

## CRITICAL NOTICE

### **Readings of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty***

Edited by Daniele Moyal-Sharrock and William H. Brenner,  
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There can be little doubt that had the opportunity been available to him, Wittgenstein would have pruned and rearranged, in this case perhaps to a greater degree than in others, the rough and unrevised notes which Anscombe and von Wright first published in 1969 under the title of *On Certainty*. Described in their Preface to the work as 'a single sustained treatment of the topic', separately marked off in his notebooks, which he 'apparently took up at four separate periods' during the last eighteen months of his life, with his last entry only two days before his death, it must appear to even the most casual reader that the same questions arise time and time again, with Wittgenstein often providing only slight variations in his numerous approaches to them. For that reason, it is only natural to assume that he would have with time selected and organised his remarks with the sole aim of directing the reader's attention to the identifiable goal towards which he must surely have intended them to point.

But what can that goal have been? This is the moot question which this, for the most part outstanding selection of essays attempts to answer, and these answers may seem as much at odds with one another as the bewilderment provoked by the work itself might lead one to expect, a bewilderment which the editors see as integral to the 'distance and deference' with which it has so often been regarded: clearly recognising the 'unpolished gem' which *On Certainty* is, readers have been unable to reach agreement on the nature of the message they naturally assume that it must be attempting to convey. It is partly for this reason that the editors divide approaches to it into four categories, comprising *Framework*, *Transcendental*, *Epistemic* and *Therapeutic* Readings, although there is inevitably some doubt over the extent to which these can always be clearly demarcated. The tendency for *Framework* and *Transcendental* Readings to merge is a case in point.

(*Ibid.*, 3) From the Editors' standpoint, what is truly important is that at last, and after a period of relative neglect, *On Certainty* is beginning to take its rightful place as Wittgenstein's third and final masterpiece.

Sporting a dust-cover which, with its monochrome photograph of tubular scaffolding, must surely be one of the most unprepossessing in recent philosophical publishing, even if it does to some degree symbolically convey what this collection of essays is about, its importance lies in the fact that it constitutes the first sustained attempt by a range of authors who know their subject intimately to come to grips, albeit from different perspectives, with the nature of Wittgenstein's thinking in a 'work' which expresses the final thoughts of a philosophical genius. On the assessment of the Editors, the major problem that textual exegesis has been directed towards is the ultimate nature of the so-called 'hinge-propositions' that he is often understood to be using as a means of pointing towards the 'scaffolding' or 'framework' surrounding or incorporating our 'basic beliefs':

Does Wittgenstein think of these 'hinges' as empirical propositions or expressions of grammatical rules? Are they presuppositions, assumptions, tacit beliefs or expressions of our ways of acting? Should the basic, animal certainty Wittgenstein strains to describe be seen as a *subjective* certainty, an *objective* certainty, a *collective* certainty? Is it a kind of warrant, belief, trust or faith? Are all of these options incompatible? (*Ibid.*, 2)

Furthermore, are the images provided in passages from *On Certainty* like § 248 and § 498 with their references to answering 'doubts at bedrock' and to the 'rock-bottom' of our convictions, passages which, like § 341 with its reference to propositions which are 'exempt from doubt', and § 211 with its talk of the 'scaffolding' of our thoughts, all of which have seemingly 'foundationalist' connotations (*Ibid.* and 14, Note 5), not in danger of presenting a Wittgenstein who is quite at odds with his previous self in the *Philosophical Investigations*? What business has he of even appearing to attempt to answer '(sceptical) doubts at bedrock' when we are already only too well aware that to

the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*, doubts can only make sense *within* a particular language-game, and that outwith any genuine context of this kind, the interminable doubt of the sceptic can only be the result of staring at a misleading *picture* of 'other minds' or of an 'external world' ? A doubt which has no end cannot be a genuine doubt. Yet in having even the appearance of attempting to answer this kind of doubt by presenting *special* propositions which are *exempt* from doubt, it would seem that he is regarding as legitimate the traditional *philosophical* questions that we can surely understand him to have already shown to have no real sense. The question is a very pertinent one to those who see the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations* as someone presenting a highly original methodology based on the claim that the traditional philosopher is guilty of being party to the kinds of misleading *pictures* that exist in isolation from the practices in which our language-games find their homes, and it is echoed throughout this volume by a number of philosophers who fall into several of the different categories that the editors have devised. Here, for example, is Michael Williams, ostensibly providing a *Framework* reading, in his paper 'Why Wittgenstein isn't a foundationalist':

Justifying (along with arguing, teaching, doubting, surmising, explaining etc.) is something that we do always already within some up-and-running practice of argument, inquiry or discourse. To raise questions of justification in the global, decontextualized and abstract way of the traditional sceptic is to raise questions that have not been given a clear sense. They appear to make sense only because the necessary background for asking any question at all has been suppressed. (*Ibid.*, 58)

But does Williams feel the need to refer to the *Investigations* rather than to *On Certainty* in order to take this view ? He finds his answer in the latter work through an appeal to passages §§ 23-24 where doubt only makes sense within particular language-games, and §§ 35-36 where Wittgenstein draws our attention to the tendency to present global scepticism about the existence

of physical objects as if it were a scepticism over a question of *fact* (cf. 'other minds') when instead no such proposition as 'there are physical objects' can be formulated. To talk about physical objects *is* to talk about how we refer to ships and shoes and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings within particular language games where our ability to determine that these items exist on specific occasions is governed by the satisfaction of the appropriate empirical criteria. To question in a global way whether these criteria 'really' have an application is senseless (1).

For a quite different perspective on the same general question of the continuity of Wittgenstein's thought, one only need consider Howard Mounce in his paper, included in the *Transcendental* category, on 'Wittgenstein and Classical Realism'. Here he extrapolates on his view that because commentators approach *On Certainty* with the idea, derived from their knowledge of the *Investigations*, that the very notion of a *philosophical* proposition is without meaning or is confused, because it cannot be understood as making a move within an ordinary language-game, then they are inevitably going to be perplexed by Wittgenstein's presentation of 'hinges' in *On Certainty*. This leads Mounce to his important conclusion:

'Hinge propositions' are readily understood once they are seen not as propositions existing unstated in a practice but as what a *philosopher* would say who wished to make explicit its essential features. 'Geologists treat the earth as having existed for an immense stretch of time' is not what geologists themselves say. But it is what a *philosopher* would say who wished to make explicit an attitude among geologists which is essential to their practice. (*Ibid.*, 118 *et seq.*)

Claiming at one point that Wittgenstein's views in *On Certainty* are identical with those of the classical realists (*Ibid.*, 121), Mounce slightly modifies this at the end of his paper when he states that this would be an exaggeration, although his connection with the classical realist tradition is said to be most clearly marked in the *Tractatus* and in *On Certainty*, in which latter work for Mounce Wittgenstein is stating *philosophical* 'hinge-propositions'. (*Ibid.*, 121).

