propositions of natural science, one has entered the realm of the inexpressible. This mystical realm lies outside the world of accidents in which there is no value, and in which there therefore can be no ethical propositions.

This is excessively familiar to students of Wittgenstein, yet the question is what are we to do with it? Believing that Wittgenstein's failure to move on from his position in the *Tractatus* is a great pity (*Ibid.*, 179), and illustrating how we might move on by quoting from the *Notebooks* a passage in which Good and Evil are said not to be properties of the world but of the subject, and that we are to live happily despite the misery of the world around us, Oberdiek continues:

Something has gone badly awry here. The boundaries of language against which we futilely but inevitably rush - the cage from which we cannot escape, although we cannot stop trying - end up tying Wittgenstein in knots. For while Wittgenstein avoids the dead-end

of logical positivism regarding ethics, the austere doctrine of the *Tractatus* cannot, in the end, make what he says there and in the 'Lecture on Ethics' coherent. (*Ibid.*, 190)

Oberdiek's alternative is that the subject who acts in the world is a living, human being who intends to live honestly and courageously and who '*intends* to make a difference in the world, and a difference of a certain *kind*.' (*Ibid.*) Concluding *contra* Wittgenstein that ethics does not so much run up against the boundaries of language and of sense, but rather that this is a consequence of Wittgenstein's having run up against the boundaries of the *Tractatus*, something which he came to realise in his later treatment of language, logic, mind and metaphysics from 1930 onwards, Oberdiek believes that both the *Investigations* and *On Certainty* contain the resources which would have allowed Wittgenstein to provide a new and distinctive approach to ethics in line with the kinds of ideas these works contain. Claiming that what Wittgenstein says about rules governing the correct use of colour-words, and therefore about the language-game in which we talk about colour, applies equally to ethics, he utilises the work of G.H. von Wright in *The Varieties of Goodness* to reach the conclusion that we can traverse the boundaries imposed by Wittgenstein in his earlier work by realising that whilst in *theoretical* enquiry our concern is with 'the structure of our conceptual scheme and of grammatical relations among its elements', in *practical* enquiry we seek 'to judge of good and bad and duty' because it is important 'to our orientation in the world as moral agents' (*Ibid.*, 195). This probably misunderstands Wittgenstein, who took the results of *any* kind of enquiry, whether philosophical or not, into what he found to be of the utmost value - music, for example - to be irrelevant to its role in his personal life. Yet it is through performing that role in his life that we can come to understand what music, for example, personally *meant* to him. This bears comparison to the earlier remarks in the *Tractatus* regarding matters of value, insofar as his attitude here has the same *practical* implications without doubtful metaphysical underpinnings. Oberdiek nevertheless makes a brave attempt to shed new light on these only too well-known and often apparently intractable aspects of Wittgenstein's earlier work.

Another aspect of Wittgenstein's oeuvre which may often seem to be intractable, is his treatment of religious belief. Here again there are a number of remarks appearing in various works including *Culture and Value*, the *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett, the all-important *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, together with an assortment of comments sifted from conversation and correspondence. The significant feature of Wittgenstein's approach is that he always attempts to grasp the role certain statements are playing within the contexts in which they are uttered. This he can sometimes be seen to do by comparing the apparent grounds (or lack of them) for making certain judgements by different individuals who may understand these statements in entirely different ways. In an admittedly sketchy account from the *Lectures on Religious Belief*, for example, he refers to Lewy's claim to believe in a Judgement Day, and whether this is something he can understand. In one sense, he knows what Lewy means, but if an atheist were to say that there will be no Judgement Day, the question arises whether the atheist and the believer are using terms with the same meaning, and it is not clear what the criterion of meaning the same here might be. He then refers to an island in which the natives have certain beliefs, and remarks that depending on context it would not be at all clear whether these beliefs were religious or scientific. (6)

