

CRITICAL NOTICE

The Oxford Handbook of
Wittgenstein

Edited By Oskari Kuusela and Marie McGinn
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Now available in paperback following its original hardback publication in 2011, this substantial production is advertised by the publisher as ‘the most comprehensive volume ever published on Wittgenstein’, a claim with which at first sight most readers will hardly be inclined to disagree. The book contains 35 essays by Wittgenstein scholars and, except for one, these are included under 6 categories: *Logic and the Philosophy of Mathematics* (7 essays), *Philosophy of Language* (8 essays), *Philosophy of Mind* (6 essays), *Epistemology* (3 essays), *Method* (7 essays), and *Religion, Aesthetics, Ethics* (3 essays). As one might expect, the contributors come from the three geographical areas which mainly reflect current interest in Wittgenstein, with 13 scholars from the United Kingdom, (4 are from Oxford and 3 from London), 13 from North America (2 are from Iowa), and 9 from Continental Europe (2 are from Finland).

The ‘Editors’ Introduction’ concerns itself mainly with Wittgenstein’s place in 20th Century analytic philosophy, where he is said to be ‘a contested figure on the philosophical scene’ (*Ibid.* 3), one who plays ‘a less central role’ in contemporary thinking (*Ibid.*, 4) than he did during earlier phases of the subject’s development. Examples are provided to justify this claim, including the resurgence of Metaphysics as a respectable undertaking, and the current perception of Philosophy as a research programme the aim of which is to answer clearly defined questions in a quasi-scientific manner (*Ibid.*) as distinct from questioning, with Wittgenstein, the fundamental nature of the philosophical enterprise. Another obvious feature of Wittgenstein’s approach which makes it seem alien to the analytic tradition is his style of writing (*Ibid.* 9), illustrated, for example, through his remark that philosophy ought to be written as one ‘*writes a poem*’ (*Ibid.*10).

The editors are nevertheless driven to qualify this outlook on Wittgenstein by reflecting on the role given to the so-called *private language argument*, or to his conception of *meaning as use*, which have been regarded as *results* in analytic philosophy along the lines, for example, of Russell’s *theory of definite*

descriptions. Wittgenstein can also be understood to be the instigator of certain debates in analytic philosophy (witness *Kripke on rule-following*) which take on a life of their own insofar as they soon develop along lines which gradually become more and more divorced from the original texts (*Ibid.*11). Though the editors do not put it in this way, they are pointing here to the extraordinary fertility of imagination exhibited by Wittgenstein in his best work, and this of course can act as a catalyst for those whose thinking, on certain interpretations, can appear to be distinctly un-Wittgensteinian. The editors conclude with the thought that it is quite unfruitful to continue a debate between mainstream analytic philosophy and a Wittgensteinian approach, when these can actually complement each other by allowing philosophers to question the presuppositions behind their thinking (*Ibid.*)

Alongside the Editor's Introduction and prior to the main groups of essays already referred to, is a paper by Brian McGuinness on 'Wittgenstein and Biography', which explores the complex relationship between Wittgenstein's writings and the events of his life. But do we even have to know anything about his life if his work should 'speak for him' ? (*Ibid.* 14). Quoting Elizabeth Anscombe, who wished that if she could have pressed a button that would have destroyed all of the available biographical material, she would have done so, presumably on the assumption that this was an unwanted distraction from what is really important, McGuinness refers to the *need* Wittgenstein had to reflect upon his character, a need to 'come to terms' with himself and so to see and accept his nature as a 'poor sinner' (*Ibid.* 15):

In the notebooks in which he recorded his thoughts for future reflection or use, personal reflections abound. He interrupts his philosophical writing to exclaim, sometimes but not always in code, on his weaknesses, his vanity, his sins, or his aspirations - all of which of course might infect his philosophical writing as much as any other aspect of his life (*Ibid.*)

Remarking that Wittgenstein saw the particular form taken by his own life as a function of his unhappy family, a family in which three of his brothers committed suicide, McGuinness goes

on to explore the sheer complexity of a character who desired to be perfect (as exclaimed to Fania Pascal), one who had the 'greatest need and capacity for love possessed by destructive tendencies directed chiefly (but not only) against himself, full of feelings of guilt' (*Ibid.* 17), and who constantly speculated on the possibility of an early death. Living a true life for Wittgenstein really meant confessing his guilt to those on whom he believed his deceptions had actually been perpetrated, even if his requests for forgiveness as a 'sinner' were then being addressed to people who failed to see any genuine need for them (*Ibid.*).

Yet McGuinness sees this struggle for honesty in his life as something which is not finally distinguishable from his desire not to cheat himself or others in dealing with a philosophical problem (*Ibid.* 19). That, of course, is closely connected with the claim that the real issue when dealing with a particularly difficult and important problem may lie with the will, and with what one *wants* to see, and not, as it must appear at first sight, with the intellect (*Culture and Value*, 17e).

But no matter how serious, severe and beyond the norm Wittgenstein might have been in his relationships both with himself and with others, (*Ibid.* 20), the fact remains that the content of his major works can only be properly understood and discussed in its own terms if it is to be understood and discussed at all; and it is *that* aspect of the relationship between his life and his writings which Anscombe is pointing to by suggesting that the biographical facts are irrelevant to his strictly philosophical thinking. McGuinness ends with a brief discussion of 'nonsense' in Wittgenstein, as ultimately that which breaches the limits of 'possible human practice' (*Ibid.* 21).

The notion that philosophy ought to be written as one writes a poem arises again in Marjorie Perloff's 'Writing Philosophy as Poetry: Literary Form in Wittgenstein', although with this example she is careful to distinguish between various interpretations of *dichten*, a term she finds almost untranslatable into English. We have therefore had 'as a *form of poetry*' (earlier Perloff), 'as a *poetic composition*' (earlier Winch), 'as one *writes a poem*' (later Winch), 'as one would *write poetry*' (Schalkyk), and finally, 'only do philosophy *as poetry*' (Antin), which is sufficiently colloquial to hopefully capture the sense of the quote from *Culture and Value*, 24e, 1980 (*Ibid.* 716, Footnote 3).

The main question at issue for Perloff is what it is that makes Wittgenstein's philosophical writings also, or even primarily *literary* (*Ibid.* 714), and one suitable way of exploring this question is by comparing 'the terse and enigmatic propositions of the *Tractatus*' with 'what looks like a much more casual free-wheeling discourse' in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The example that is used here is the comparison between the language-game and the game of chess in §§ 30 - 31. One central point of this passage, that to know how to use the word 'king' in chess is to be aware of the *role* of this piece in playing the game, so that no one who was unaware of what it was to play board-games at all would even be in a position to ask for the meaning of the word, acts for Perloff as a prelude to what she sees in § 32 as an 'elusive' shift towards an attack on 'the Augustinian theory of language':

The new analogy - wonderfully absurd - is between a stranger in a foreign country and a child communicating within its own not-yet-learned language system. Is the child's 'thought' then like the foreigner's native language, prior to the 'new' language to be learned? The posited analogy is patently absurd, for what could that prior language possibly look and sound like? How does one talk to oneself without talking? As Wittgenstein puts it frequently, does a young child hope before it has learned the word 'hope'? (*Ibid.* 722).

Yet it has seemed to many philosophers, and can even be understood to be a presupposition of our ordinary 'common sense' thinking, that there is nothing at all *wrong* with the idea that the child in this passage is *already* aware of many different *kinds* of items in the world around him, items towards which he can adopt common human responses like hoping, wishing, expecting, before actually acquiring the *names* for these kinds of items and for his responses to them. We can, after all, and in much the same way, truthfully say that the dog is obviously expecting to be taken for a walk or to be at this point in the evening given its usual bone. Yet the last thing that we would wish to claim is that the dog is in possession of a spoken language like our own. What is taken by

Perloff to be 'patently absurd', *viz.*, that the child is conceptually articulate *prior* to learning to talk, that he has, in this way, a 'language of thought', has not at all seemed so to many philosophers, else the 'criticism' of this pre-philosophical *picture* or *paradigm* that forms part of the 'Augustinian theory' in the relevant passage (§ 1), would hardly be as revolutionary as it is often understood to be.

Here it is important to distinguish between empirical and conceptual investigations, because there is an obvious sense in which asking whether a person can think *without* language, is to operate with a misleading *picture*. The main Wittgensteinian point here is methodological, so that asking for the *name* (sortal term) of something of a given *kind* is always parasitic on our prior acquaintance with a public language. Consequently, to interpret the dog's wishes or hopes on analogy with our own in terms of its expressive behaviour, does not mean that we must think of the dog as having its own primitive 'language of thought', for this is the very *picture* that has no genuine work to perform.

In fact, Perloff sees the aspect of Wittgenstein's 'method' that is expressed in §§ 30 - 32, as one instance of the 'use of countless examples, anecdotes, narratives, and analogies - that gives the text its poetic edge' (*Ibid.* 723), and this can lead the philosopher to '*revise* our previous understanding of this or that fixed notion'. Turning to *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein's literary gifts, 'the poet-philosopher's astonishing rhetorical skill', are at work in his ability to persuade us, for example, that even today the response 'I don't know' to the question 'Have you ever been on the Moon?' is, as she puts it, absurd. Not absurd, certainly, if travel throughout the solar system had become a commonplace, and no doubt one could manufacture examples involving the recent introduction of commercial space-flight to the Moon, that would provide a suitable context for the legitimacy of this response. Nevertheless, the point is taken, and it is taken, for Perloff, because of Wittgenstein's literary skills.

She also sees this ability at work in the 'Remarks on Fraser's *Golden Bough*', where Wittgenstein uses these literary skills to persuade us that Fraser is misconstruing the behaviour of the natives by constantly interpreting it in terms of their (mistaken) *beliefs*, say, about the activities of a deity, when what is central are the *practices* which are integral to the life of the tribe. Words and phrases can only be understood within their particular contexts of use, and Fraser's concentration on *explaining* tribal

behaviour in terms of the (mistaken) primitive *beliefs* that govern it arises solely from *his* inability to appreciate the many different kinds of contexts in which language is used (*Ibid.* 726).

In 'Wittgenstein's Use of Examples', also within the *Method* category, Beth Savickey emphasises the dramatic shift from the early work in the *Notebooks* and in the *Tractatus*, where there are said to be around three dozen examples (*Ibid.* 667) like 'this watch is lying on the table' (*NB.* 69), or 'this chair is brown' (*NB.* 5), to the later philosophy of the *Philosophical Investigations*, which might be said to be composed of nothing but examples: 'the number of examples found in the later writings increases exponentially' (*Ibid.* 671), and this is because, broadly speaking, there is a move in the later writings from 'logical to conceptual investigations' (*Ibid.*), from '...the simple and rigid rules which logicians give for the structure of propositions' to 'the infinite variety of functions of words in propositions' (*Ibid.* 670).

Savickey describes what she calls the 'grammatical movement' inherent in the claim that it is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when some one else is in pain (*Zettel* § 540), a movement which will be misunderstood as an inclination towards behaviourism should one fail to see the significance of that passage (*Investigations* § 281), in which it is stated that only of a living human being and of what is like one, can it be said that it has sensations and is conscious or unconscious. Using this example of *pain* throughout the paper, she emphasises that the meaning of this concept is rooted in the ordinary situations in which it is used, and that this is clearly misunderstood so often in philosophy when, for example, someone insists that there must be *something* accompanying a cry of pain (*Ibid.* 692). This is an example of what she refers to as a 'false move', revealing 'false imagination' on the part of the philosopher who is in the grip of a picture that makes it look as if Wittgenstein, by emphasising the importance of expressive pain behaviour, is *denying* that others *really* feel pain, when the point at issue is simply that their actually *feeling* pain is expressed in these contexts in which the concept is properly *used*.

While Savickey's paper is mostly expository, Marie McGinn covers similar ground by exploring 'Grammar in the *Philosophical Investigations*', at the same time taking issue with what

she regards as Peter Hacker's inadequate characterisation of Wittgenstein's method in 'overcoming the picture of thought as a remarkable act of mind' (*Ibid.* 660), an account which she feels cannot really capture the true significance of Wittgenstein's achievement:

We need to look in another dimension, the one which is invoked by the interpretation of the distinction between surface grammar and depth grammar that I want to recommend, and which sees Wittgenstein's grammatical investigations as having a focus which is quite other than that suggested by Hacker's picture of a concern to tabulate an intricate network of grammatical rules that are alleged to fix a word's place in the symbolism (*Ibid.* 660).