For a third and again quite different perspective on what so-called 'hinge-propositions' actually are, and what role they are performing, one can turn to Rupert Read's "'The First Shall be Last and the Last Shall be First...': A New Reading of *On Certainty* 501' , a paper understandably included under the *Therapeutic* category, and in which he comments on Wittgenstein's statement that 'I cannot give up this proposition without giving up all judgement' (§ 494,) said at the end of this passage to have the character of a rule:

The opening sentence.....is just the kind of remark that is standardly taken to be the teaching of *On Certainty*. One is supposed to learn the occasions on which one can refuse to answer the sceptic, by citing a 'framework-proposition', or by refusing to doubt at bedrock. One is supposed to know what it is that the sceptic is trying to say, but also to know that *that* cannot sensically be said, here and now, and/or can be sensically rebutted or refused or 'dissolved'. (*Ibid.*, 311)

But on the grounds that there is nothing that could *count* as 'giving up all judgement', we have no *genuine* conception on Read's assessment of what doubting a 'hinge-proposition' could even amount to. Far from trying to get us to understand the nature of those 'hinges', what Wittgenstein is really trying to get us to see is that these so-called 'propositions' come 'awefully close to being a *paradigm of unstability*':

Wittgenstein, in *On Certainty*, sees that most of the time there just is not anything that we would be prepared to even *count* as 'doubts at bedrock' - that truly we just do not understand what someone is up to, who comes out with strings of words like 'I know that I have two hands' or 'If I were to doubt that I had two hands, I would have to doubt everything.' This explains why Wittgenstein's tone in *On Certainty* is very frequently one of *puzzlement*. His readers, on the other hand, have typically seemed remarkably unpuzzled by the doctrines

that they have extracted from his work. (*Ibid.*, 317).

Read's Wittgenstein on his *resolute* reading is saying that 'Here is one hand' should not be understood to be stating anything outwith an actual context of use, and that it is quite indifferent therefore whether, isolated from the practice of speech, it is saying anything at all. This is a corollary to his claim that the philosopher who believes that he can provide such a statement with a distinctly *philosophical* use to point, say, to 'the framework of our basic beliefs' is suffering from an illusion.

It is certainly true that 'hinge-propositions' as normally conceived do have no *genuine* role in day-to-day speech, so that anyone who in our company spent all his time, apparently for no obvious reason, telling us that he was certain he was seeing a tree, that he had two hands, that he had a brain and had never been on the Moon, *etc.*, would be seen, not as making a point of philosophical importance, but as suffering from a mental affliction. In a recent entertaining paper, 'Concepts: Speaking in Limbo' (2), Fred Mosedale cites a number of perfectly ordinary applications for the Wittgensteinian statement 'I know that is a tree', *e.g.*, as a way of illustrating that what is being viewed is not after all a piece of deceptive sculpture, as a way of saying that I have a knowledge of English illustrated in my command of the noun 'tree', or as a way of saying that my eyesight is actually better than you think, and he contrasts these with the philosopher's claim that he can provide a 'special' use for this statement out of any ordinary context and therefore in circumstances where it is open to question whether he is saying anything at all.

Nevertheless, if we think of Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* as struggling in the attempt to capture an important point towards which he understands Moore to be gesturing, albeit indirectly, and perhaps even unknowingly, then there are many philosophers who, like Mounce and Williams, would still wish to see him as having something important to say in presenting his 'hinges', whether or not he is in doing so echoing the *Investigations* (Williams) or illustrating a radical departure from it (Mounce). The problem would appear to turn on one's *choice* of examples from *On Certainty*, because, taken in isolation, these can often appear to carry their own interpretations

along with them, so that in the absence of the broader perspective that a more comprehensive survey of the work as a whole can induce (*cf.* Williams) it can appear to be self-evident that Wittgenstein himself is making a definite *philosophical* commitment, say, to humankind's inherent adherence to hinges as propositions of a uniquely *philosophical* kind, something he is often seen to be doing as a means of undermining the outlook of a supposed 'Cartesian sceptic'.

Yet that the role of 'hinges' need not be thought to be propositional at all is central to the ingenious reading of the text provided by Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, who, stressing Wittgenstein's wish to distinguish *knowledge* from *certainty*, and *subjective* (knowledge) from *objective* (manifested in *action*) certainty, may appear to provide an interpretation that manages to sidestep a number of the obvious problems highlighted by those philosophers like Read and Mosedale who raise difficulties for Mounce's Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein who can only too easily be seen to provide a 'philosophical' use for statements like 'I know that that's a tree':

Were we non-human animals, it would be enough to say that objective certainty is a kind of non-propositional, inarticulate animal trust in certain things. But we are animals endowed with a conceptual language, and hence our normally inarticulate objective certainties get articulated by philosophers eager to elucidate the nature of our basic certainty. In doing this, philosophers give verbal articulation to certainties whose verbalization in ordinary discourse would be a sign of something gone awry..(*Ibid.*, 92)

This is precisely why 'I know that that's a tree' said out of any normal context of use, is indeed a sign of 'something gone awry'. In 'Unravelling Certainty', statements of this kind, far from having a distinctly 'philosophical' application, enjoy instead an exclusively heuristic status. The attempt to give *non-linguistic* certainties linguistic expression in the manner of Moore or Wittgenstein, whilst important, is highly misleading, because 'hinge certainties' do not really enjoy any *propositional* form at all. To think that they do, or that Wittgenstein thinks that

they do, is what gives rise to the inevitable suggestion that Wittgenstein is at odds here with his methodology in the *Investigations*, contradicting himself in the attempt to provide statements like 'I know that that's a tree' with special 'philosophical' applications when they normally make sense to us only in ordinary contexts of use. In the act of elaborating on these basic points, what Moyal-Sharrock says may be thought to have distinctly Aristotelian resonances:

Hinges do not have a propositional form, be it internal or external: they are not implicit propositional beliefs that lie dormant in some belief-box until occasionally stirred to inform our external propositional beliefs. The hinge-certainty verbalized as: 'I have a body' is a disposition of a living creature which manifests itself in her *acting in the certainty of having a body*. When asleep or unconscious, this certainty remains a disposition, but becomes occurrent in any normal use she makes of her body - in her eating, running, her *not* attempting to walk through walls as if she were a disembodied ghost. (*Ibid.*, 93)