The passage does indeed have all the appearance of a record taken from notes scribbled down by a student attending to Wittgenstein's thoughts as he struggled to express them, yet their importance lies in the way in which they convey the idea that what, say, for the atheist is a simple empirical claim about a Judgement Day, a claim which the atheist feels free to treat as a piece of naive superstition for which there is clearly no empirical evidence, may be playing a different role in the life of the believer. For him it may instead form part of that passionate commitment to a system of reference referred to in *Culture and Value* (2nd edition, 1964, 64), so that although it is a *belief* it is more like a way of living or of assessing life. Yet for the atheist this kind of talk will have no meaning. This interplay between the atheist and the believer, and the misunderstandings to which it can give rise, reveals that the *interpretation* of the meaning of what a Judgement Day

is, becomes a crucial factor in the decision of either of them to believe or not, affecting even the very meaning of what it is to *believe*. Indeed, there is nothing to stop the believer himself from adopting a fundamentalist outlook in which he interprets the Judgement Day to be a forecast of what in spite of available evidence will be very likely to occur. Apart from matters of this kind, it remains an open question whether Wittgenstein himself was wholly the dispassionate analyst rooting out these misunderstandings, as distinct from being himself genuinely drawn towards if not in practice committed to any particular form of Christian belief.

John Cottingham may appear in his 'The Lessons of Life: Wittgenstein, Religion and Analytic Philosophy' to have set himself a difficult task in his attempt to show that Wittgenstein's ideas are of profound importance to our understanding of religious belief, at a time when he not only believes that Wittgenstein's influence in this field as in others is on the wane, but when his outlook is apparently besieged by opponents of different kinds: from deists who wish to stress the epistemic importance of religious belief on the one hand, and from atheists on the other who cannot avoid seeing Wittgenstein as making an attempt to give Christianity an 'escape route' by attempting to place religious belief beyond rational criticism.

Although this is familiar and well-worn territory, if we make the attempt to understand Wittgenstein's method and why he wishes to attribute different roles to factual and empirical as distinct from religious utterances, then we can see how Cottingham may be enabled to adopt a more positive outlook on Wittgenstein's approach to religion, positive in that it may allow us to obtain a grasp of the nature of religious utterances in context. At the same time, however, we cannot avoid becoming aware that *no* belief adhered to within the kind of complex society in which we live today - where religious commitment is often clearly understood to be a matter of individual *decision* - can be independent of the interpretation of that belief provided by the individual believer. This is evidently less true of simpler tribal societies in which initiation into the tribal 'religion' can be more easily regarded as a form of Wittgensteinian training leading to ritual performances which in this respect at least are independent of *individual* decision. In

cases like these, it is much easier to see religious language as performing a single uniform role within a clearly defined social context in which questions of rational assessment and criticism simply do not arise. The same may be held to be partly true of enclaves within more complex societies like our own.

Cottingham provides a comprehensive account of the varying factors which ought to be considered in discussing Wittgenstein on religious belief, arguing especially that he does after all give due weight to the fact that even if believers are taken to be making a passionate commitment to a system of reference, it does not follow that they do not also *believe* in the *truth* of the doctrines they are seen to espouse. Wittgenstein need not therefore be thought to be attempting to shield Christian belief from external criticism. Yet it is just at this point that the argument can tend to go round in a circle, because there can be considerable variation amongst believers on what '*believing in the truth*' of a doctrine actually comes to, and in order to make the appropriate stand a believer may not even feel that religious commitment *needs* to withstand rational criticism. He may feel that his *belief in the truth* is all the better for failing to conform, say, to the kind of literal interpretation that would readily allow it to be subject to a critique based on the exercise of straightforward empirical criteria. But considerations of this kind are precisely what can make these issues seem intractable.