So, for Marie McGinn's Wittgenstein, we overcome the temptation to see mental states as having special representational powers that words alone cannot have, by drawing our attention to the quite ordinary circumstances in which we are trained to use words like 'thinking', 'expecting', and 'intending'. On this view, following Gordon Baker and his reasons for breaking with the B & H partnership, she sees the notion of achieving a *perspicuous representation* of some expression, in quite a different way from Peter Hacker: not as a means of outlining a tabulation of rules for its use which delimit the bounds of sense and so prevent metaphysical nonsense, but as a means of drawing our attention to the ordinary circumstances in which a concept is used in order to undermine in specific cases the philosophical problems that arise when philosophers are in the grip of a picture which they find it difficult to forego. This clearly connects with Beth Savickey's treatment of *pain*, where the (philosophical) temptation to think of it as a hidden inner process 'behind' another's behaviour gives rise to a philosophical *problem* which is recognised to be illusory when we appreciate the significance of expressive pain behaviour, and so again of how terms for pain in the first and third person are differently *used*. The resolution of the philosophical problem in *this* case, McGinn would regard as only one example that illustrates the distinction between *surface grammar* and *depth grammar* (*Ibid.* 657).

Still within the 'Method' category, Oskari Kuusela in 'The Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy', explores the way in which Wittgenstein throughout his philosophical life tackles the same 'fundamental confusion' that philosophy is involved in, albeit that in the *Tractatus* he is still party himself to aspects of that confusion that later on he deals with through methodological change. The basic question is whether the necessities concerning the nature of reality that the philosopher has traditionally been involved in 'discovering' can be the object of true or false statements, and in stark contrast with the tradition, Wittgenstein initially identifies a confusion between internal and external relations that the traditional philosopher fails to recognise, one which sees him 'misunderstanding the logic of language' (*Ibid.* 599) by regarding as 'assertions' what can only be 'shown':

For this in effect is what treating necessary or essential characteristics as if they were on a par with the accidental and contingent amounts to. Similarly, if Wittgenstein were trying to put forward theoretical assertions about what can and cannot be said, he would himself fall into the very confusion of which he seeks to convict others' (*Ibid.* 600).

On Kuusela's view, Wittgenstein is introducing a method of analysis that enables him to respect the distinction between what can and cannot be said; but any thought that this method can be *justified* is nonsensical, involving a relapse to the traditional ideal of philosophy's attainments that Wittgenstein is rejecting (*Ibid.*). This realisation that necessities cannot be the objects of factual statements is for Kuusela a fundamental principle of both the earlier and the later philosophy, where Wittgenstein takes the main problem with metaphysics to lie in its inability to distinguish between factual and conceptual investigations. However, as Wittgenstein's later criticisms of the *Tractatus* reveal, his earlier comprehension of philosophy as an activity of clarification rather than of discovery of necessary truths was inadequate, because he was party to a dogmatism that still made it look as if it were 'discoveries' of some unique (philosophical) kind that were the objects of his enquiries. This dogmatism manifests itself in the *Tractatus* through his tendency to see himself as having revealed 'the hidden essence of propositions', and in his claim, for example, that the proposition is a *picture* of

reality, a claim he later on might still have thought to be illuminating, but only *for certain purposes*:

.....central to Wittgenstein's development is the evolution of his comprehension of the status of philosophical models, not a switch from one model to another or from one conception of language to another. The old models too may still serve us well, if put into an undogmatic use as objects of comparison (*Ibid.* 616).

Just as the papers by Beth Savickey and Marie McGinn complement each other, the same might be said for those by Oskari Kuusela and James Conant. Conant wishes to dispute what he regards as 'the standard narrative of Wittgenstein's philosophical development' which sees 'the one really significant break in his philosophical development' occurring in 1929 on his return to Cambridge, at which point 'the early Wittgenstein' is replaced by 'the later Wittgenstein', an individual whose 'primary mission in life is thought to have been that of prosecuting a merciless criticism of the ideas of the early Wittgenstein' (*Ibid.* 621).

.....I will accordingly distinguish between an early Wittgenstein who died in or around 1929, a middle Wittgenstein who was born in or around 1929 with his return to Cambridge but passed away sometime in the neighbourhood of his extended sojourn in Norway in or around 1937, and a later Wittgenstein who was born in or around 1937 and who died in 1951 (*Ibid.* 634).

Whilst most readers will probably react to these claims with the thought that Conant is rather exaggerating the hold of the 'standard model' on us if we consider the amount of scholarly attention that has now been given to Wittgenstein's work in the early and middle 1930's, he is eager to point out that one of his aims is to draw our attention to certain 'commonalities in the thought of Early and Middle Wittgenstein which jointly constitute a central focus of critique in the work of the Later Wittgenstein'; and these can be easily missed on the so-called 'standard model' (*Ibid.*), a model

that distorts our perception of the kinds of criticism of his earlier work beginning in 1937. In short, the break with the *Tractatus* took place gradually, and Conant identifies the differences between sections §§ 89 - 133 of the *Philosophical Investigations* and how these passages appear in their original form in the 'Philosophy' section of *The Big Typescript*, as one way of illustrating how, during this period, Wittgenstein's outlook evolved. Conant's Early Wittgenstein's conception of 'the logic of our language' gives way to the Middle Wittgenstein's 'plurality of logical grammars', prior to being overcome by the Later Wittgenstein's conception of methods when doing philosophy, methods that on Conant's view allow for a recognition of the extent to which Middle Wittgenstein only gradually relinquished the metaphysical commitments of the *Tractatus*.

Avner Baz in 'Aspect Perception and Philosophical Difficulty' intends to trace a new line of thought, 'staying away from old controversies' as much as possible (*Ibid.* 697), concerning the well-known topic of aspect perception. He finds *philosophically* interesting a move within the *Brown Book* from reflection upon how we ought to conceive of our mental states and processes, to the topic of aspect perception, noting that it is in this context that Wittgenstein's first *sustained* engagement with this subject takes place. Yet this is said against a background in which Wittgenstein's pursuit of clarity about aspect perception required many years of work and hundreds of remarks that never gave rise to 'anything like a satisfying conclusion' (*Ibid.* 701).

Baz nevertheless argues that '...Wittgenstein comes to the topic of aspect perception in an attempt to say something about the nature and source of a certain type of difficulty that arises when we "do philosophy"' (*Ibid.* 702). This is clearly at odds with the thinking of many philosophers who have tended to regard aspect perception as little more than a peculiar psychological phenomenon with no genuine philosophical interest, and this inevitably leads them to question why Wittgenstein should even have spent so much time on it. Baz's answer at least seems clear:

Let me emphasize that the question under dispute is not whether aspect-dawning may be described as a type of *experience*. The question is rather what *sort of* an experience it is, or how we should *conceive* of it.

And my aim, in invoking the aspect-denier, has only been to show the futility of trying to answer *this* question by means of attending to what happens in or to us when we enjoy this type of experience (*Ibid.* 709).

So how is the question to be answered ? Baz replies by inviting us to think of the aspect-blind person as someone who simply fails to see the *point* of a *language-game* in which we invite him to *see* what we see, even although in looking at the object he fails to *see* the aspect that is engaging us, so that ‘what seeing comes to in this case is not to be discovered by focusing on an enacted or remembered instance of aspect perception’. Instead, what seeing amounts to in these cases ‘is to be found by reminding ourselves of how “seeing” is used when it is used to express, and speak of, the seeing of an aspect’ (*Ibid.* 711). Just how satisfactory Baz ought to find this reply, however, is another question, an indication that the exploratory nature of this paper is a pointer to the amount of further work on these issues that still requires to be done (1).

The final paper in the *Method* category, Joel Backstrom’s ‘Wittgenstein and the Moral Dimension of Philosophical Problems’, explores the extent to which Wittgenstein regarded the problems of philosophy not, or not merely as intellectual puzzles, but as questions which require a change in the philosopher’s personal orientation if they are to be answered or even dissolved. This again relates to that well-known statement that their ‘solution’ is often a matter of the will rather than of the intellect (*Culture and Value*, 17e). Backstrom provides a very thorough treatment of the issue, relating it, for example, to the age-old perception of philosophy as a desire for self-knowledge, a knowledge that Wittgenstein almost inevitably understood to be difficult to achieve if human beings are deeply embedded in conventional, socially conditioned modes of thinking and response, a point discussed originally by G.H. von Wright (2). Indeed, how uncomfortable, and even terrifying, he found the very prospect of attaining self-knowledge in these circumstances (*Ibid.* 730).

Despite his questionable understanding of Wittgensteinian ‘therapy’ as person specific (*Ibid.* 734, Footnote 4), Backstrom nevertheless argues that Wittgenstein’s focus is not on the fully

developed philosophical theories that result from sophisticated argument, but on those first steps which escape notice because we find ourselves already committed to a particular way of looking at things (*Ibid.* 738), a way governed by our adherence to preconceptions, pictures and analogies that lie behind our thinking. Whilst this conclusion would be generally accepted, Backstrom uses it to bolster his claim that, according to Wittgenstein, 'the confusions in our philosophizing are connected through these "proto-philosophical" pictures etc. with widely ramified confusions in our lives'. This claim he supports by quoting the 'immensely manifold connections' and 'deeply rooted tendencies' to be deceived that are manifested in our thinking; and Wittgenstein cannot surely be implying that these appear *only* when doing philosophy? (*Ibid.*, 739).

Backstrom continues by asking how philosophical confusions might be intertwined with difficulties in everyday life, and in section '4. Love and Evasion' he invites us to consider confusion about love. It may be argued, however, that the kinds of questions and answers that may very well be given in *this* field (Cf. 'What is happiness' ?), where the issue is often that of reflecting upon the kinds of situations in which the concept may be said to be satisfied, and not that of simply finding what it *means*, are not related to the roles played by the *pictures* underlying the confusions encountered when doing *philosophy*.

The discussion takes another turn in '5. Philosophy as Critique of its Times' where Cavell is quoted as someone who draws our attention to unnoticed and unassessed 'climates of opinion' that include the kinds of cultural presuppositions targeted by Wittgenstein (*Ibid.* 742). This is so especially in that famous passage quoted in '6. Courage Without Heroism' where people are said to be embedded in philosophical confusions: the inclination to think in a certain way actually rests with the *herd* who have created this language as its proper expression, so that the only method of avoiding these forms of thinking is to be in rebellion against language (*Philosophical Occasions*, 185, quoted *Ibid.* 744). This leads Backstrom to ask how one can discover self-deception in oneself for, quoting Wittgenstein's claim that nothing is so difficult as not deceiving oneself (*Ibid.* 750), it would appear that this cannot be something that by its very nature can be easy to achieve. In this respect,

it requires the same *kind* of reorientation in one's thinking that is captured in the thought that what is at issue is a matter of the will rather than of the intellect. In *that* sense, what one suddenly 'sees' or 'grasps', perhaps for the first time, cannot involve (purely) intellectual considerations.