Urging that we refrain from the temptation, when doing philosophy, to think of Wittgenstein's *categorial* description of hinge-propositions as the articulation of some seemingly invisible bedrock of 'basic beliefs', Moyal-Sharrock emphasises that we ought to concentrate on Wittgenstein's *phenomenological* description of 'mindless animal certainty' as a purely *practical* matter, and here her reference to a basic 'knowing-how' is reminiscent of a famous Rylean distinction. What Wittgenstein calls 'hinge-propositions' are heuristic, artificial presentations of 'certainties that can *only* show themselves - *in* what we say and do.' (*Ibid.*, 94) This is her answer to the almost inevitable temptation to think of 'hinge-propositions' as kinds of specially manufactured 'philosophical' statements - Read, Mosedale - introduced for the specific purpose of articulating our 'basic beliefs', an interpretation which can see Wittgenstein at odds with his underlying therapeutic self. Moyal-Sharrock's certainty manifests itself in the actions of the embodied individual, and at this point it would be worthwhile quoting a final passage that

manages to express just how ingenious her interpretation really is. Stressing that the basic certainty under consideration can therefore show itself in the verbal references a person makes to her body, she continues:

For example, 'My back is sore'. This is of course, not the same as formulating a hinge: 'I have a body'. One is nonsense, if used as an assertion in normal circumstances. The other: 'My back is sore' is a description or expression, which uses the hinge: 'I have a body' as a grammatical, not a propositional underpinning. (*Ibid.*, 99, Note 40)

Ingenious though it be, many readers may yet be inclined to see this interpretation not as an original elucidation of the text of *On Certainty*, but instead as a reconstruction of it which manages to iron out or simply evade certain glaringly obvious inconsistencies which have puzzled most of those previous commentators who have seriously looked at it. It then incurs the danger of suggesting, not so much where Wittgenstein *is* heading, but where he *ought* to be heading if he is to be seen aright. Yet in doing so, it may seem to replace with a rigid theoretical edifice the multi-faceted and exploratory texture of the 'work' as we read it today.

Take, for example, the range of passages running from § 633 onwards, containing the assertion 'I cannot be making a mistake', leading up to § 659 and the claim that 'I cannot be making a mistake about the fact that I have just had lunch'. Indeed, the assumption that one could be mistaken in this kind of context is said to have no meaning. On Moyal-Sharrock's view, however, what is presented here as an attempted *formulation* of a hinge and not an *occurrence* of a hinge, the *certainty* conveyed (albeit heuristically) in the claim about just having had lunch as a manifestation of something ultimately non-linguistic, changes its nature with Wittgenstein's realisation that he might after all have dropped off immediately after the meal without knowing it. If he then sleeps for an hour only to awaken with the (mistaken) belief that he has only just eaten, then what had all the *appearance* of a hinge-certainty turns on this view into a false empirical claim. Yet it is surely hard to resist the conclusion that the point of

Wittgenstein's statement *in the first place* could on a plain reading of the text have been nothing other than to express the *subjective* certainty conveyed by his claim to *know* that he had just had lunch, a claim which turns out on reflection to be capable of being shown to be untrue. Certainly, Wittgenstein ends the paragraph with the remark that he distinguish between different *kinds* of mistake, so pointing in Moyal-Sharrock's way towards claims which are beyond truth or falsity, and this can be taken to reveal that in cases of this *different* kind their original role cannot then be discovered to have been empirical after all; but this does not resolve the inherent ambivalence that readers inevitably discover in the original claim that Wittgenstein is appearing to make.

This may be taken to show either that Wittgenstein in similar passages has not yet found the proper formulation for the point he really wishes to make, as famously expressed in § 402, or that his open-textured exploratory approach with its presentation of many different possibilities is not actually intended to provide us with any definite *philosophical* standpoint of the kind that commentators like Daniele Moyal-Sharrock assume that he is keen to provide. On the latter view, this would make *On Certainty* similar in its approach to the *Philosophical Investigations*, where the presentation of many different points of view, no one of which may necessarily be presumed to reflect the personal outlook of its author, nevertheless *invites* readers to identify Wittgenstein himself as the expositor of some definite philosophical position. (3)

But this raises the much more general question of where Wittgenstein's real achievements are taken to reside. Is he providing us in *On Certainty* with, as Avrum Stroll would have it, 'the most important contribution to the theory of knowledge since *The Critique of Pure Reason*', (*Ibid.*, 33), or is he the master of philosophical analysis revealing the pitfalls and confusions that philosophers inevitably encounter in their attempts to adopt one definite philosophical standpoint rather than another? And are these alternatives in any event mutually exclusive? Stroll, in his short and remarkably succinct paper, 'Why *On Certainty* Matters', thinks highly of Daniele Moyal-Sharrock's presentation (*Ibid.*, 46, Note 4) and argues that Wittgenstein has identified the real issue for the ideological or radical sceptic as that of certitude. He claims that in the last paragraph of the work,

Wittgenstein confronts Descartes' radical form of scepticism as presented in his Dream Hypothesis, successfully neutralising it in the following way:

I cannot seriously suppose that I am at this moment dreaming.

Someone who, dreaming, says: 'I am dreaming', even if he speaks audibly in doing so, is no more right than if he said in his dream 'it is raining', while it was in fact raining. Even if his dream were actually connected with the noise of the rain. (§ 676).

Stroll need not be taken to be suggesting that Wittgenstein in this paragraph is consciously opposing Descartes. In fact, the point being made in this passage is repeated in *Zettel* 396, where he brilliantly and amusingly suggests the possibility of an anaesthetised man saying 'I am conscious'. Ought we to say 'He ought to know' ? Similarly, if someone talks in his sleep and says 'I am asleep', ought we to respond by saying that he is quite right ? The reason that these situations strike us as amusing is that there is no proper first-person present tense application for 'I am dreaming that...'. (*Zettel* 399) whilst genuinely asleep. We are, rather, given instead to speculating, surmising, supposing, imagining, proposing or day-dreaming whilst half-awake that such-and-such.