To act intelligently and with a great deal of skill is expressed through the act itself, and ought not therefore to be understood in terms of overt behaviour preceded or accompanied by a 'mental' act endowing it with the qualities of skill and intelligence which are being attributed to it. This is one facet of the essentially Rylean points that David Wiggins exploits in his paper 'Knowing How To and Knowing That': 'When I do something intelligently, i.e. thinking what I am doing, I am doing one thing and not two. My performance has a special procedure or manner, not special antecedents.' (7)

Whilst acts of this kind may indeed be preceded and sometimes accompanied by a great deal of deliberation over what to do and over how to proceed or continue, and whilst decisions about

how to act do often require what Wiggins refers to as propositional knowledge, or knowledge, say, of a technical kind which can only be properly expressed in propositional terms, *e.g.*, the complex procedures of the bomb-disposal expert who nevertheless carries out his task without conscious reflection, the fundamental point is that a distinction can be drawn between knowing that and knowing how, even if the knowing how may often involve prior propositional knowledge which the agent need not have in mind at the time of his performance.

Wittgenstein makes the point in *Zettel* with his distinction between primitive thinking as expressed in the primitive behaviour of the builders in § 2 of the *Investigations*, and he further elaborates upon it in the following example of a workman constructing an appliance out of various bits of stuff with a given set of tools (*Zettel* §§ 99-100), something which he does without any verbal accompaniment, inventing perhaps a soliloquy to go along with this performance in a later imagined filmed version of what he is doing. Yet there is no sharp dividing line between this case and examples from the animal kingdom: the lioness in stalking the gazelle manages to succeed because she has learned how best to overcome her prey, or I notice the squirrel in my garden gradually managing through trial and error to extract peanuts from the bird-feeder. Whilst their achievements are being expressed here in propositional terms, we would be loathe to conclude that the lioness or the squirrel would be in a position to make *our* distinction between knowing that and knowing how, a distinction which itself for Wittgenstein would make sense only against the background of *our* prior acquaintance with a public language. Wiggins ends his paper with interesting personal reminiscences relating to his acquaintance with Peter Hacker.

Whilst Severin Schroeder's paper 'Analytic Truths and Grammatical Propositions' does spend its last 6 pages discussing the distinction between what Wittgenstein calls grammatical propositions, and analytic truths, its main concern is to preserve the analytic-synthetic distinction against attacks from Quine, Williamson and others, and is certainly worth reading in its own right for the arguments that Schroeder presents. The last paper in the collection from Jonathan Dancy is even less directly concerned with Wittgenstein's work: 'Action, Content and Inference' raises the

question 'can an action be the conclusion of an inference?' a question which he reveals to be rather more ambiguous and puzzling than may at first sight appear.

It is perhaps regrettable that Peter Hacker was not given the opportunity to reply to these essays, for this would have added considerably to the appeal of the book. This wide-ranging collection nevertheless does succeed firstly in paying tribute to one of Wittgenstein's most prolific commentators - for the editors his most pre-eminent interpreter - and secondly in bringing to the fore the kinds of questions that reveal just how relevant the work of Wittgenstein is in the current philosophical climate.

#### ENDNOTES

- (1) Cf. criticisms of Kripke by J.F. Rosenberg: *Beyond Formalism : Naming and Necessity for Human Beings*, (Philadelphia: Temple Uni. Press 1994).
- (2) Peter Hacker: *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (Blackwell Pub.,1996) 252.
- (3) In Anthony Kenny: *From Empedocles to Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.)
- (4) P.F. Strawson, *Individuals*, (London: Methuen, 1959), 97.
- (5) Scott Soames: *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 17 *et seq.* It is worth noting that Soames on Wittgenstein on proper names is one of the very few instances where Soames can be said to come anywhere near a reasonable or acceptable presentation of the subject matter of the *Philosophical Investigations*.
- (6) Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* ed. by Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1966), 58.
- (7) Gilbert Ryle: *The Concept of Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Peregrine 1963), 32.

*As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. His latest, on Wittgenstein, appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, with a further in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010.*