There is only one essay in this book on Wittgenstein's understanding of natural religion, that by Stephen Mulhall, whose 'Wittgenstein on Religious Belief' begins by drawing our attention to the remarkable paucity of material on this subject within Wittgenstein's own writings, as distinct from the by now rather extensive secondary literature inspired by what he is interpreted as having said in these relatively few passages. Mulhall initially considers the charge of 'fideism' made by Kai Nielsen against Wittgenstein's followers on this topic: fideism regards religious modes of discourse, like the modes of discourse employed in the sciences or, for that matter, in the arts, as having their own internal criteria of rationality and intelligibility, so that they are from the outset immune from external criticism. Mulhall instead endorses the view that there is nothing in Wittgenstein's conception of *grammar* to justify the conclusion that religious belief does not 'encourage immorality, political and social discrimination, cultural primitivism, and barbarism, to name but a few of the more familiar objections to which religions are heir' (*Ibid.*, 759). He also cites (legitimate) internal modes of criticism like 'superstition' and 'heresy', so that the charges against 'fideism' are in *this* respect valid:

Accordingly, a criterion for properly understanding his remarks is the realization that they are in a certain sense self-subverting - that their apparently prohibitive intention is in fact nothing of the kind, and that they leave everything precisely as it was for those who wish to criticize any given mode of discourse or form of life (*Ibid.*)

Adoption of religious faith, however, is hardly a matter to be decided *a priori* (*Ibid.* 760), and it would be quite wrong to suggest in any event that the failure of any standard arguments for the existence of God must lead to an abandonment of religious faith, if faith is not itself dependent on their validity. If we are already willing to make a distinction between the deliverances of reason and the deliverances of faith, then, as Mulhall puts it when discussing Malcolm's treatment of Anselm's

ontological argument, '...what at first seems to be an exposition of a deductively valid argument for religious belief turns out in the end to articulate a chain of reasoning that can only be properly understood, let alone endorsed, from the perspective of faith' (*Ibid.* 764). Yet Mulhall regards theological language itself as something that is 'essentially self-subverting': 'the repeated collapse of its affirmations into complete disorder is its mode of order - it is, one might say, the only way these language-games should be played' (*Ibid.* 768). Mulhall concludes his paper by discussing Cora Diamond's treatment of the riddle involved in Anselm's concept of 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived', a phrase which can never be fully transparent to us on the grounds that if this were to have a meaning we could *fully* grasp, then we would really be conceiving of something greater than the phrase describes (*Ibid.* 771). Whilst Mulhall is certainly investigating a particular strand in the literature on religious belief in this paper, these scholastic overtones will inevitably serve to render it rather less interesting as an account of Wittgenstein on religion for those readers (3), who are more interested in Wittgenstein's discussions about religious experiences and practices.

Paucity of available remarks also affects 'Wittgenstein on Aesthetics', a paper by Malcolm Budd that is extracted from his book of *Aesthetic Essays* (Oxford, 2008). In fact, the *Tractatus* boasts only one remark about ethics, 'Ethics and aesthetics are one' (6.421), and they are one because both subjects concern absolute value that lies beyond the world of facts, the only world that can be the subject of propositions. Consequently, the *Tractatus* has nothing to say about aesthetics, although Budd is able to piece together some scattered remarks from the *Notebooks 1914 - 1916* that express the idea that contemplation of a work of art involves a mystical experience of wonder at the intrinsically absolute value of the object, a value that cannot be captured in words (*Ibid.*, 777).

More material is available on Wittgenstein's later thoughts about aesthetics including notes about the well-known 1938 *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (Blackwell Pub. 1966), lectures from 1932-33 and various scattered remarks throughout his writings. So Budd's main aim is to piece these together. We are told, for example, that aesthetic appreciation is not a matter of what gives pleasure to the viewer or listener, and can only be appreciated from within

the specific cultural context that gives rise to the work. The question of what it is to play or listen to music with understanding, is said to be the main issue that concerns Wittgenstein, and here § 527 of the *Investigations* tells us that understanding a sentence is much more akin to understanding a theme in music than one may think (*Ibid.* 784). Wittgenstein also draws the comparison between the musical theme and a gesture which can express a similar character, a comparison that Budd identifies as one of the main reasons why Wittgenstein took psychological experiments or causal investigations to be irrelevant to aesthetics (*Ibid.* 787). The autonomy of the value of art is in this respect central to Wittgenstein's thinking.

Since 'ethics and aesthetics are one', it must appear that much the same can be said about ethics as about aesthetics, and Anne Marie S. Christensen in 'Wittgenstein and Ethics', begins by presenting Wittgenstein as someone who was extremely critical of philosophers' attempts to discuss the subject of ethics, so that 'whether intuitive knowledge exists, whether values exist, whether the good is definable' become the 'claptrap about ethics' mentioned by Wittgenstein in conversation with the Vienna Circle. Throughout his life he was not interested in providing any kind of explanatory theory about ethics, although in his *Lecture on Ethics* he emphasises what he takes to be important about ethics by describing it as an enquiry into what is valuable, into the meaning of life, into what makes life worth living or into the right way of living (*Ibid.* 798).

So there is, according to Christensen, a significant difference between the *Tractatus* view that propositions of ethics are impossible, and what Wittgenstein later on says concerning ethics as a subject which clarifies what we are doing in using words from an ethical point of view (*Ibid.* 797), and this turns it into a subject that discusses the very 'possibility of relating to the world in a way that establishes distinctions between what we find important and unimportant, valuable and neutral, right and wrong' (*Ibid.* 799). In any attempt to live a human life, therefore, the question of the meaning of life inevitably arises, although Wittgenstein is not in the business of providing it with an answer, as distinct from revealing its role within an ethical context. According to Christensen, ethics for Wittgenstein is the activity of establishing a framework for a meaningful life, so that it must

require a personal commitment to certain ways of living (*Ibid.* 810), a point made within a section of the paper headed 'Ethics is Personal'. Consequently, the earlier 'ineffability' of ethics as a subject which could not be talked about because any attempt to do so would result in 'running against the boundaries of language' or 'against the walls of our cage', is replaced by a conception of ethics compelling us to see that 'our relationship to other people represents a precondition for any true understanding of ethics as well as of ourselves' (*Ibid.* 815). This, according to Christensen, allows us to draw the conclusion that in the *Philosophical Investigations*, as distinct from in the *Tractatus*, the later 'dialogical style', represents an acknowledgement of the fact that the kind of clarification or 'liberation' that we seek 'is best achieved through cooperation, through the realization that others may also have relevant contributions to offer' (*Ibid.* 816).

Unlike the three papers on *Religion, Aesthetics, Ethics* which concern themselves with subjects about which Wittgenstein has relatively little to say, the three papers listed under the category of *Epistemology* are concerned almost exclusively with the content of *On Certainty*. The debate is opened by Duncan Pritchard who, in 'Wittgenstein on Scepticism', focusses on this work, albeit that he sees the issue of scepticism informing all of Wittgenstein's writings, including the remarks on solipsism in the *Tractatus* and in his *Investigations* treatment of rule following. Pritchard outlines his interpretation of one of the most important features of *On Certainty* by regarding claims to know as ways of resolving doubt, with the consequence that the supporting reasons for these claims must always be more *certain* than what is claimed to be known. In the same way, claims to *doubt* what one knows must always be more *certain* than the content of the knowledge claim, otherwise the doubt would fail to be justified.

This is just the familiar point that claims to know or to doubt such and such are always made within particular contexts of use, so that what we are *most certain* of, yet have no genuinely supporting reasons for, the Moore-like claims about having two hands or about never having been on the Moon, cannot be legitimately claimed to be either doubted or known. Claims of this kind, when they are given the role of 'hinges' in a strictly philosophical context, are not being 'used' for a practical purpose to make ordinary knowledge claims.

In this respect, the concept of the hinge-proposition is the result of a *philosophical* assessment of our ordinary talk about *knowing that*, one that is surely intended, as Pritchard argues (*Ibid.*, 531), to undercut the thought that our ordinary claims to knowledge can be the subject of what he refers to as the kind of 'general epistemic evaluation' envisioned by the sceptic. Wittgenstein succeeds in doing this by revealing that our ordinary practices are completely *disassociated* (*Ibid.*) from the sceptical picture which makes it seem that evaluations of this kind can be made. There is, however, a price to be paid for adopting this line, a price that Pritchard finds unacceptable if one is forced to claim that hinges are *non-propositional*. Throughout *On Certainty* Wittgenstein constantly speaks of the Moorean-type claims as propositional in character, even if they are then treated as *norms* rather than as ordinary knowledge claims, a view that Pritchard finds rather more agreeable than the entirely non-propositional account.

After discussing certain epistemic readings of hinge-propositions, with a particular concentration on the work of Michael Williams, Pritchard remains haunted by the following idea: 'that we are unable to claim to know these propositions which we are most certain of clearly does require a radical revision in our conception of the epistemic landscape, especially as this constraint also impacts upon sceptical counterclaims' (*Ibid.* 547). Pritchard nevertheless concludes that it is only if we accept that 'our practice of offering grounds presupposes a framework of ungrounded certainties' that the debate between the sceptic and the anti-sceptic can be undermined, and for that reason alone, he finds that a recognition of Wittgenstein's insights concerning this issue is a necessary prelude to the development of an anti-sceptical epistemology (*Ibid.*).

In 'Wittgenstein and Moore', Thomas Baldwin provides an engaging historical overview of Wittgenstein's relationship with Moore. This is combined with an assessment of the writings of Moore and Malcolm as they impacted on Wittgenstein, providing him with the catalyst that set him thinking about those questions discussed in that exciting series of unrevised short notes that were eventually given the title of *On Certainty*. Here, according to Baldwin, one is able to listen to a Wittgenstein who is thinking out loud for a period of two years towards the end of his life on the

topics of knowledge and certainty. As Baldwin rightly says, what we are provided with is a text that, warts and all, makes up for its lack of structure and coherence by the freshness and originality of its thinking.

In his treatment of Moore's claims to knowledge, Malcolm comes out rather well in Baldwin's account, for what Malcolm says seems barely distinguishable from Wittgenstein's own assessment of these same claims, *viz.*, that Moore's claims to knowledge (*Ibid.* 554) are made outwith any ordinary contexts of use, and for that reason fail to satisfy the criterion that to know something requires explaining how one knows as a means of resolving doubt. Baldwin provides a blow-by-blow account of the four parts of *On Certainty*, and draws close attention to the gradual development of Wittgenstein's ideas. When, for example, in § 136 he refers to Moore's claims as enumerations of empirical propositions that are affirmed without special testing, claims that play a 'peculiar logical role' in the system of our empirical propositions, or when, using that famous metaphor concerning the bed of the river in §§ 96 - 99, he captures the idea that basic aspects of our understanding of what holds fast for us in our picture of the world can be modified through time, we know that we are at the heart of *On Certainty*.

'Whether I know something depends on whether the evidence backs me up or contradicts me' (*On Certainty* § 504). Yet Moore's claims are not made in circumstances where this criterion applies, and this, as Baldwin puts it, 'detaches them from the kind of context in which they would be unproblematic' (*Ibid.* 566). So, in § 347, Wittgenstein reflects that 'I know that that's a tree' is puzzling until an ordinary context occurs to him in which this statement would be genuinely informative. In § 622, however, he reflects on exactly the same subject in the following way:

But now it is also correct to use 'I know' in the contexts which Moore mentioned, at least *in particular circumstances*.....For each one of these sentences I can imagine circumstances that turn it into a move in one of our ordinary language-games, and by that it loses everything that is philosophically astonishing (*Ibid.* as quoted).

This suggests that *in particular circumstances*, Moore's claims have a proper application

where they have no intended *philosophical* role of the kind that he attributes to them. Baldwin presents this point by saying that ‘once claims to knowledge are brought down to earth by considering their role in our actual language-games, Moore’s claims are no longer philosophically astonishing and there is no longer any reason to reject them’ (*Ibid.* 568 and Footnote 12). Yet he uses this as a reason for *disagreeing* with ‘the widespread view that in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein holds that Moore’s claims to knowledge are incorrect’. This ‘widespread view’, however, is simply that the only ‘particular circumstances’ in which Moore’s claims to know could conceivably be genuine, and could therefore be playing a role in our ordinary language-games, are circumstances *other* than those in which Moore is using them; because the way he does use them is, on Wittgenstein’s reading, a clear misuse of ‘I know’. This ‘widespread view’, in short, a view which is clearly Wittgenstein’s own, is not one which would *deny* that claims to know such and such can be brought down to earth by considering their use in ordinary language-games. It is therefore difficult to see why Baldwin should wish to draw a conclusion which, in the final analysis, misrepresents the ‘widespread view’ by appearing to claim that it applies to cases that, as Wittgenstein himself clearly argues, are evidently genuine uses of ‘I know’.