The point of Wittgenstein's final statement in *On Certainty* is actually to counteract the suggestion that someone who is at this moment sitting at a table and writing could be making a *mistake* (§ 675), for if it is suggested that he might be drugged (§ 676) then he cannot both be *really* unconscious and yet be fully awake to tell the tale about what he is presently doing. Yet the proper question to be asked here ought to be whether Wittgenstein can imagine circumstances in which he would say that a dream had been so vivid that it led him on waking up to remark that he genuinely believed that he had been sitting at a table and writing, only to discover that he had really been sleeping in his bed all along. The answer is surely that there are such circumstances. Yet if there are, this can be taken to show that Wittgenstein's argument succeeds in proving only that knowing that one is sitting at a table and writing is not consistent with being both asleep and awake at the same time. But Wittgenstein's position is actually much stronger than that, for it is only because

a certain *framework* is already in place that he is even able to discover why a first-person present tense use of 'I am dreaming' does not make sense; and it is primarily because it does not make sense, that our having dreams so vivid that we imagine them to mirror reality, *is* discoverable only when we finally wake up. Yet this does surely tend to validate Avrum Stroll's claim that in the final analysis Wittgenstein does provide an answer of sorts to global scepticism by showing that the kind of interminable doubt that Descartes is said to propose can arise at least in part from using the verb 'to dream' outwith its normal circumstances of application.

It should be noted, however, that this does not entirely resolve the inherent ambivalence in the kinds of propositions that Wittgenstein claims he cannot be making a mistake about, for the example of presently sitting at a table and writing already presupposes the possibility, say, of dreaming that this is so as the only alternative to its being *really* the case, and this is ruled out as a *genuine* possibility by the nature of the framework surrounding the proper use of this term. Yet this principle does not apply to the other example used in §§ 674-5, that NN cannot be mistaken about his having flown from America to England a few days ago. The suggestion that only if he is *mad* could he assume anything to the contrary may appear to be true to someone with an exceptionally good, or even a normal memory, but it may not be so obvious to someone whose memory is failing with age, or who was intoxicated on the flight to the extent that his memory of *when* the flight occurred is now decidedly hazy. Indeed, the suggestion that he *must* have made such a flight will be ruled out altogether if he can be shown to have recently been in the company of a stage hypnotist who has implanted in him a false memory of his Atlantic trip. Yet this once again raises the issue of just why we should be committed to seeing Wittgenstein *to begin with* as really wishing to *formulate* a proper 'hinge' rather than a true-or-false empirical statement.

Avrum Stroll's paper, falling into the *Framework* category, is preceded by one which is outwith these categories altogether, one devoted to reflecting on its author's editing of the Notes that Rush Rhees provided about *On Certainty*. D. Z. Phillip's 'Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*: The Case of the Missing Propositions' succeeds in reflecting the kind of puzzlement that strikes

most readers on their first encounter with the book. He arrives at the idea, for example, that there *are* framework propositions like 'I know that that's a tree' which achieve this status precisely because they cannot be *said*, thus resolving the puzzle that Phillips has already encountered in expressing a proposition that seems to capture exactly what one could indubitably claim to *know*, yet which has no ordinary application. Congratulating himself on finding hinge propositions which are not asserted *because* they form the framework for those propositions that we do assert, he then finds himself further perplexed with the thought that these propositions supposedly underlying the whole of discourse cannot themselves be *used*. Yet propositions which cannot be used can have no proper sense. Phillips's probing and questioning continues in much the same way, arriving at the conclusion, for example, that in appropriate circumstances 'this is a human being' or 'this is a car' are *presuppositions* which capture the *sureness* of his activities, only that these are not in daily life ever *asserted*. Yet he comes to realise that all of this 'talk of presuppositions intellectualizes the sureness in our activities'. (*Ibid.*, 23) Described by the editors as exhibiting the kind of 'intelligent naivete symptomatic of the best philosophizing' (*Ibid.*, 6) Phillips's paper reaches a conclusion which echoes readings of *On Certainty* which have now become more familiar in the literature:

The trouble has come from the mislocation of the sureness in our ways of thinking and acting. I think I see now that what I am trying to give an account of when I speak of this sureness, is not the presuppositions of our ways of thinking and acting, but a sureness found *in* our ways of thinking and acting. We act in certain ways, and certain facts are simply not questioned. It isn't that they cannot be questioned, but they *are not* questioned. And if you ask what rules them out, the answer is: our practices. (*Ibid.*, 23)

Joachim Schulte in 'Within a System', takes his cue from a passage (§ 248) in which Wittgenstein appears to be in conflict with himself by declaring that having arrived at

the rock-bottom of his convictions, these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house. Here the foundational imagery is in stark contrast with that picturing the coherence and connections amongst our beliefs and concepts. Schulte sets himself the aim of resolving the conflict in the remainder of his paper:

And now, I think, it is clear how we can reconcile the coherentist strands in Wittgenstein's thought with his apparently foundationalist imagery. The real work is done by our ordinary empirical statements and the encompassing framework of actions, institutions and practices where no individual item enjoys absolute pride of place. To the extent these various items usefully contribute to this going concern they support each other, and this mutual support requires a high degree of coherence.

*(Ibid., 73 et seq.)*

What Wittgenstein has to say about our use of (empirical) statements within explanatory science reflects this coherence to a high degree. It is a function primarily of the *role* of these statements within a scientific context. The important passages here are §§ 292-298 - *cf.* § 558 - and of special interest is also the beginning of paragraph § 337. This passage, whilst expressing his usual point that in making experiments there are some things which are *not* in doubt, contains what must appear to some readers to be a most inappropriate example for Wittgenstein to employ in its support. The reason for this is that here he is concerned with what it would not in *practice* ever make *sense* to doubt, what can so *misleadingly* be referred to as the *stability* of those facts of nature upon which the function of our language-games depend. Yet his example of sending a letter which he expects to safely arrive clearly cannot fall into this same general category. Because it is too specific, it fails *per se* to point towards any general 'hinge' of this kind, and almost *invites* the rejoinder that to expect a letter is to expect *too* much in the event of an industrial strike by postal workers. This is yet a further example of that ambivalence already encountered. In this case, something which seems to be an empirical proposition is being used to express a 'rule' in circumstances in which *in the first place*

it is difficult to see how it could conceivably be properly used to fulfil the function that Wittgenstein has all the *appearance* of intending it to perform.

