

CRITICAL NOTICE

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*

A Critical Guide

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Collections of essays on the *Philosophical Investigations* have regularly appeared since the 1960's. The early classic volume with George Pitcher as editor, his *Collection of Critical Essays* from Doubleday Anchor, New York in 1966, contains, amongst other good things, original reviews of the *Investigations* by Malcolm and Strawson, the famous debate between Ayer and Rhees - all from the 1950's - and some prevalent interpretations of the argument concerning a 'Private Language'. Later on, Irving Block edited *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* from Blackwell in 1981. More wide-ranging in its content, this grew out of the Wittgenstein Colloquium held in London Ontario in 1976, and is marked by its inclusion, in its UK edition, of Saul Kripke's paper 'Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language', which at that time appeared without its later Postscript 'Wittgenstein on Other Minds'. Ian McFetridge, in a review (of seven Wittgenstein volumes), showed particular foresight when he had occasion to comment:

The important thing to say here is that Kripke's article is by far the most impressive piece of work in the books under discussion.

Its exemplary clarity evinces an intellectual passion which repeatedly drove this reader, with an anticipation of pleasure, back to Wittgenstein's text (as relevant a test, surely, of the philosophical expositor as it ought to be of the literary critic). An assessment of Kripke's claims is out of place here: they should and will be given extended discussion.

(From 'Recent Work on Wittgenstein', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Jan. 1984, 73).

Which indeed they have amply received and continue to receive even now. In more recent times, a further shift in Wittgenstein interpretation was captured in *The New Wittgenstein* (Routledge, 2000), a book which helped to consolidate an interpretation of the *Tractatus* by Cora Diamond and James Conant

that has since been 'extended' by some of its more forthright proponents (notably by Rupert Read and Phil Hutchinson) to the *Investigations*, where in their recent work ideas both about 'nonsense' and about person relative and person specific interpretations of Wittgensteinian therapy play a very prominent role. This outlook is particularly noticeable in three of their essays contributed to the recent volume *Wittgenstein Key Concepts*, edited by Kelly Dean Jolley (Acumen, 2010).

Whilst the books mentioned here are no more than what became the tip of a much deeper iceberg, they serve to indicate historically significant changes in Wittgenstein interpretation. There can be no guarantee, as history has shown in respect of the earliest volume, that the perspectives they reflect will with the passage of time continue to retain their initial relevance to contemporary debate. It is therefore interesting to note that Arif Ahmed's new collection in the Cambridge 'Critical Guides' series, contains a number of papers which reflect a theoretical rather than a therapeutic approach to Wittgenstein interpretation. This is more than evident in the first paper in the book, Robert Hanna's 'From referentialism to human action: the Augustinian theory of language', where the move from the early to the later philosophy is described in the following terms:

.....Tractarian essentialism and Tractarian transcendental solipsism are sharply criticized and replaced by an anthropocentric metaphysics of the commonsensical or the ordinary, in which essences and structures are all manifest - 'Nothing is hidden' (PI 435) although normally unseen by us because of our concentration on everyday tasks or philosophical confusion. (*Ibid.*, 13)

This noticeably theoretical stance is even more obvious in the 'translation' of § 281, where Wittgenstein's reminder that only of a living human being and what resembles one can one say that it has sensations, sees, hears, is conscious or unconscious, is rendered in terms which for philosophers wedded to a more therapeutic approach, will seem uncomfortably alien:

....under the slogan *human mind requires human behaviour* (PI 281)

the Cartesian and Schopenhauerian solipsistic mind of the *Tractatus*

becomes the activating structure of embodied human comportment.

(*Ibid.*)

It might be thought that only a philosopher wedded to a particular way of thinking could use the term 'comportment' in this context, although this has to be balanced by Hanna's quite unexpected use of Biblical and literary comparisons in his reference to what he surmises that Wittgenstein's builders may be in the process of actually building:

Wittgenstein never does tell us what the builders are building.

But it is not too fanciful, and indeed it even makes very good instructive philosophical sense to imagine that the builders described in §§ 2, 6 and 8 are trying to build either the Tower of Babel, as described in Genesis II:I-9.....or perhaps the wall upon which Humpty Dumpty sat in *Through the Looking-Glass*...