In the last paper of the *Epistemology* group, ‘Wittgenstein on Intuition, Rule-following and Certainty: Exchanges with Brower and Russell’, Kim van Gennip uncovers a close connection between Wittgenstein’s early 1930’s critique of Brower’s notion of intuition, and his later account of certainty in *On Certainty*. She claims that one reason this connection has been missed is that Rhees did not include in his editing of ‘Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness’, already recognised as a precursor to the later account of certainty, the remarks on mathematics that would have made the connection only too obvious (*Ibid.* 591). A quote from Wittgenstein’s 1939 *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics* reveals his objection to intuitionism as the view that we require an *intuition* at each step in a calculation, something that we might as well call a *decision* (Wittgenstein as quoted *Ibid.* 590), a point that clearly recalls the rule-following remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Furthermore, Wittgenstein criticises Russell’s account in his 1937 ‘The Limits of Empiricism’ of the distinction he makes between ‘the purely visual’ and the activity of classification which we bring to perception, arguing instead that the many different ways in which we talk about ‘seeing’ reveals that this is not

a compound of a 'purely visual' element and something else. This connects with his criticism of Russell's account of causation as something of which we are 'immediately aware', when instead we *react* to the cause. The limitations of Russell's empiricism, for Wittgenstein, are shown in the need for indubitable premises based on immediate experience, when what is really at stake, methodologically, is our role as agents in a common world of cause and effect. For van Gennip this reveals (*Ibid.*, 578) 'a fundamental disagreement on their outlook on epistemology in general'. This is another engaging paper, one that successfully weaves together various historical strands that point towards a continuity in Wittgenstein's thinking on these topics.

In 'Private Language' in the *Philosophy of Language* category, David Stern provides a historical overview of the secondary literature concerning a topic that 'has received more attention than any other aspect of his philosophy' (*Ibid.* 333). From the early 1954 debate between A.J. Ayer and Rush Rhees, together with the initial reviews of the *Philosophical Investigations* by Norman Malcolm and Peter Strawson, allied to which were papers by Judith Jarvis Thomson and Anthony Kenny on the private language argument and its connection to the verification principle, the literature developed along lines which saw philosophers taking opposing sides in an evolving debate: Rhees, Malcolm and Kenny were very much in favour of the validity of what they took to be Wittgenstein's 'argument', and Ayer, Strawson and Thomson were in varying degrees against what they saw as his 'conclusions'. Yet all of these philosophers had their own presuppositions, and these determined their acceptance or rejection of what, on Stern's view, was generally regarded as a deductive *reductio ad absurdum* argument having wide-ranging implications for analytic philosophy (*Ibid.* 334). Ayer, for example, found himself agreeing with Wittgenstein that there could not be what he called 'a logically private language', as defined in § 243, albeit that he was prepared to argue that a 'Robinson Crusoe' from birth would be capable of developing a language for himself that he would be able to teach to others.

These 'Orthodox' readings of Wittgenstein, as Stern presents them, suffered something of a setback in 1982 with Saul Kripke's 'Communitarian' interpretation of Wittgenstein's thinking, one that gave a new prominence to the paradox stated in § 201 and his 'sceptical solution' to it that already

ruled out the possibility of a private language, with the consequence that § 243 onwards came to be seen, by those influenced by Kripke, as little more than a 'mopping-up' operation confirming what had already been revealed earlier on in the book. Yet, as Stern convincingly argues, quoting Fogelin and Candlish (*Ibid.*, 337), the interpretative tradition, new or old, has always been in danger of quarrying the text for remarks that support a particular viewpoint, discarding those that would appear not to fit certain preconceptions. Instead of clearly presenting the opposing views in this debate before evaluating their relative strengths and weaknesses, the tendency has been to identify a 'promising strand' in the debate that can presumably be related to what is said in §§ 243 - 315, one that is taken to conclusively show that some version of the 'private language argument' is very much alive in certain famous passages, notably §§ 256 - 258, § 265, § 270 and § 293.

Stern's own view is that the issues are far more complex than this would suggest, because it is the very nature of Wittgenstein's method to explore possibilities *via* varying 'voices' in the narrative, none of which we are entitled unequivocally to identify with his own. Furthermore, if the text is interpreted along 'Pyrrhonian' lines, so that the so-called arguments within the book are actually being undermined in the course of reading through it, with the consequence that the very idea of a private language falls apart or collapses from within, then we gain an entirely different perspective on Wittgenstein's thinking. As an example, Stern quotes Peter Hacker as a philosopher who produces a battery of sophisticated arguments against the idea of a private language, an idea which we therefore must grasp fully if we are to prove its illegitimacy, whilst simultaneously leaving us with the impression that the very idea of such a language is a delusion or misconception, in which case there can really be nothing about it to understand.

In this regard, Stern finds Gordon Baker's new reading of Wittgenstein on private language congenial, even if a little extreme in its rejection of argument in the *Investigations*, so that Baker's late work is 'perhaps best understood as a polemical recoil from detailed Hackerian exegesis' (*Ibid.* 345). Whilst the temptation amongst most earlier commentators was to read § 258, surely the most argued over passage in the book, as part of a 'subtle chain of reasoning' to convince us that 'a language only

I can understand' is impossible, because there can be no criterion of correctness to tell whether words are being used in this context rightly or wrongly, what we are subtly being led to understand instead is that having or not having such a criterion is the very notion that has no genuine meaning.

Just as David Stern's paper is almost inevitably going to throw light on others within the separate category of *Philosophy of Mind*, Lars Hertzberg's 'Very General Facts of Nature', also within *The Philosophy of Language* category, has much in common with those papers concerned with the topics discussed within the *Epistemology* group. Quoting *Philosophical Investigations* § 415, in which Wittgenstein states that what he is really doing is to supply remarks on the natural history of human beings, observations that no one has doubted, but which escape notice because they are always before our eyes, Hertzberg identifies Wittgenstein's concern with the way in which 'the language we speak is contingent on the circumstances of our lives' (*Ibid.* 351). This, he believes, is an aspect of Wittgenstein's thinking that has been underplayed in the literature, and underplayed even by Wittgenstein himself. The first quoted remark is closely connected to another from *Investigations* (II, xii), in which Wittgenstein states that if anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones, 'then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him' (*Ibid.* 352).

The point is elaborated upon in *Investigations* § 142, where it is said that if there were no characteristic expressions of pain, fear or joy, our normal language-games would lose their point; and this concentration on the sheer contingency of the ordinary surroundings which we take wholly for granted, is stressed in *On Certainty* §§ 513 -14, where reference is made to the *possibility* that something really *unheard-of* might take place, like houses turning into steam *etc.* (*Ibid.* 355). A similar example occurs again in *Investigations* § 80, where an ordinary chair suddenly disappears from sight only to reappear, and so on, and the moral of this story is that we do not give up the use of the word 'chair' just because we are not prepared for every possible contingency in which we may wish still to use it. It is also suggested that even our ability to carry out mathematical operations is dependent

on certain contingent facts of nature, like the reliability of pen and paper, although Wittgenstein denies that what he is saying is that the certainty of mathematics is *based* on this reliability. The idea that Wittgenstein is in some way suggesting something like this has caused consternation amongst believers in the autonomy of mathematics. The genuine point, however, is rather that what has to be accepted, the given, is *forms of life* (*Ibid.*, as quoted 359). As Hertzberg puts it:

The point is that what we consider to be ‘the certainty of mathematics’ is not something laid down in the nature of mathematical concepts themselves, but is ultimately an expression of the place calculations have in our lives. In this way, what we know as ‘mathematics’ is also dependent on very general facts of nature (*Ibid.*).

Hertzberg goes on to connect the significance of these ‘very general facts of nature’ with Wittgenstein’s concentration on our ‘primitive responses’ as human beings, and these responses come to prominence in two special contexts, one in which we learn the use of psychological expressions, particularly when being introduced to the language of pain, and the other in which we come to understand causality. The immediate reference here is ‘Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness’ and the appeal to the fact that we *react* to the cause. *On Certainty* § 475 speaks of man as an animal in a primitive state and of the fact that language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination, a point reflected in *Investigations* § 244 where reference is made to the possibility that words are connected with the natural, primitive expressions of sensation and used in their place. Hertzberg sees a danger, however, if the attempt is made to explain the formation of concepts in the minds of individual speakers, instead of describing the development of the use of words in human interchange (*Ibid.* 368):

On the one hand, there is the account in the early parts of the *Philosophical Investigations*, emphasizing the way in which a speaker’s responses are brought into agreement with that of the community, but leaving out of the account what it means

for her to make language her own; on the other hand, there are the remarks in 'Cause and Effect' bringing the natural responses of the individual into focus, but leaving out the ways in which those responses come to play a part in a shared language (*Ibid.* 369).

But what does it mean for her 'to make language her own', other than for her to actually learn to use it in communication with others? And what does it mean to bring those natural responses of the individual into focus, unless they are the responses of an individual within a community with similar responses? These after all are the facts of the case, even if the ghost of the 'Born Crusoe' still remains with us, no matter how his 'possibility' might be discussed. Hertzberg's difficulty may be illusory. Nevertheless, he sees the way in which Wittgenstein relates the use of language by human beings both to general facts of nature and to the way it is connected to the lives we actually live, as something 'that sets him apart from the mainstream of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century' (*Ibid.* 369). Hertzberg finally asks whether, for this reason, Wittgenstein ought to be regarded as a naturalist, and this surely cannot be the case based on the prominent idea of a naturalist as someone who claims 'that there is no clear-cut divide between the methods of philosophy and those of empirical science' (*Ibid.* 369). However, in a much wider sense, which Hertzberg does not explore, Wittgenstein has often been compared to Hume in this regard, even allowing for the manifest differences in their outlooks both on the sciences, viewed from a historical perspective, and on the function of philosophy in general.

In 'The Life of the Sign *Rule Following, Practice and Agreement*' Edward Minar provides a perceptive overview of Wittgenstein's notion of *agreement* as it functions in those passages dealing with the following of a rule, remarking that it is both artificial and misleading to separate his remarks about philosophy and his approaches to it, from his engagement with specific conceptual confusions. Minar gets underway by investigating why it is that Wittgenstein's exploration of the notions of *thinking*, *meaning* and *understanding* play such an important role in his becoming clear about his former idea that

we *construct* ideal languages (*Investigations* § 81). As he says himself, it was because he was not clear about this that he was led 'to think that if anyone utters a sentence and *means* or *understands* it he is operating a calculus according to definite rules' (Wittgenstein as quoted *Ibid.* 278). According to Minar, Wittgenstein's 'treatment of rule-following is a sustained deconstruction of a model of meaning based on a picture of the "hardness of the logical must" (PI § 437)'. This picture of some super causal mechanism underlying and making possible our ordinary practices 'inclines us, quite systematically, to look everywhere but in our lives, to search inside and behind and beneath and upward, for the sort of satisfaction we think we need, something that would address the alleged (but in fact quite unspecified) threat of arbitrariness' (*Ibid.* 279).

It is primarily because of this that agreement, for Minar, is part of the *grammar* of rule following, an aspect rather than a precondition of our practices (*Ibid.*, 280), so that a 'restoration of the surroundings of our everyday traffic with rules' (*Ibid.* 286) is what enables us to realise that the 'very ground of rule-following' cannot really be conditional, in our *philosophical* thinking, upon whether *interpreting* a rule leaves room for doubt. When questions of interpretation do arise in particular cases, they pose quite ordinary problems and not problems of a philosophical nature. The entire 'skeptical dialectic' discussed by Minar dissolves when we return to the 'rough ground' of those quite ordinary practices in which we can find no grounding for a general 'justificatory problem' about how to follow rules. As Minar puts it, only when we consider the sign itself as dead do we become perplexed about the need for 'extraordinary measures' to close the gap between the sign and an explanation of its role, a role that in our philosophical thinking we are tempted to conclude can be 'interpreted' in many different ways. But 'interpretation itself cannot determine meaning' (*Investigations* § 198).

Agreement then, as this suggests, is part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (*Investigations* § 240, *Ibid.* 290), although this evokes a worrying element of contingency that harks back to the issues discussed by Hertzberg. This worrying element in our thinking about agreement, *viz.*, that it 'seems to abolish logic' (*Ibid.* 291), is reflected in our tendency

to ask how something so seemingly ephemeral can play such an important role in grounding 'the laws of thought' ? The answer given is that the fact of normativity is illustrated in what we do, in following *these* rules, in coming to *these* conclusions, a point captured in the famous claim that the logical 'must' is a component part of the propositions of logic, and these are certainly not propositions about the natural history of human beings (*Ibid.* 292). There can be little doubt that Minar manages to capture a distinctively Wittgensteinian outlook in his discussion of these issues.