The idea of doubting at bedrock occurs again in § 513, with the thought that something *really unheard of* might happen, yet this is provided with an answer of sorts in § 516 with the conclusion that should something happen to make Wittgenstein doubtful of his own name, then there would almost certainly be something else that would make the grounds for these doubts themselves seem doubtful. This reflects scientific procedure, which would attempt to account for those unforeseen events within our existing scientific framework prior to any thought that they might instead require an entirely revolutionary form of explanation. This may seem to give § 292 a Kuhnian flavour, with its reference to further experiments being unable to *give the lie* to earlier ones - *i.e.*, that they cannot show previous results to be invalid within an *existing* framework - as distinct from changing our entire way of looking at things, yet it *need* not be taken to imply anything beyond the important point that any system of scientific propositions like that incorporating the fact that water boils at 100 deg. C, or indeed that water = H<sub>2</sub>O - *e.g.*, the Periodic Table - faces the tribunal of experience as a *body* of evidence, to the extent that if any element within it were put in question it would make this entire framework unworkable.

§ 294 importantly refers to *how* we acquire this form of conviction within scientific practice. The implication is that it is the nature of scientific method itself that provides an 'empirical foundation' for our assumptions (§ 296), a point consistent with the conclusion in § 295 that *always* finding out that water boils at a given temperature, or finding out after *every* experiment that water = H<sub>2</sub>O, cannot be construed *per se* as *proving* the proposition in question. § 297 tells us of the *role* that our experiments play within a system of propositions, and § 298 looks forward to Hilary Putnam's division of linguistic labour with its reference to the fact that although not everyone is conversant with scientific practice, we are nevertheless as a *community* 'bound together by science and education'. The practice of scientific method is in this way another example that illustrates the 'exemption from doubt' that Wittgenstein sees to be at work in more ordinary contexts.

Whilst Joachim Schulte's paper falls into the *Framework* category, Anthony's Rudd's absorbing 'Wittgenstein, Global Scepticism and the Primacy of Practice' is included in the Editors' *Transcendental* section. It has the interesting aim of attempting to show that the belief amongst many philosophers that Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* provides a definitive solution to, or dissolution of the problem of philosophical scepticism, is at best misleading because he sees Wittgenstein as demonstrably failing to confront scepticism in its more obviously challenging forms. This places Rudd in direct opposition to Avrum Stroll, for Rudd rejects the cogency of the very example quoted by Stroll (§ 696) as decisively undermining the Cartesian Dream Hypothesis, because it seems 'pretty weak' to him (*Ibid.*, 160, Note 6). Rudd's primary claim is that our dreams and waking states cannot always be qualitatively distinguished to the degree that Wittgenstein and those who argue in his wake would like to make out:

.....dreaming scepticism isn't disposed of by showing that we couldn't use the word 'dream' with meaning unless we could contrast dreams with waking life, for it remains possible that the contrast is more of a relative one than we normally suppose. My waking life, while not a dream in quite the sense in which those states I normally call my dreams are, may not differ from them as much as I like to think. We may (as Berkeley supposed) wake from what we normally call our dreams into states of consciousness whose objects may be more stable and consistent, but no more mind-independent than dream-objects are. (*Ibid.*, 150)

But the value of Wittgenstein's account is quite independent of any tendency we have to sometimes imagine that our lives are a dream, for an indulgence in any kind of poetic fantasy of this kind, in common with the fact that a number of cultures including certain branches of Hinduism or Buddhism display an adherence to some form of Idealism (*Ibid.*), is irrelevant to the methodological point that whatever we may wish to imagine, all our imaginings only make

sense against the background of our prior acquaintance with a public language. To see this entirely as an issue determined by the degree to which the content of our waking and dreaming experiences may be taken to be qualitatively indistinguishable is to adopt the kind of 'private' perspective that would treat the verb 'to dream' in isolation from its normal surrounding of application. Yet these surroundings are integral to our understanding that a first-person present tense use of 'I am dreaming' makes no sense. Indeed, and as Cora Diamond interestingly points out (4), Wittgenstein himself expressed a strong temptation at one point in his development to a form of idealism, a temptation which may never have left him. Yet this need be seen as no more than a personal predilection that is independent of the valid claim that Rudd entirely misses in his willingness even to concede that certain idealist preferences make no *practical* difference to our day-to-day encounters with objects and persons in normal surroundings (*cf. Zettel* § 413-4):

So there are contexts in which the thesis of the mind-independence or otherwise - the ultimacy or non-ultimacy- of the physical vis-a-vis the mental can make a real and culturally significant difference to people's lives - even if it isn't a difference that is detectable in their everyday dealings with furniture. Perhaps chairs, though 'real' as compared with hallucinations, are still part of the veil of Maya ? It is at least a suggestion that cannot be dismissed simply by appeal to ordinary linguistic practices in which we all share. We should then be careful not to take Wittgenstein's appeal to ordinary usage as providing by itself an easy knock-down argument against scepticism. (*Ibid., et seq.*)

Even if we are prone to detect a certain flippancy in his offhand remark concerning the veil of Maya, Rudd's evidently dismissive reference to 'ordinary usage' neglects the central point that if the important (philosophical) distinctions to which he wishes to cleave are not 'detectable in their everyday dealings with furniture', then that for Wittgenstein is

the catalyst that leads him to ask what possible role they can be playing in our understanding of how in this context our language is performing its day-to-day function. This inevitably leads him to question why we are prone to believe that there is a *genuine* philosophical problem arising from the possibility that all life is a dream *if* this problem is consequent solely upon our tendency to stare at what we perceive to be the lack of any qualitative difference between the content of our experiences when either awake or asleep.

As the proponent of a highly traditional response to Wittgenstein, Rudd characteristically believes that a radical extension of our concepts of *doubt, knowledge, dreaming* or *reality* cannot be ruled out *a priori*, arguing that the 'innovative philosopher' who introduces sense-data need not be interpreted to be doing no more than 'misinterpret a "grammatical movement" '. He quotes *Investigations* § 401 against Wittgenstein, suggesting that the philosopher may instead be inventing a new and revelatory way of looking at things. (*Ibid.*, 152). Indeed he may, but in doing so he ought not to neglect the second paragraph of § 132 with its reminder that reforms of language for particular practical, including scientific purposes, are not the kinds of cases to which he is referring, because these already find their roles within the framework of our employment of a public language. The confusions that Wittgenstein addresses arise when language is idling, a point illustrated in the misuse that philosophers are inclined to make of the verb 'to dream'. Nevertheless, Rudd is wedded to the idea that Wittgenstein's critique of scepticism if it is to be successful requires rather more than the methodological stance with its anthropological and sociological associations that he sees Wittgenstein as adopting. It requires the transcendental viewpoint that Rudd evidently takes Wittgenstein's stance to lack, and this partly explains his introduction of Heidegger who, in his final assessment, succeeds in *Being and Time* where Wittgenstein evidently fails. Rudd's paper is not one to be missed.

Duncan Pritchard's approach in the *Epistemic* category can appear to take readers into an entirely different world to that inhabited by Anthony Rudd, and at its very beginning he presents the paradox of philosophical scepticism as conceived in the contemporary literature,

a literature in which epistemology has seen a dramatic resurgence in recent years (*Ibid.*, 189), in a form which Wittgenstein would have immediately repudiated. In 'Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* and Contemporary Anti-Scepticism', the paradox arises from the conjunction of three propositions which are jointly incompatible, but all of which are individually plausible, *viz.*, that we are unable to know the denials of sceptical hypotheses, from which it may be taken to follow that we are unable to know any one of the 'everyday' propositions which we typically take ourselves to know; yet we *are* able to know everyday propositions. Making play with the notorious brain-in-a-vat hypothesis, which Pritchard treats as being *defined* in such a way that we could not possibly *know* it to be false, the sceptic is able to conclude that we do not *really* know everyday propositions either, and this will hold no matter whether we are victims of a sceptical hypothesis or not.

But this argument neglects the Wittgensteinian point that if we cannot know that we are *not* brains-in-vat, then we cannot know that we *are* either : what is being presented here as a genuine possibility, *viz.*, that because 'there is nothing phenomenologically available to us that could indicate that we are not BIVs, then how could we possibly know that this scenario has not obtained ?' (*Ibid.*,190), rests for Wittgenstein on using the concept of knowledge outwith any normal circumstances in which it could be applied. This is not after all like surmising that Julius Caesar had an epileptic fit as he left the Continent for Britannia in 55 BC, a statement which we would take to be true or false even if we *in fact* have no current documentary evidence in its support. On the contrary: if the possibility of *ever* finding it out to be true or false is by definition ruled out, then the sceptical hypothesis in Wittgenstein's view can never become anything other than an idle fantasy.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Pritchard should discover very meagre pickings on the carcass he carefully scrutinises in the course of investigating whether *On Certainty* has much to contribute towards a primarily epistemological approach to scepticism as he conceives it, for he recognises in common with most commentators that Wittgenstein's reaction to scepticism,

insofar as he reacts to it at all, is semantic and consists primarily in demonstrating, as here, that the sceptic who has doubts about an 'external world' or 'other minds' is confused by a *picture* in the application of which he takes the *meaning* of our statements in these fields to consist, and this inclines him to treat as questions of *fact* questions which can by definition have no answer because they are asked in isolation from the language-games in which factual questions find their homes. Pritchard's paper nevertheless goes into considerable detail in the course of discussing the work of two philosophers, Crispin Wright and Michael Williams, who on his assessment attempt to provide an epistemological response to scepticism, and once again he finds his results at best inconclusive. Yet if we take it that from the beginning an epistemological response to scepticism as Pritchard conceives it, presupposes that scepticism makes *sense*, then once again we cannot be surprised when he reaches the conclusion that any 'plausible anti-sceptical thesis inspired by *On Certainty* had better be understood along primarily semantic, rather than epistemic lines' (*Ibid.*, 217) Along the way Pritchard has interesting things to say about a 'minimal' reading of 'hinge-propositions', and in the course of assessing Wittgenstein's approach, comes to the conclusion, following Daniele Moyal-Sharrock, that it would be better if hinges are not understood in propositional terms at all (*Ibid.*, 199).

Thomas Morawetz begins his primarily analytical paper with the statement that 'one of the most seductive traps for the novice philosopher' is to assume that whenever one has knowledge, one can appropriately make a claim to know, an assumption that Wittgenstein shows to be seriously in error on the grounds that of all the many things at any given time that a person may be said to know, only a very small number of them are items of knowledge that can properly be said to be established by accumulating evidence in their support. But if we are to include within cases about which one can correctly be said to have knowledge, those which Wittgenstein in his reaction to Moore sees as 'standing fast' for him, then Morawetz's 'novice philosopher' may not be as naive as may at first sight appear. Indeed, as Morawetz points out towards the end of his paper when assessing the kinds of examples Moore uses in making his

claims about knowledge of the external world, he correctly takes Wittgenstein to treat these as examples, *e.g.*, about his hands, to which the concept of *knowledge* does not really apply:

A person is less and less likely to be thought of as knowing  
*p* (and less likely to think of herself as knowing *p*) to the extent  
that *p* is such that one cannot imagine how others could believe  
the contrary (see OC 93) (*Ibid.*, 185)

§ 93 is a further presentation of precisely those kinds of examples that 'stand fast' for Moore, and this gives rise to the obvious question why Morawetz in an earlier part of his paper is given to include these as examples of knowledge. The answer is provided in the following remark:

Moore seems indeed to be concerned with just those matters  
that Wittgenstein also says we know but almost never have  
occasion to claim to know, matters that our behaviour *shows*  
we know...in all these ways, Moore's thinking seems congruent  
with Wittgenstein's. (*Ibid.*, 184)

That the apparent inconsistency here is largely terminological is revealed *via* a further distinction that Morawetz makes later on:

A genuine case of knowing involves both general and special  
qualification. I am only generally qualified to say that the earth  
existed, etc., in the sense that I and others participate in a way of  
life and way of thinking for which that is a basic presupposition.  
With regard to the non-existent stairway or the nature of my name,  
I have special qualifications; others are not situated to give the  
same evidence and make the same associations as I am. I may  
for that reason be called to give grounds. Moore's mistake, then,  
is to say that one knows things which are in fact matters of general

qualification (*Ibid., et seq.*)

This passage also points towards the fact that Morawetz sees Wittgenstein making more than one general distinction between what he refers to as methodological propositions or rules and what in effect are ordinary empirical propositions supported by evidence, for he usefully distinguishes four different categories of propositions in *On Certainty*, included in one of which as here is the example of being unable to doubt one's own name. The first category he takes to comprise (philosophical) claims about the existence and persistence of physical objects which would never have any ordinary application, and the second to include claims about a person's having no doubt about his own name or about having two hands, claims which cannot be put in question without overthrowing his capacity to make judgements. Yet these can be seen to be capable of corroboration by checking the documents in his wallet or by physically checking his body, although we are to presume that only in very *special* circumstances would checks of this kind be required, *e.g.*, when someone suffering from amnesia had forgotten his own name, or when as a result of an accident the question of his confirming that he had two hands had become a matter of urgency. Morawetz again describes Wittgenstein's real 'hinge' examples here as examples of *showing* that I *know* my name, and this can clearly lead to misunderstanding.