Barry Stroud in 'Meaning and Understanding' is concerned with the Wittgensteinian thought that 'one cannot use language to get outside language', and he sees the 'implications of these middle-period reflections on the impossibility of understanding language and meaning "from outside"', illustrated extensively in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In particular, developing an arithmetical series is a striking example of the 'fundamental point' Wittgenstein wishes to draw our attention to when discussing meaning and understanding; and this is that no matter how many numbers the person has written, and no matter what rule it may appear that he is actually following, 'the numbers written on the page up to any given point could still be viewed, in Wittgenstein's phrase, "from outside" any implication of the pupil's having understood the instructions in some particular way' (*Ibid.* 300). So in *Investigations* § 198, it is asked how the rule can show how one is to go on at *this* point, if *anything* that one does do can be interpreted as following some rule or other. Stroud continues by mentioning the enormous body of commentary that followed Kripke's treatment of this question (*Ibid.* 303).

He also mentions what has now become the commonplace that the second half of § 202 points to the 'misunderstanding' involved in this way of thinking, because we are, in practice, perfectly clear about what it is to follow the rule 'plus 2', so it is not intended that this should *mean* that after counting to 1000, the pupil could follow some *other* rule. This platitude is just what is implied by the claim that grasping the rule is ordinarily captured in what we refer to as 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases. Stroud expresses the point by saying that from 'inside language' we say what rule is being followed or what words mean (*Ibid.* 305), and 'there is

nothing else to be understood or interpreted other than the words we utter'. From 'inside language' Stroud therefore implies that we grasp what is required from an engaged position of understanding *what* the rule is or *what* is meant by the word.

He then makes the significant point that one source of resistance to Wittgenstein's thought that meaning and understanding cannot be accounted for 'from outside' all language is that this seems to make it impossible for anyone to acquire a language in the first place. On Stroud's view, there is an aspiration by philosophers 'to explain language and meaning and understanding in general' (*Ibid.* 306), from 'outside language', and this is no doubt the source of the rather primitive idea that we must begin by having a 'language of thought' which our learnt vocabulary can latch onto. Stroud adopts the opposing view that we 'all start out with no linguistic competence and are brought to full mastery by training, interaction and socialization with those who speak and live as we come to do'. Quoting *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (VI, § 31), which states exactly this, Wittgenstein also goes on to say that the difficulty here rests in believing that there is more to explain, when what is required is a recognition that there is nothing to explain, only the *illusion* of a greater depth. It can be taken for granted that he is not here referring to any form of scientific explanation. Stroud ends by considering Wittgenstein's remark that it is impossible to describe the fact that corresponds to a sentence without simply repeating the sentence, a remark that is intriguingly followed by the claim that this is connected with the Kantian solution of the problem of philosophy. (*Ibid.* 309). Stroud glosses this as the claim that 'the facts of meaning and understanding can be understood only from *within* whatever meaning and understanding we are capable of'.

The idea that Wittgenstein's thinking might even be comparable to that of Kant is discussed in David R. Cerbone's 'Wittgenstein and Idealism', where the reasons for believing that Wittgenstein used certain concepts in a way that provides them with a suitably 'transcendentally idealistic' role is succinctly summarised at the beginning of his paper. This follows a choice of commentators who have believed, amongst many others, that Wittgenstein did give them this role, and these include G.E.M. Anscombe, David Bloor, Michael Forster, Jonathan Lear, Thomas Nagel and Bernard Williams:

Those who argue that Wittgenstein must in the end be some kind of idealist will cite, among other things, his appeal to 'forms of life', (either as diverse or ultimately and emphatically singular), his attention to the (alleged) constitutive role of, variously, our practices, community, or 'mindedness' in the formation of concepts, and his apparent dismissal of philosophical problems and questions as instances of speaking 'outside' of language-games (*Ibid.* 311).

Thomas Nagel is said to argue that Wittgenstein sets limits which imply that nothing that is meaningful can reach beyond the 'outer bounds of human experience and life', and Michael Forster claims that just as Kant describes the human mind's 'imposition of certain principles', Wittgenstein describes *diverse* human minds imposing *diverse* principles. Equally, whereas Kant's *noumenal* human nature constrains the human mind, Wittgenstein's *empirical* human nature allied to, or as expressed in 'social practices and traditions', performs a similar role. Generally speaking, it is Cerbone's case that these comparisons are highly misleading: rather than claim that 'the boundaries set by our human form of life' impose restrictions on what can intelligibly be said, he claims that it is Wittgenstein's aim to challenge the idea that these boundaries can be imposed at all (*Ibid.* 330). Just as we can construct new languages (*Zettel* § 325), the concept of a living being has the same indeterminacy as that of a language (*Zettel* § 326).

The difficulty here is that if we are to present the issues at stake in terms of a Kant who wishes to impose certain limits, as distinct from a Wittgenstein who wishes to liberate us from certain limits, then this would surely be inappropriate: it may very well be that the role performed by transcendental idealism in Kant's thinking is, in the final analysis, entirely compatible with Wittgenstein's *description* of our practices and of how our concepts are used within specific contexts as a means of revealing that they may be being *misused* by the philosopher who discovers difficulties with their application. After all, Kant wished, in the most general terms, to ground rather than simply to affirm or deny the

'validity' of our ordinary understanding of the world, of what we would 'ordinarily say', or of the kinds of concepts we use to say it.

By contrast, if we are willing instead to classify Wittgenstein as a naturalist in a rather wide sense, then the role of this naturalism within his philosophy is going to differ entirely from that given to it by Hume, who believes in 'the existence of body' *despite* his philosophical reasonings to the contrary. On the other hand, to say that Wittgenstein, unlike Hume, believes in 'the existence of body' without qualification would be equally misleading, since his point would be that the philosopher has construed the philosophical concept of *body* in such a way that it has led him to see it as open to question whether there *really* be body or not; and that statement is made entirely outwith the kinds of contexts in which we do indeed 'impose' roles upon the concepts that we apply to talk, say, about Austin's 'middle-sized dry goods'. The wide sense in which Wittgenstein may be construed as presenting a form of idealism *may* then be captured by saying that we are in a Kantian sense 'constrained' within our ordinary language - games to describe the world around us in this particular way. Or, if this appears to be going too far, we can simply point out, for example, that to describe it exclusively in some other way, *e.g.*, in terms of the activity of atomic particles, would be entirely out of keeping with the way in which we ordinarily experience it.

Still within the *Philosophy of Language* category, Cora Diamond in one of the longer papers in the book, begins by exploring the idea that resignation is required when reaching the limits of language, because we have at this juncture arrived at the point at which we recognise that there is something we *cannot* do. Quoting the *Big Typescript*, 310, which on the contrary states that this is the point at which satisfaction really comes about, because this notion of recognising that there is something we *cannot* do is actually confused, she develops these ideas by turning firstly to the notion associated with Wittgenstein that we make limits clear 'from inside'. In the famous letter to Ludwig von Ficker, for example, he states that the aim of the *Tractatus* is an ethical one, and in that book he draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the 'inside' as it were. One may be led to wonder how a publisher is supposed to respond to the idea that this work consists of two parts, that displayed in the book and what he has *not* written, and that the latter is the more important? What

Diamond goes on to do is establish a connection between three issues: a) the distinction between reaching either a point of satisfaction or of resignation on the first question; b) Wittgenstein's notion of philosophical method; and c) the idea of marking out limits 'from inside' as either 'constraints' or otherwise.

This paper is classic Diamond. She continues by discussing a question that Wittgenstein had asked in 1929 about why anything exists at all. This can be regarded either as a rather profound question, profound in that it can appear to bring human thinking to an impasse, accompanied by a sense of astonishment that cannot be put into words; or it can be regarded as a question that a person with a rather prosaic cast of mind would take to have no *genuine* sense, because there cannot almost by definition be any means of answering it. There are elements of both reactions in Wittgenstein:

The clarity that Wittgenstein thought could be reached about ethics through presenting senseful language 'from the inside' was essentially clarity about the fact that nothing that could be said would be what we wanted, that the very fact that some proposition was intelligible was enough to show that it was beside the point (*Ibid.* 260).

Diamond quotes the 'Lecture on Ethics', where it is said that Wittgenstein 'was tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition in language, is the existence of language itself' (Wittgenstein as quoted, *Ibid.* 261.) Probably her best expression of the point being made here comes in her discussion of the claim that 'ethics and aesthetics are one', where what is ultimately involved is 'a transformation in our relation to all that is accidental, all that happens and ordinarily absorbs us and matters to us, all that we take ourselves to know, to be aware of' (*Ibid.* 263).

The paper ends with a discussion of solipsism in the *Tractatus*, and here Diamond's solipsist, in saying that 'the world is *my* world', does not succeed in saying anything, albeit that the collapse of his solipsism is open to view. The 'shifting character' of this remark, from its early appearance as a conclusion, to its final status as something that the reader 'moves through and

beyond' by participating in solipsism's evident collapse within the text, is a process which allows him to gain some understanding of the point of the book. But, of course, this interpretation is not held by everyone, and there will inevitably be those of a more traditional bent who will tend to claim that Diamond's writing in these and surrounding paragraphs is occasionally hovering on the edge of unintelligibility; the price, no doubt, of attempting to gain a deeper understanding of Wittgenstein's motivations in these exceptionally difficult passages.

This could certainly not be said of 'Logical Atomism in Russell and Wittgenstein', a paper by Ian Proops which explores the relationship between Russell's early 1911 and 1912 versions of logical atomism and their development as 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' in 1918, which Russell declared to be a means of explaining certain ideas that he had learnt from his former friend and pupil, Ludwig Wittgenstein (*Ibid.* 215). This paper is very much a work of historical scholarship, and Proops discusses the familiar controversy over the question of whether Wittgenstein's own version of logical atomism would require that properties and relations be included amongst the bearers of Tractarian names (*Ibid.* 217).

For those who are particularly interested in the later development of Wittgenstein's ideas, it is worth emphasising that regardless of the answer to this question, Wittgenstein made it clear to Waismann in 1929 that the logical structure of his elementary propositions need not have the slightest similarity to that of what we would ordinarily understand to be a proposition (*Ibid.* 218). Furthermore, in the *Philosophical Grammar*, Wittgenstein refers to his former belief in the existence of a calculus which would allow the definitive dissection of ordinary propositions into constituents that 'would remove all possibility of misunderstanding' (Wittgenstein, as quoted, *Ibid.* 219).

Also of considerable interest is Proops's mention of Wittgenstein's reference in the *Notebooks* to the identification of 'patches in the visual field' as Tractarian objects, on account of their having 'no visible parts', or of their being *points*. This, however, has to be balanced against his later remark to Norman Malcolm that as a logician it was not his business to decide whether this or that thing was either simple or complex, since that was a purely empirical matter (*Ibid.* 230); although this

use of 'empirical' is not something that Proops is prepared to accept at face value, given that the 'discovery' of simple objects is stated elsewhere to be the result of logical analysis. Proops finally concludes that 'Wittgenstein never really supplied an adequate way of telling when a proposition would be fully analysed, and, consequently, that he failed to indicate a way of recognising the Tractarian objects' (*Ibid.* 233).

The paper draws to a close with a perceptive discussion of the dismantling of Wittgenstein's version of logical atomism *via* the well-known colour exclusion problem that is prompted by *Tractatus* 6.3571, where it is stated that the *logical* structure of colour prohibits the simultaneous occurrence of two different colours at one point in the visual field. Yet it is not at all obvious that this 'exclusion' is logical, although Wittgenstein clearly thought earlier on that it was, just as he describes this contradiction as manifested in physics in terms of the logical exclusion of two particles from the same space at the same time. Wittgenstein at one point refers to his earlier confusion of logical analysis with chemical analysis (*Ibid.* 236), a confusion that led to his eventual abandonment of the main tenets of logical atomism, *i.e.*, that he could enumerate his simple objects, and provide a final analysis of propositions in terms of elementary propositions whose composition he could eventually 'discover'. This became 'unacceptable dogmatism' in the early 1930's once he had decided that the very notion of the final analysis of a proposition made no sense (*Ibid.* 237).

In 'The Proposition's Progress', (an already published paper in his *Objectivity and the Parochial*, Oxford, 2011), Ian Travis to some degree complements the story provided by Ian Proops by also moving from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*. The subject here is the developing idea of the concept of a *proposition* as its role changed *via* an intermediate stage in the *Philosophical Grammar*. Travis sees Frege hidden behind the scenes in all of Wittgenstein's work, from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations*, both of which are attempting to answer the same questions, with the consequence that one 'can read the *Investigations* - as one might read the *Tractatus* - as simply working out what Frege should have said to be true to his best insights' (*Ibid.* 183).