The third category to which Morawetz refers, comprises the kinds of examples 'that in no sense are part of our picture of the world in an unrevisable way' (*Ibid.*,181), and although he chooses to employ the rather unusual cases of book titles corresponding to their contents, or drivers in the U.S.A. driving on the right-hand side of the road, it might have been better, given that he is now considering matters subject to historical and cultural change, to think in broader terms of cases like the move from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican system, or even from a Newtonian to an Einsteinian conception of space and time, with due acknowledgement to Wittgenstein's claim that, at least since the 17th century, we have gradually become part of a culture 'bound together by science and education'. Consequently, also into this category fall examples like never having been on the Moon in 1950, or never having flown the Atlantic during

the 19th Century. These examples relate to four of the most famous passages in *On Certainty*, §§ 96-99, with their memorable reference to the movement of the waters and the relatively fixed river-bed over which they flow. Morawetz's fourth category is that of straightforward empirical propositions requiring evidence, the obvious one in which a person can make a 'claim to know'.

Morawetz also usefully considers the old chestnut of 'I know' seeming to guarantee the content of what is known, in the course of which he even manages to criticise Wittgenstein for 'tripping over his own insights into confusion' (*Ibid.*, 175), in a passage (§ 13) in which Wittgenstein actually concedes the point at issue both at the beginning when he states that it cannot be inferred from someone's *saying* 'I know it is so' that it actually is so - barring the assumption that what he says is true - and at its end when he says that from the fact that someone says 'I know...' it does not follow that he knows it. Wittgenstein can at most be charged in the relevant context with a minor inconsistency in his manner of expression.

Leaving the *Epistemic* category for another *Therapeutic* reading, one cannot help but be reminded when reading Edward Minar's 'On Wittgenstein's Response to Scepticism: The Opening of *On Certainty*' of that famous passage (*Investigations*, Part II, xii, 230) where Wittgenstein invites us to consider that certain general facts of nature might be different from what we are used to, in which case the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to us. Here what at one level might seem a commonplace remark - though unaccompanied it ought to be emphasised by any concrete examples - can from another perspective be seen to hover over the edge of unintelligibility. The kinds of examples we would actually tend to imagine would be so pedestrian, like those consequent upon differences in the earth's gravity, in its atmosphere, or in the constitution of human beings; or they might again be so outlandish as to include something *unheard of* happening (§ 513). But in these cases we would still wish to find some form of explanation for these events within an existing framework. Yet in the absence of examples of these kinds, it may seem not only that there is nothing that we could think of as constituting changes in *general facts*

*of nature* that could make sense to us, but also that there is really nothing - cf. Rupert Read with his reaction to the notion of giving up all judgement - that Wittgenstein actually intends us to imagine because there is nothing that could *count* as an alteration in general facts of nature in the sense that he may here be only *appearing* to intend.

It is therefore a feature of what goes under the heading of a 'resolute' or 'therapeutic' reading of *On Certainty* that it should question the conventional framework in terms of which hinge certainties are discussed, and Edward Minar characteristically attempts to pull the rug from under our feet should we be in any way certain that hinges of any variety have a genuine role to perform:

To hold that certainty belongs to an entire world view, system or set of practices seems unhelpful to the point of emptiness. Without a way of specifying those parts of the system that anchor it, we are in effect repeating that we go on as we go on. It seems like the propositional story has to be non-propositional, to avoid giving the sceptic's questions a foothold. On the other hand, the non-propositional account has to be propositional, to locate a distinct role for the hinges. On both scores, it is hard to see how the sceptic is quieted. (*Ibid.*, 260)

On this view, the very idea that we act according to the operation of hinges in our day-to-day activities as a reflection of the animal *certainty* underlying everything we do, is really a way of saying nothing, no more than that we do go on as we go on. As Minar elaborates:

In my view, the tension between the different conceptions of hinges serves throughout the text of *On Certainty* to destabilize the idea that the relevant language-games have an underlying structure that determines what stands in need of justification and what stands fast without it. (*Ibid.*)

Consequently, there is really no requirement for anything in the way of a theory of hinges of whatever form that in some sense sets the limits to human understanding, for what Wittgenstein 'does instead is to provide reminders for the purpose of undoing the confusions that lie behind the quest for philosophical accounts of such limits. '(Ibid.) This means - a point nevertheless common to an account like that of Daniele Moyal-Sharrock - that any Moorean-type statement seen outwith an ordinary context of use has no genuine application, and Minar spends the remainder of his paper spelling out in detail that a philosopher is suffering from an illusion should he feel the need for a justification of the kind that hinges may be thought to supply.

But in the final analysis, if this is what a *Therapeutic or Resolute* reading boils down to, does this take us any further than the thought, central to our understanding of what a large part of the *Investigations* is about, that the sceptic who has doubts about an 'external world' or 'other minds' is confused by a *picture* in the application of which he takes the *meaning* of our statements in these fields to consist, and that this inclines him to treat as questions of *fact* questions which can by definition have no answer because they are asked in isolation from the language-games in which factual questions find their homes? Yet if we see *On Certainty* as doing little more than echo this theme, then not only will a number of the other contributors to this volume see this as a highly truncated account of its real intentions, but it will also fail to tackle the apparent inconsistencies over Wittgenstein's motivations which have already been considered. The real value of Edward Minar's contribution, like Rupert Read's, is that in providing us with a starkly uncompromising vision of *On Certainty* in which its conventionally understood theoretical edifice implodes as the reader struggles with its bewildering text, it reminds us that Wittgenstein's thinking may be, or can at least be made to seem to be, far more enigmatic than can at first sight appear.

Still in the *Therapeutic* category, Alice Crary's 'Wittgenstein and Ethics: A Discussion with Reference to *On Certainty*' employs as its central theme the thought that Wittgenstein's failure to make any traditional contribution to ethics, results from his unique understanding of the nature of ethical concerns, rather than from a wish to disengage himself from ethics itself. She takes a stand

against what she classifies as ‘inviolability’ interpretations of Wittgenstein, which would have it that our linguistic practices are immune to rational criticism or ‘inviolable’. This view she takes to follow from a certain ‘use-theory’ of meaning, propounded amongst others by Norman Malcolm, who was one of its first exponents. Should Wittgenstein be understood to be arguing in accordance with a use-theory that there are certain judgements that are ‘exempt from doubt’, then to that extent it would appear that he is arguing in favour of an ‘inviolability’ view. Based on the principle, one familiar on a *resolute* perspective, that Wittgenstein believes there is only one kind of nonsense, she accordingly chastises philosophers like Marie McGinn who would argue that whilst the words used in uttering Moore’s knowledge-claims are not totally without meaning, we nevertheless cannot take what he says to form intelligible acts of assertion. (*Ibid.*, 285) :

The upshot is that Wittgenstein appears to be describing the discovery of logical ‘misfits’ between the meanings of Moore’s sentences and the contexts in which he produces them or, in other words, that he appears to be claiming that Moore’s utterances are unintelligible on account of the particular (at least barely intelligible) things that they try, unsuccessfully, to say. (*Ibid.*, 286)

Crary’s argument, by contrast, is that since Wittgenstein does not think that there is any sort of ‘lack of fit’ between the ‘sense’ of Moore’s words and their context of utterance, given that they have no clear meaning at all, then he cannot be suggesting that there are some judgements that are on the ‘inviolability’ interpretation immune to criticism. Adopting a fresh start, Crary sees *On Certainty* exemplifying philosophy’s ethical difficulty insofar as it serves to remind us that failure to ‘repudiate the idea of a standpoint independent of our modes of response’ - a standpoint she would clearly attribute to ‘both the sceptic and the sceptic’s dogmatic, Moorean interlocutor’ - is to fail to even consider whether the ‘circumstances in which we want to utter our (allegedly investigative) words, bear any affinity to circumstances in which we ordinarily utter these words’ (*Ibid.*, 296)

But, once again, it is clear that this resolute reading may only be taken to convey what we can otherwise express by saying, in terms closer to those Wittgenstein himself employs in the *Philosophical Investigations*, that the sceptic, like Moore with his dogmatic *metaphysical* response to him, is guilty of having become *mesmerised* by a *picture* of 'other minds' or of an 'external world'. On Wittgenstein's analysis - a term we need not balk at using in this context - it is because the sceptic, according to his philosophical *intuitions*, takes our understanding of what these terms *mean* to consist in the *application* of the *picture*, that he is led to treat as questions of *fact*, those typical pseudo-questions which can have no answer because the philosophical problems that they supposedly reflect arise from staring at this picture in isolation from our participation in the language-games in which factual questions in practice arise. The characteristic 'reminders' of what we actually do or of how we go on, then hopefully succeed in returning us to the consequences that we may, in a philosophical context, be able to derive from reflection on what, in any particular case, this participation may be taken to reveal.

Allowing for obvious differences in terminology, it is interesting to note that William H. Brenner, in his 'Wittgenstein's Kantian Solution', manages, in the course of providing a reading in the *Transcendental* category, to make what readers can surely interpret to be much the same point. In his final summing-up he stresses similarities in the approaches of both Wittgenstein and Kant:

'There are trees in the garden': Hylas and Philonous disagree not over whether this is true but over 'what it really means'. Both think it stands in need of a 'philosophical analysis' - an explanation of the *sense* in which it is (or may be) true. Wittgenstein's 'Kantian' approach is to reject the demand for such an analysis on the grounds that the sense of the proposition is in the proposition itself, not in some other - perhaps 'truer' form of - proposition. (*Ibid.*, 139)

'In the proposition itself', therefore, insofar as we can study its *role* in practice as revealed

within the language-game in which it has an ordinary application. The traditional philosopher, on the other hand, thinks that the proposition's *real* meaning is provided *via* his intuitions concerning, in the terms Wittgenstein employs, the application of a picture accompanying his use of the proposition, one that he unavoidably takes to encapsulate what this meaning is. Consequently, in Brenner's terms, 'in the proposition itself' points to its use in practice within 'the stream of life', and therefore within what he refers to as 'those "outer" normative contexts of use that Wittgenstein calls *language-games*,' (*Ibid.*, 139). Brenner sees this point reflected in *On Certainty* § 501, where Wittgenstein points to the *practice* of language as a way of illustrating how logic cannot be described. It is not uncommon, then, for similar points about Wittgenstein's methodology to be expressed from what initially may be thought to be opposing interpretational perspectives, a point to which the Editors have already drawn our attention in referring to the tendency for *Framework* and *Transcendental* (and perhaps even certain aspects of *Therapeutic*) readings to collapse into each other.

By contrast, Michael Kober in his *Epistemic* offering, ' "In the Beginning was the Deed": Wittgenstein on Knowledge and Religion' sees the things that Wittgenstein describes as 'standing fast' for Moore as part of a 'world-picture' belonging to our 'overall epistemic stance', and this allows him to see certainty in *subjective* rather than in *objective* terms. (*Ibid.*, 248) This makes Wittgenstein's claim that this is a logical and not a psychological matter (§ 447) seem rather paradoxical, and Kober attempts to avoid the difficulty by claiming that presumably 'it belongs to the "logic" of a practice that its participants are always in a particular mood or show a specific religious or epistemic stance' (*Ibid.*, *et seq.*) This must go against the grain for the vast majority of commentators today who would wish to distance the notion of *certainty* from any psychological associations whatsoever.

Whilst it would be quite impossible in any critical notice to cover every aspect of the fourteen contributions that make up this volume, it is clear that the Editors have done a valuable job in selecting such a wide-ranging group of essays. With an Introduction that is a model of its kind,

the book exhibits collectively a catholicity of understanding that would have been impossible to achieve in a monograph, or in a book issuing from authors committed to a single interpretative stance. Anyone who is inclined to approach this work with the presumption that there exists some 'standard reading' of *On Certainty* in which 'hinge-propositions' provide a 'philosophical' answer to the traditional sceptic, is almost inevitably going to end it considerably more perplexed than when he began. Yet on the Socratic view normally understood to be Wittgenstein's own, that would definitely be no bad thing.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) Readers are also advised to refer to Williams's paper 'Wittgenstein's Refutation of Idealism' in *Wittgenstein and Scepticism* ed. Denis McManus (Abington: Routledge, 2004) 76.
- (2) 'Concepts: Speaking in Limbo', Fred Mosedale, in *Being Frank: Ebersole, Wittgenstein & Ordinary Language Philosophy*, Conference M.M.U. Crewe, Cheshire, April 15-16, 2010.
- (3) This idea is central to David Stern's interpretation of the *Philosophical Investigations*. See his *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations An Introduction*. Cambridge Introductions to KEY PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS by David Stern, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- (4) 'Wright's Wittgenstein', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 125, October 1981, 358.

*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.*