The story told by Travis is inevitably a complex one, involving the provision of an answer in the *Tractatus* to his question (only one of three basic questions) of how something that relates to the world as does a proposition, can be formed from what are a proposition's parts. Here he points towards the structuring of particular elements (each of which represents an element of reality) that a proposition is, so that a proposition is a *picture* insofar as the arrangement of its elements serve to *represent* the way reality is (*Ibid.*, 184). In the *Philosophical Grammar*, by contrast, a *language* determines what *its* propositions are. Propositions then become something closer to 'linguistic items', so that their *senses* are determined by their roles in the language: the requirement that a proposition be a picture in order to represent reality, is therefore abandoned (*Ibid.* 188). While both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* may be said to provide a *picture* of reality, 'though it may seem strange to say so' (*Ibid.* 196), the final step from a language to a 'language-game' takes place in the *Investigations*. Here 'representation is, essentially, by, and for, agents' (*Ibid.*, 197) who can be said to 'act on' a proposition in a world of the indefinitely many kinds of contexts, and so of the uses of words and propositions, with which we are only too familiar.

Turning to the *Philosophy of Mind*, Edward Witherspoon provides a very good account of Wittgenstein's thinking, and of the gradual development within the secondary literature of philosophers' attempts to understand this thinking, about the so-called 'problem of other minds'. In 'Wittgenstein on Criteria and the Problem of Other Minds', he begins with a statement of the problem that the concept of *criteria* is intended to resolve, *viz.*, that a 'skeptik about other minds argues that I never have adequate justification for attributing mental state concepts to any being other than myself' (*Ibid.* 472). This is usually combined with the thought that any direct access that one might be surmised to have gained to the experiences of another person could not fail to be an access to experiences that, by definition, had then become one's own. Presented in these terms, the problem is insoluble, and for that reason we have to regard the concept of *criteria* as a means of showing that the philosopher, in Wittgenstein's eyes, is misconstruing the way that language is *used* when we talk

both about our own experiences and about those enjoyed by other people, enjoyed by them insofar as these are experiences that are attributable to 'a separate consciousness' or to 'other minds'.

Witherspoon discusses the well-known distinction between *criteria* and *symptoms* made in the *Blue Book*, before turning to Rogers Albritton's famous paper 'On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term 'Criterion'''. In the final analysis, Albritton's interpretation fails as an answer to scepticism because, although it is manifestly true that certain ways of behaving may be taken to be an indication that someone, say, has toothache, the satisfaction of these criteria, *viz.*, holding one's cheek, moaning and groaning *etc.* cannot provide a *logical* or *conceptual* guarantee that this person is undergoing that particular experience. Consequently, given that this correlation between the outer behaviour and the inner state is purely contingent, Witherspoon concludes that in any particular case it might not hold, so that this interpretation 'gains no leverage against skepticism' (*Ibid.* 478).

Following this reference to Albritton's work, in which criteria are classified as 'defeasible', Witherspoon discusses the approach of John McDowell, who argues instead that because a person's behaviour gives *expression* to his inner state in cases of toothache, this allows us to clearly draw the conclusion that this person *has* toothache. As Witherspoon sees it, someone 'who is pretending to have a toothache does not satisfy the criteria for having a toothache; rather, she *causes it to appear* that she satisfies these criteria' (*Ibid.* 481). On these grounds, Witherspoon argues that even although criteria remain 'defeasible', the 'logical' tie between behavioural criteria and the states which they express, allows for non-inferential knowledge about 'other minds'. The remainder of his paper is largely taken up with expanding upon and clarifying this point of view, with suggesting how it may 'answer' scepticism, and how it relates to Wittgenstein's writing in passages like *Investigations* § 420.

In some ways, Wittgenstein's position is even stronger than this might appear to suggest, because, *pace* Witherspoon, Wittgenstein sees the philosopher's vision of 'hidden experiences *behind* outer behaviour' as a misleading *picture* that, once abandoned, allows us to appreciate that this behaviour is not an intermediary allowing or denying access to one ontological level *via* another. In fact, the common *picture* that someone else *experiences* things very much as I do is, if we take this

approach seriously, nothing more than a harmless accompaniment to our attribution of mental states both to ourselves and to others. The problem arises when this *picture* is understood to *ground* our understanding of what these attributions of mental states really involve. Imagine, for example, that while walking down the street I come across a vehicle that has crashed into a wall, and beside it someone on the pavement with blood pouring from a chest wound, his leg apparently broken, and his face contorted in agony. Having assessed this scene as one in which a pedestrian has been injured and is suffering pain in a road accident, I am taken aback when the person rises up from the ground unharmed on hearing the word 'cut' coming from behind the wall, at which point a previously hidden film crew appears. My appreciation of the scene entirely alters. In this case there is simply no question that, based on what I originally saw, I was justified in concluding that this individual *was* in pain 'non-inferentially', as Witherspoon presents it, *prior* to my discovering that I had been taken in by a very realistic film set.

Wittgenstein's resolution of the 'other minds' problem *is* in this way 'non-inferential', so that he does not present a *direct* answer to this philosophical puzzle as traditionally construed. In short, as Witherspoon suggests, by revealing how our third person mental state terms are actually *used* to talk about the *expressive* behaviour of others, he circumvents the natural *philosophical* temptation to treat our understanding of 'other minds' in terms of inner states *behind* outer behaviour. This he achieves by viewing the problem *as* a result of our adherence to a harmless yet *philosophically* misleading picture.

In 'Wittgenstein and the First Person', William Child dedicates his paper to a discussion about Wittgenstein's understanding of the function and significance of the first person pronoun 'I', and how this relates to the view we adopt towards the mental states and experiences of others. Child provides a very thorough treatment of the issues involved, including the distinction between as-subject and as-object uses of 'I', which have been generally accepted, although the claim that to say 'I have a pain' is no more a statement about a *particular person* than moaning is, has led to considerable puzzlement in the literature (*Investigations* § 405, as quoted, *Ibid.* 379). As Child sees it, this view becomes more palatable once we understand Wittgenstein's reasons for adopting it. Nevertheless, he concludes that from the fact that 'I' is neither a name, nor a substitute for a description, nor a term that applies to a

Cartesian ego, nor a demonstrative identifying a person in terms of his bodily characteristics, it *can* still be classified as an expression that picks out a person in a distinctive way: 'So Wittgenstein can afford to be permissive: he can allow that we may if we like say that every use of "I" refers to the person who produced it' (*Ibid.* 386). But this, as Child emphasises, simply does not square with the conventional claim that 'I' has a *genuinely* referential role to talk about the person who demonstratively employs it.

As Child sees it, these odd conclusions arise because Wittgenstein adopts an *epistemic* conception of reference, just as he adopts an epistemic conception of what it is to be a statement, with the consequence that if I do not discover, find out, or make a test to judge whether I am in pain, then to claim that I *know* that I am in pain is senseless. This criterionless aspect of first person sensation ascription plays an important role in Wittgenstein's discussion of private language, for a private language is actually *defined* in *Investigations* § 288 in terms of the need for criteria of identity for a *particular* sensation, and this means that, as Child would see it, a sensation becomes *something* about which we may come to *know* particular features, something we can describe correctly or incorrectly.

Child ends by comparing the different ways in which Wittgenstein looks upon sensations in the earlier *Philosophical Remarks*, which sees them very much as private objects 'inexpressible' in a public language but expressible in the language 'with me at its centre'; and in the later *Philosophical Investigations*, where the meaning of 'pain' remains the same in both first and third person uses, even although criteria are applicable in the third person use alone. We are therefore open to see the earlier treatment as one in which, as Child describes it, 'pain' has *both* a first person yet paradoxically incommunicable *private* use, and a *public* use with a purely behavioural meaning, as an expression of the very conception that he later came to attack. This accords with Child's view that, as Wittgenstein puts it in § 293, a proper assessment of how pain-language is actually *used*, reveals that *if* we construe the actual use, the actual 'grammar of the expression of sensation', in terms of 'the model of object and designation', then the 'object' has no role to play; and this is just a roundabout way of saying that as sensation language *actually* functions in first person applications, our sensations are *not* objects with qualities which we can *discover*, or *describe* correctly or incorrectly (*Ibid.* § 397, Footnote 44).

The significant feature of Paul Snowdon's 'Private Experience and Sense Data' is that this is exactly the kind of conclusion about which he feels entitled to be sceptical. Despite describing § 293 as 'a brilliant metaphor-based argument', he nevertheless concludes his treatment of this passage with the thought that 'this is a case where maintaining agnosticism about the negative epistemological consequence affects the significance of one of Wittgenstein's points' (*Ibid.* 426). This so-called 'negative epistemological consequence' is the assumption that no one knows what is in another person's box, an assumption without which Snowdon claims that the argument would not go through. This completely misconstrues the 'argument' which, as already indicated, turns on the point that should we continue to misunderstand how first person sensation terms function in practice by treating them *as if* they apply to 'private objects', we will find that 'the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant', so that 'it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box'. Consequently, the conclusion of the 'argument' is just that there is nothing in which a person's 'knowing what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle' could even consist, given that this is not how first person sensation language is actually *used*.

Immediately prior to his treatment of § 293, Snowdon complains that Wittgenstein nowhere justifies his conclusion that 'our psychological predicates stand for conditions that incorporate behavioural requirements', a conclusion that follows from the fact that 'the condition of resemblance in behaviour could be a condition for e.g. feeling pain'. We are then treated to the counterexample of 'flubber man' who has a viable mental life without exhibiting any corresponding behavioural responses. But Wittgenstein did not even imply that all psychological states or private sensations *must* have some expression in behaviour, given that some do, some do not obviously do, and some do not. He could hardly have denied either that someone who is, say, physically totally paralysed could have a normal mental life.

The problem that Snowdon encounters here goes back to his (mis)reading of § 281, which famously states that only of a living human being and of what resembles or behaves like one, can one say that it has sensations, sees, is blind, is deaf, is conscious or unconscious (*Ibid.* 425). Snowdon's dismissive 'What are we to make of this?', a question based on his assumption that what is being said here amounts on Wittgenstein's part to 'a positive theoretical suggestion', once again completely

misconstrues the force of the claim that if the philosopher continues to insist on treating these kinds of concepts outwith the ordinary circumstances in which they have an application, then we will find ourselves attributing them to anything you please, to electronic computers, for example, or even to trees. Indeed, it is significant that Snowdon mentions trees because, according to his tree lovers, trees *are* the possible bearers of pain sensations (*Ibid.* 425), and this has the consequence that it then becomes a simple matter of *fact* that whilst humans and animals do feel pain, it would normally be agreed that trees and computers do not. Wittgenstein's point in § 281, however, is that to attribute pain to trees does not make sense, given the surrounding circumstances in which the relevant concepts are *used*. Far from being a 'theoretical' claim, this is instead a comment on the 'grammar' of the concept of *pain*.

Snowdon also disagrees with the conclusion that a subject cannot properly be said to *know* that he is in pain, a conclusion he is willing to draw without considering why Wittgenstein is not prepared to treat first person sensation ascriptions as claims to knowledge. Of course it is true that in ordinary day-to-day discourse, there may be many circumstances in which, as Snowdon argues - but as a reason for *undermining* Wittgenstein's claim - we can say with impunity that *we know* that we are in pain, *e.g.*, to a sceptical doctor, or in describing Snowdon's drugged patient who *knows* that he is, even although he shows no signs of it. But these examples are beside the point.

It is also clear that Snowdon ties 'knowing that one is in pain' to having the *concept* of pain, and this on his assessment means that creatures without language can feel pain although they can never *know* that they do. But even this is open to question: if a dog shows every sign of avoiding, from experience, those kinds of circumstances which would inevitably result in having a painful experience, then this may after all justify us in concluding that it has come to know when it would and when it would not feel pain, and therefore what it is to be in pain. The extent to which we would be prepared to ascribe concepts to animals based on the complexity of their expressive behaviour, is, of course, a matter of degree. There are other points in his paper at which Snowden fails to appreciate the force of Wittgenstein's claims, *e.g.*, his disagreement with Wittgenstein's idea that a public context in which behaviour is expressive allows for the possibility that more than one person can understand the

language whilst a purely private context does not: these are points that Wittgenstein fails to *prove* (*Ibid.* 422). This is reminiscent of the well-known argument (4) that one's having private sensations, in Wittgenstein's radical sense, sensations 'describable' in a private language, does not imply that another person cannot understand the language. The answer to this is that the 'language only I can understand' is how a private language is *defined*. It is part of Wittgenstein's wholly methodological strategy, based on how our sensation terms are ordinarily *used*, to utilise this concept in the way that he does in order to illustrate that it can have no application. For this reason, it would be at the very least misleading to regard the conclusion of 'the private language argument' as the result of some kind of traditional *reductio ad absurdum* proof.

If Paul Snowden's contribution is very much that of a dissenting voice, Joachim Schulte in 'Privacy' returns to a scholarly discussion about how the term 'private' is used by Wittgenstein from 1935 onwards, although the relevant use occurs firstly in 1930 - 31. He begins with the notion of *superprivacy* mentioned in the 'Notes for the "Philosophical Lecture"' from just after 1935, a kind of 'philosophical superlative' that is best thought of as 'a form of unsharable [*sic.*] first-person access to certain mental items' (*Ibid.* 431). This leads to the idea of sense-data as private objects, and Schulte interestingly introduces MS 119 from 1937 which mentions *imagining* tying a word to a certain inner experience, and this requires the recognition of this experience as 'the same again', something that gains its intelligibility only from an established public use. Recognising a private object, therefore, becomes the same as 'thinking that one recognises it' (Wittgenstein, as quoted, *Ibid.* 434). Schulte mentions the obvious connection here with *Investigations* § 258, so that we are now coming across a conclusion that already clearly appears true to him, one that would achieve expression in a more sophisticated way later on, albeit that his future critics would not necessarily agree with the validity of the 'argument' used to present it. Nevertheless, Schulte introduces three 'dualities' from Frege which manage to capture prominent ideas that, *via* Peter Hacker, can be understood to be the target of Wittgenstein later on, and Gordon Baker's later work is mentioned and criticised in the course of showing that although Wittgenstein certainly targeted *mentalism* in a more or less Cartesian

sense, his objections to *behaviourism* in the texts are rather more limited (*Ibid.* 441 and Footnote 37).

Generally speaking, Schulte believes that Wittgenstein has thoroughly debunked a certain conception of 'an inner world populated by inner objects amenable to certain forms of inspection' (*Ibid.* 446) by showing that 'this image is extremely misleading and prone to tempt us into saying all kinds of preposterous things'. This, on Schulte's view, is because the very idea of being privately owned presupposes that what is owned by X could be owned by Y, so that any use of a concept of *privacy* that excludes this condition is senseless. This is reminiscent of *Investigations* § 288, where Wittgenstein introduces a concept of *privacy* that requires 'a criterion of identity for the sensation', thus allowing for the possibility of error in identifying something again as the same, a possibility that really does make no sense relative to our ordinary language game in which the 'expression of doubt' in talking of one's sensations has no place. Schulte's paper is another interesting piece that helps to deepen our understanding of what Wittgenstein means by *privacy*.

In 'Wittgenstein on the Experience of Meaning and Secondary Use', Michel Ter Hark explores a whole range of phenomena discussed by Wittgenstein, including *experiencing* the meaning of a word, something that is said to lie behind our appreciation of puns (*Ibid.* 507), and is manifested in the ability to say the word 'bank' in isolation to *mean* the bank of a river instead of the financial institution, and in the repetition of a word till it loses its meaning. In addition to and corresponding with this is meaning-blindness as the inability to *mean* in this way, an inability that is comparable to aspect-blindness *as* the inability to see something *as* something, *e.g.*, to see the change of aspect in the duck-rabbit drawing. Together with these basic phenomena he wishes to include some rather more 'hard-to-get-hold-of' experiences including momentary meanings, a feeling-of-unreality, and *deja-vu* (*Ibid.* 502). Also listed are what to some philosophers at least must seem rather strange phenomena like synaesthesia, involving a 'secondary use' of a word, as in the association of the vowel 'e' with yellow, or 'lean' with 'Tuesday' and 'fat' with 'Wednesday'.

Whilst there will be philosophers who see these as examples of purely psychological interest with no philosophical import, Michael Ter Hark wishes to emphasise that within the context

of Wittgenstein's use of the term 'language-game', we can appreciate his interest in these phenomena if we understand that the 'leitmotiv of Wittgenstein's conception of language-games of psychological, and in particular experiential, concepts is that they are learnt as substitutes for "primitive reactions", or, more generally, natural behaviour' (*Ibid.* 515). Secondary use as in the connection of the vowel 'e' and yellow is described as 'a logical dependency of one use of words upon another use', just as the verbal expression of pain relates to natural pain behaviour. We are on this view compelled to relate 'e' and yellow not because we have been taught to do so, but because this is a primitive reaction which, when it is 'experienced', will not necessarily be shared by everyone. Wittgenstein discusses these issues from the period of the *Philosophical Grammar* and of the *Brown Book* right up to the extensive treatments he provides in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* and in the *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol.1 (*Ibid.* 500 and Footnotes 1 & 2). To the extent that they remain unconnected in the minds of philosophers to the traditional problems of philosophy that they see treated in the *Investigations*, this subject of the *experience* of meaning will tend to remain one of specialised interest alone.

Another topic that has not enjoyed a particularly prominent place in the discussion of Wittgenstein's work is what he has to say about the will, and in 'Action and the Will' (previously published in *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 2011), John Hyman regards Wittgenstein's later writings in this area, although seriously flawed, as nevertheless having 'paved the way for the extraordinary renewal in the philosophy of action in the second half of the twentieth century' (*Ibid.* 470). Despite neglecting voluntary inactivity and passivity 'in all of his writings' (*Ibid.* 465), Wittgenstein nevertheless mentions this important idea in 1947, albeit that he fails to develop it further:

Can't rest be just as voluntary as motion ? Can't
abstention from movement be voluntary? What
better argument against a feeling of innervation ?
(*Ibid.* Wittgenstein as quoted *Ibid.* 465).

This passage is from *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Part I, although the main treatment of action and the will occurs in *Philosophical Investigations* §§ 611 - 632 and in Part II, Sec. viii.

John Hyman provides a very detailed account of the historical background in Locke, Schopenhauer, William James and Russell, explaining where he believes that Wittgenstein, as Strawson originally remarked in his review of the *Investigations*, 'powerfully and suggestively' treats these issues, even allowing for his failure to elaborate on the topic already mentioned. John Hyman's is the only paper dealing with this subject in the *Handbook*.

As if to compensate for the relative neglect that Wittgenstein's work on mathematics has suffered in the secondary literature, given that most elementary volumes on his philosophy even today either do not mention this subject or apologise for failing to treat it, the *Handbook* contains seven essays dealing with *Logic and the Philosophy of Mathematics*. This is entirely in keeping with the fact that in 1944 Wittgenstein added the following sentence to a biographical sketch by John Wisdom: 'Wittgenstein's chief contribution has been in the philosophy of mathematics'. It is also well known that he had originally intended to follow the rule-following passages in the *Philosophical Investigations* with his reflections on mathematics (Editors, *Ibid.* 7 Footnote 6). This does not, however, mean that a new era has begun during which these writings will assume more prominence given, firstly, that the later *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* are often regarded as far from complete, *i.e.*, fully prepared for publication, and that the background and therefore the interest of most philosophers who specialise in Wittgenstein still tends to rest in the humanities rather than in mathematics and the sciences.

Michael Potter's 'Wittgenstein on Mathematics' captures these reflections in his conclusion that '...one struggles to present, even in outline, a positive account of mathematics that can reasonably be called Wittgensteinian', adding forthrightly that:

Perhaps, though, Wittgenstein's failure to make significant progress was inevitable. He was trying to reconcile his radical anti-realist conception of the subject matter of mathematics with an anti-revisionary conception of mathematical practice without collapsing into formalism; and that is surely a very tall order (*Ibid.* 136).

Stressing that the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* is far from being a finished work on the subject, given that only parts I and VI are reasonably complete, the remainder being mostly selections and arrangements by the editors from notebooks written between 1937 and 1944, he concludes with the thought that Wittgenstein's late writings on mathematics 'are fragmentary in a way that his writings on philosophy of mind...are not' (*Ibid.* 136). Furthermore, rather than develop a finished account of the subject, Wittgenstein seems more concerned, as Potter puts it, to provide meta-level advice about how to go about finding one. If we take that together with Wittgenstein's seemingly half-hearted endorsement during his later discussions of the principle that the meaning of an arithmetical generalisation lies in its proof, a principle that had dominated what Potter treats as his middle-period from roughly 1929 -1937, then we can understand why he regards this as the reason for Wittgenstein's decision not to include a section on mathematics in his final version of the *Investigations* (*Ibid.* 136). He ends with the not uncommon observation that conventional mathematics has a richness that radically anti-realist interpretations of the subject simply cannot explain. Michael Potter's paper is an excellent introduction to the subject and includes discussion of the *Tractatus* together with more lengthy treatments of finitism and the harmlessness of contradictions *etc.* in the middle-period.

'Wittgenstein and Infinity' by A.W. Moore raises again the question of finitism as it relates to Wittgenstein, and he begins by discussing the difference between the 'realist' model, according to which it is a fact quite independent of ourselves that there is no biggest natural number, and what for want of a better term may be called the 'anti-realist' model, said to be adopted by Wittgenstein, and according to which the mathematical necessity of the infinite series of natural numbers is at best one of the rules of the grammar of mathematics (*Ibid.* 107 *et seq.*) Any thought that our number system resides in the nature of things would to Wittgenstein be anathema. Or, to put it another way that is sanctioned by Moore at this point, the statement 'this stick is infinitely divisible' can mean either that this stick is divisible into infinitely many pieces, or that no matter how many pieces this stick is divided into, it can be divided into more; and only the latter, said to be shared by Aristotle, is an acceptable means of describing the 'infinite'. This is in accord with *Investigations* § 254 that regards the mathematician's

reference to the objectivity and reality of mathematical facts, not as a philosophy of mathematics, but as something for philosophical treatment (as quoted *Ibid.* 118). Nevertheless, Moore has doubts concerning Wittgenstein's claim that the meaning of mathematical signs is gained from their use outside of mathematics, by citing the possible use of signs within mathematics which either have no immediate external application in themselves, but perhaps supplement the use of some which do, or which 'help to systematize' other parts of mathematics which do at least have an application within the subject itself (*Ibid.* 119).

In 'Wittgenstein Reads Russell', Gregory Landini begins with an engaging historical portrait that captures what has since become something of a legend concerning 'perhaps the most perfect example I have ever known of genius as traditionally conceived, passionate, profound, intense, and dominating. He had a kind of purity which I have never known equaled [sic.]...' (Russell as quoted *Ibid.* 27). One of the main features of Landini's account, however, is that this has indeed given rise to what is nothing more than the fiction that Wittgenstein pursued his researches into mathematical logic with such vigour that he had soon overtaken Russell to a degree that actually made him his teacher rather than his pupil (*Ibid.* 31 *et seq.*) The conventional view that Wittgenstein rejected a Russellian theory of types on the grounds that such a theory must be dispensed with by a theory of symbolism, far from being the discovery that destroyed Russell's multiple theory of judgement, was actually something that Wittgenstein learned from Russell himself.

From a study of Russell's unpublished manuscripts, and from close attention to the available historical data, Landini draws the conclusion that accepted 'folklore' concerning the domination of Russell by Wittgenstein is really a matter of Wittgenstein the apprentice working within a research programme originally devised by Russell (*Ibid.* 41). Generally speaking, Landini sees 'Russell's voluminous work notes' shedding 'a flood of new light on his views', and he draws the conclusion that they both shared the conception of philosophy as logical analysis, together with a commitment to a research programme that endeavours to dissolve philosophical conundrums through 'eliminativistic reconstruction' (*Ibid.* 53). This process is said to involve the analysis of

concepts like *matter, space, time* and *motion* into their favourable logico-semantic components, while leaving aside their physical components and, presumably, any metaphysical dross they may have accumulated. The aim is to arrive at a point at which 'there are no non-logical necessary relations among material properties and relations', the only necessity being logical necessity (*Ibid.* 56). Whilst some readers will no doubt gape at his thought that this 'Russell-Wittgenstein program of logical atomism is worth reviving' (*Ibid.* 57), they will nevertheless find thought-provoking Landini's claim that because logic is the *essence* of philosophy, it must transcend any such programme.

In 'Wittgenstein and Frege', Wolfgang Kienzler provides a comprehensive account of a Wittgenstein who throughout his philosophical career expressed his admiration for 'the great works of Frege', albeit that it is even today not entirely clear exactly what books by Frege he actually possessed or even absorbed in detail. Furthermore, Michael Dummett's admiration for Frege is expressed in his thought that wherever Wittgenstein departs from Frege, he 'gets onto the wrong track', whereas Baker and Hacker present a Frege who is firstly a mathematician and only secondly a philosopher with a rather naive outlook (*Ibid.* 84). Kienzler's own view is that Wittgenstein in both the *Notes on Logic* and in the *Tractatus*, adopted some ideas from Frege but developed them in ways which saw him departing radically both from Frege and from Russell. Within the *Tractatus*, Kienzler identifies 17 passages relating to Frege, and only in 4 of them is there some measure of agreement expressed with Frege's ideas. (*Ibid.* 89). Kienzler differs from Diamond on the importance for Frege of the distinction between sense and reference, given that because Wittgenstein had very little use for this distinction, it would at least be highly misleading to refer to his move away from Frege on this particular point (*Ibid.* 98). One is left with the impression that, on Kienzler's reading, everything in the *Tractatus* is designed to clarify a viewpoint on language in which the distinction between names and sentences (corresponding to that between things and facts) as against Frege's distinction between function and object, is what motivates his thinking. Generally speaking, we have to regard Frege first and foremost as mathematician and logician and Wittgenstein as philosopher, and Kienzler exhibits a great deal of scholarship in bringing this out.

Mathieu Marion's 'Wittgenstein on Surveyability of Proofs' begins with the thought that philosophers of mathematics are often divided into 'mainstream' and 'maverick', both of which, as it has turned out, have become increasingly detached from issues of concern to mathematicians. Wittgenstein's 'maverick' stance is said to manifest itself in his opposition to the logicist tradition of Frege, Russell, Ramsay and Carnap (*Ibid.* 138). His standpoint on the 'surveyability' of proofs is a prime example of this 'maverick' outlook, given that it is read as supporting strict finitism, a radically 'anti-realist' position in the foundations of mathematics. To give only one example:

There appears, therefore, to be a circularity in Russell's attempt to ground arithmetic on logic: in order to understand the logical truth, one must introduce precisely the arithmetical knowledge which is meant to be ascertained by the logical truth. This claim lies at the heart of Wittgenstein's remarks on 'surveyability' (*Ibid.* 142).

Although the argument that Marion is discussing at this point comes from Part III of the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* from around 1939 - 1940, he sees an early variant of the same 'circularity' conclusion in an earlier manuscript MS 105 going back to 1929. That we must be able to use a proof as our guideline in judging, that it must be a configuration that can be reproduced with certainty, and that a proof changes the grammar of our language and makes *new* connections, connections that do not 'already' exist prior to their roles in the proof, are all conclusions that Marion regards as forming a 'central plank of Wittgenstein's opposition to "Platonism" or "realism" in mathematics' (*Ibid.* 147). The meaning of a theorem is given by its proof, and it is in that sense that proofs 'construct' propositions, so that this is all very much against the thought, already described as 'anathema' to Wittgenstein, that mathematical statements 'describe' a world of abstract entities that 'exist' independently of our mathematical procedures (*Ibid.*) The importance of 'surveyability' lies in the role of the proof in 'guiding' the mathematician to an 'understanding' of the result, even although it may appear, as Wittgenstein puts it, to point towards an external reality: it is instead the acceptance of a new measure of reality.

As already indicated, Marion believes that Wittgenstein uses his remarks on surveyability to undermine the idea that the system of *Principia Mathematica* provides ordinary arithmetic with ‘foundations’, and it is in this sense that Russell’s great work ‘leaves everything as it is’. It is for this reason irrelevant to the ordinary use of arithmetic to make calculations in everyday life. It may be thought that there is a parallel here with the philosophical question of the existence of an ‘external world’ because, just as people go about their business without worrying about the existence of an external world because, say, according to Hume this is something we *must* take for granted in all our reasonings, they similarly go about doing arithmetic without worrying about whether they are ‘referring to abstract objects abiding in an independent realm’. Yet, this parallel is clearly inexact: talking about mathematical objects *is* abstract in a way in which talking about ships and shoes is not. From a Wittgensteinian point of view, however, the idea that there may or may not be an ‘external world’ is a misleading *picture* derived from a *philosophical* misconstrual of how our ordinary concepts function within the context of our *practices* of referring to the objects, animals and people around us. It is just that when we *reflect* philosophically on our mathematical *practices*, there is a tendency, by no means universal, to regard numbers, say, as *objects* which inhabit a realm of a different kind. But this tendency is strictly *irrelevant* to what *is* fundamental, our participation in the *practice*. Marion concludes with the thought that more attempts ought to be made to allow Wittgenstein’s thought on mathematics to ‘speak to us’ and so play a role in current debates, as his use of the circularity argument against Russell and his remarks on surveyability actually reveal (*Ibid.* 158).

In ‘From Logical Method to “Messing About”’: Wittgenstein on “Open Problems” in Mathematics’, Simo Saatela discusses Wittgenstein’s treatment of ‘Open Problems’ in mathematics, problems which are undecided insofar as they are not known to be provable or disprovable within currently accepted systems of mathematics (*Ibid.* 162). According to Wittgenstein, a problem is only a problem in mathematics, if there is a definite method of finding its solution, and to think of a problem in mathematics as being on a par with a problem in science is totally confused. ‘Messing about’ in mathematics can be productive in providing a possible solution to open problems that

might otherwise be thought to have no sense whatsoever insofar as it is believed that there *could* be no way of finding a solution to them. Saatela agrees wholeheartedly with Marion that mathematics for Wittgenstein is a 'motley of techniques of proofs':

What he wants to open our eyes to is the misleading classification of these 'open questions' as problems in the same sense as research problems in natural science, or as well-defined questions in mathematics. This confuses us and makes us....suppose things about 'the essence' of mathematics that lead to a mythologization of mathematics and a distorted picture of mathematical practice (*Ibid.* 179).

That distorted picture, of course, can include regarding mathematical propositions as statements about what is going on in a Platonic realm of mathematical objects. By looking at the activities of mathematicians, we can see that they are concerned with producing this 'motley of techniques of proofs'. Yet this does not mean that Wittgenstein is advocating a 'conventionalist' theory of mathematics. Again, following Marion, Saatela quotes *Philosophical Investigations* § 124, agreeing that philosophy leaves mathematics 'as it is', so that in mathematics there can only be mathematical and not philosophical problems.

The final paper in this section, Colin Johnston's 'Assertion, Saying, and Propositional Complexity in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*', begins with Russell's claim in the *Principles of Mathematics* that whilst the proposition ' p implies q ' asserts (in a non-psychological sense) an implication, it does not assert p or q . The p or the q which enter into ' p implies q ' are not strictly the same as p or q taken as separate propositions (*Ibid.* 60). Wittgenstein replies that assertion is merely psychological, so that in not- p and p , p remains the same. As Johnston reveals, Russell is here echoing a Fregean distinction between what is psychological as what is mental and subjective and so directed upon propositions as a 'form of mental act', as distinct from what is logical as belonging to the propositions themselves. In that sense, the *assertion* of a proposition, because it involves a linguistic convention, cannot be a

matter of private individual psychology, and so this term is not being used by Russell in what he calls a 'psychological' sense.

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, does not use the term 'psychological' in that way, for in saying that the correlation of name and meaning is psychological, all that he can be taken to be implying is that, as a matter of linguistic convention, it is not a matter for logic in any strict sense. Following Michael Potter, Johnston agrees that Wittgenstein did not, unlike Frege, use the term 'psychology' to demarcate the private inner mental sphere from the public sphere of language, pointing out in passing that Michael Dummett misses this point when he charges both Russell and Wittgenstein with committing the error of regarding assertion as 'an internal mental attitude adopted towards the proposition' (Dummett as quoted, *Ibid.* 66 and Footnote 6). This still leaves the question of what Wittgenstein can possibly be meaning by disagreeing with Russell over the question of p in 'not p ' not being the same, and on this Johnston suggests several possibilities as interpretations of his reply, including (a) the claim that it is precisely the situation that ' p ' that occurs within 'not p ' (b) a disagreement with the thought that what is said not to be so in 'not p ' is not the same as what is said to be so in ' p ', and (c) that since for Russell 'not p ' and ' p ' are different *symbols*, the one does not occur within the other, another claim with which Wittgenstein disagrees.

Into the new millennium, as Ray Monk suggests (5), 'Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics has now become a specialist scholarly field in its own right'. By this, however, he is implying rather pessimistically that specialists in this field who are finally acknowledging the value of this work after years of relative neglect, are now writing not for mathematicians or philosophers of mathematics, and not even for other Wittgenstein scholars: the '*only*' people who are certain to follow their writings are other specialists working in this same highly restricted field. Because Monk distinguishes between theoretically inclined 'right wing' interpreters, and more therapeutically inclined 'left wing' interpreters, with his sympathies attached to the latter, it is almost inevitable that he should discover a supreme irony in the fact that this resurgence of interest looks like resulting, not in the *cultural* change that Wittgenstein so much desired, but in yet another field of professional

academic enquiry. This would most probably, on Monk's view, have driven Wittgenstein to despair.

Certainly, there is a widespread tendency to neglect Wittgenstein's outlook on his times, an outlook that may be said to govern not only his treatment of mathematics, but also his philosophy in general. But the very fact that this general outlook can for most purposes be disregarded when discussing the content of his work in strictly philosophical terms, is precisely what makes possible a volume of the present kind. It presents us with a fairly accurate assessment not only of the state of Wittgenstein scholarship at the present time, but also of what aspects of his work are currently regarded as being of prime importance. This inevitably means that those readers with particular interests, like Wittgenstein's thinking on religious belief, on Fraser's *Golden Bough*, on Colour, on the true value of *On Certainty* and of his later writings on the philosophy of psychology, or even on the culture of his times, not to mention his remarks on music and on literary figures like Tolstoy and Shakespeare, may feel that their specialty has to some extent been overlooked. On the other hand, it would be quite impossible to satisfy everyone, and on that criterion McGinn and Kuusela have done a reasonably good job in bringing this lot of papers together. There are, after all, many other collections that continue to appear at regular intervals on specific aspects of his work: books on perception, aspect-seeing, religious belief, *On Certainty*, on his remarks on literature and on the Culture of his Times, not to mention those on subjects like psychiatry and politics to which his name has seemingly been almost arbitrarily attached. This *Handbook* is probably best regarded, then, as a rather larger version of the kind of general volume we are used to which covers a number of aspects of his philosophy though by no means all. For this reason, the publishers are almost certainly being rather optimistic in promoting it (*cover blurb*) as 'The definitive resource for the study of this great philosopher' and as a production that 'Covers the full range of Wittgenstein's thought'.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Avner Baz intriguingly sees a connection between aspect perception and ‘the private language argument’, (*Ibid.*, 702), but this suggestion is not followed up in detail.
- (2) G.H. von Wright: ‘Wittgenstein in Relation to His Times’, *Wittgenstein*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1982).
- (3) For a very recent example exploring this field, see Gordon Graham: *Wittgenstein and Natural Religion* (Oxford, O.U.P, 2014).
- (4) See, for example, Edward Craig: ‘Meaning and Privacy’, *Blackwell Companion to The Philosophy of Language* ed. R. Hale & C. Wright, (Oxford, Blackwell Pub. 1997).
- (5) Ray Monk: ‘Bourgeois, Bolshevist or Anarchist ? The Reception of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Mathematics’ in *Wittgenstein and His Interpreters*. Ed. Guy Kahane, Edward Kanterian & Oskari Kuusela, (Oxford, Blackwell Pub. 2007).

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 various organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. A paper on Wittgenstein appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, another on Ebersole / Ayer in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010, a later paper on Wittgenstein in ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY, March 2013, a further one on Ryle, PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, April 2014, and one on Wittgenstein on Shakespeare in PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE (forthcoming).