(*Ibid.*, 25)

The comparison with the Tower of Babel gains its meaning for Hanna from the attempts of the Logical Atomists, amongst whom he includes Wittgenstein and Russell in 1912, to construct a logico-semantic tower known as the *Ideal Language*, all the way up to Platonic heaven, just as the reference to Humpty-Dumpty is to someone who believes that his own proper name uniquely means his own shape, to which he can point directly by using it. But just as the project of the atomists 'led inevitably to a logico-semantic Fall into the irreducible and sometimes almost incommensurable plurality of different natural languages and language-games scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth' (*Ibid.*), the abandoned, unfinished tower of Babel, portrayed in a famous painting by Peter Breughel the Elder, is (on some accounts) destroyed. Similarly, we are perhaps invited to see Humpty Dumpty's fall as the demise of a purely referentialist outlook.

Hanna's Wittgenstein, in the very writing of the *Tractatus*, had come to realise the inadequacy of Logical Atomism, and of logical-decompositional analysis, by taking this project to its limits and beyond, even if this is not explicitly stated in the book. This in any event is a

point of view on this project that he had certainly come to adopt by the time he wrote the Preface to the *Investigations*, and it is central to Hanna's theoretical stance that the 'continuity' between the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* lies in their adopting different theoretical approaches to what are essentially the same problems about logic and language, meaning and mind. Philosophy in Hanna's eyes, and so presumably in Wittgenstein's, if clearly not explicitly so, is a Kantian critique into the limits of possible human experience and possible human cognition, one which by the time of the *Tractatus* had become a critique of human language; and whereas the *Tractatus* embodies an essentialist *a priori* reduction of logic, language, meaning and even the world itself to the solipsistic mind, the *Investigations* discovers all of these embedded in what Hanna refers to as 'the everyday actions and practices of natural-language-using rational animals in their ordinary world' (*Ibid.*, 12 *et seq.*)

This is far from being an unfamiliar story, one which can if required be combined with Wittgenstein's partially therapeutic outlook in the *Investigations*, though not in the *Tractatus*, if only as an attempt to accommodate the inconsistency implied by the not uncommon claim that his manifestly theoretical procedures in that book are at odds with his methodological pronouncements (§§ 89 - 133). But the tendency to see Wittgenstein as a latter-day Kant, especially in the *Investigations*, results from an almost inevitable puzzlement over what he can possibly be getting at in presenting 'reminders' of 'what we do' or of the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena (§ 90) if, in directing us in this passage to the '*possibilities*' of phenomena, he is *not* drawing our attention in some way to the bounds of sense, the (transcendental) conditions of the *possibility* of experience. Yet he goes on to state clearly that the *kinds* of statement about the past, present and future duration of events that Augustine recalls, those which can enable him to resolve the (bogus) *philosophical* problems which trouble him, are not of course themselves philosophical statements about these events but instead perfectly ordinary ones. He is suggesting that the philosophical problems arise from adherence to misleading pictures (§ 115) that lie in our language, pictures which repeat themselves to us inexorably when doing philosophy, but which in the final analysis are no more than incidental accompaniments to the *practice* of talking about the duration of events, or about sensations, consciousness or whatever may be the subject of dispute.

Many readers will find an inevitable tension between Hanna's often uncontroversial references, e.g., to meaningful language as 'essentially embedded in basic human linguistic practices called *language-games*' which 'are essentially embedded in actual historical networks of human activity and human culture called *forms of life*', (*Ibid.*, 14 et seq.) - though one may question what the term 'essentially' is supposed to be doing here - and the theoretical framework he imposes on the texts. This framework is always hovering in the background, an incongruous accompaniment to the picture of a Wittgenstein whose aim is to issue 'reminders' enabling the philosopher to reorientate himself towards the problems of philosophy:

....it is crucial to note Wittgenstein's appeal to semantic function and application (words as tools for doing things, or the action-embeddedness of language), *norms* (governing ideals or standards of language use), *context-dependency* (indexicality), and *actual or possible communities of human speakers* (transcendental-anthropocentric communitarianism). (*Ibid.*, 18)

This is entirely consistent with Hanna's avowed aim of revealing that the first twenty sections of the *Investigations* contain an opening argument for Wittgenstein's *meaning-is-use* thesis, and that this argument is a philosophical *roadmap* for the later arguments he provides in its support (*Ibid.*, 11). The reader comes to see *via* a 'deconstructive critique of the philosophical living picture of Pure Referentialism etched into the Augustinian picture of language' that the *meaning-is-use* thesis is the best overall *explanation* of all the relevant linguistic facts (*Ibid.*, 19 and repeated verbatim in 23). Here Hanna illustrates how easy it can become for the philosopher to provide an interpretation of these passages exhibiting a mainly theoretical outlook even although there is plenty of clear evidence that the overall intention behind them may be pointing in a quite different direction. As a way of illustrating what Hanna takes to be central to Pure Referentialism, for example, the following passage is significant, primarily because he repeats its content almost verbatim on at least two further occasions during his exposition:

All words are names, and the meaning of a word is nothing but the object it names. Furthermore all names are proper names, and the meaning of every basic proper name in a basic proposition (whether a basic singular term or a basic general term - a.k.a. a 'concept-word') is nothing but the referent or bearer of the name, i.e. an absolutely simple individual concrete object or a definite abstract concept or universal. (*Ibid.*,16, repeated as *Step A* in 20, and appearing again in 28).

Quoting § 1, Hanna sees 'the Augustinian language-game' as what he refers to as 'a diorama of Pure Referentialism', anticipating Cartesian epistemology and metaphysics of mind, Husserl's semantic phenomenology, Carnap's 'methodological solipsism', not to mention the transcendental semantic solipsism that Wittgenstein is shown to have adhered to in the *Tractatus*, a solipsism referred to in § 24 and countered in the later Private Language Argument (*Ibid.*, 27). For many readers, this overtly theoretical approach, with its only too sweeping historical survey of past philosophers, will seem superficial, blurring important distinctions and begging too many questions. Nevertheless, Robert Hanna has managed to provide within a fairly small compass as good and thought-provoking a theoretical assessment as anyone probably could of the artillery that Wittgenstein marshalls to attack and successfully destroy the Tractarian target he is usually taken to be aiming at in those opening passages of the *Investigations*. We are probably unlikely to see its like again soon. This is particularly true when at present the interpretative pendulum has swung in a completely opposite direction, whether the concept of *therapy* with which it is accompanied in any particular case is of an extreme person-relative and person-specific kind or not.

Whilst in his own way Michael Luntley in 'What's doing? Activity, naming and Wittgenstein's response to Augustine', adopts a no less theoretical approach to those early passages of the *Investigations* which occupy Hanna, he discovers a more approachable Augustine, largely because the question which occupies him relates to a different yet wholly familiar aspect of these early sections. To what extent can

the interpreter provide an explanatory account of language acquisition if what Wittgenstein has to say about the activities in which the child participates in the course of acquiring conceptual mastery, already places him within a normative, linguistic context? On the other hand, if one attempts to go behind these activities to reach the untutored child, another familiar problem arises:

.....for any account of activities that characterize a language learner where those activities fall outwith the practice of meaningful language use, it is tempting to think that an insurmountable bootstrapping problem faces any attempt to show how, on the basis of these rudimentary activities, one can explain entry into the full-blown intentional actions of concept-using subjects. This dilemma faces anyone trying to give an explanatory account of learning. (*Ibid.*, 30)

Nevertheless, Luntley wishes to challenge the common ground between the two opposing interpretative camps - Baker & Hacker *v* the 'New Wittgensteinians' - who disagree about what can be provided in the absence of any kind of explanation, by exploring an idea that would place the child's activities *between* the options of already appearing to have acquired conceptual mastery and not having begun to acquire it at all. Defining the common reading in which no account of the acquisition of conceptual mastery can be given, as a 'modest' one, a reading that Luntley finds in both Baker & Hacker and in David Pears, he hopes to provide a suitably immodest alternative by drawing our attention to activities which exhibit normativity without the prior acquisition of concepts.

Luntley notes that modest readings are encouraged with the acknowledgement that purely scientific accounts of language acquisition do not touch the philosophical problem on the table (*Ibid.*, 34), presumably because an account, say, of some aspect of cerebral function upon which language-learning may be causally dependent already presupposes the normativity of linguistic mastery. He then gradually prepares his reader for the idea of a middle-way between his impoverished empiricist who requires no prior linguistic mastery or 'rational engagement with things' and is therefore going nowhere, and his rationalist who merely presupposes prior concept possession

and so wrongly assimilates learning a first language to learning a second one (§ 32), by looking towards activities in which his subject displays a directedness towards things:

For sure we can organise behaviour with respect to concepts, but can we not also organise behaviour with respect to objects ? We can attend to an object, lock on to the object and by so doing this attentive engagement shapes our options for further behaviour. When we do this, we act with a directedness with respect to the object, not to a concept.

(Ibid., 37)

In support of his idea, Luntley expresses a dislike for the ‘fantasy’ dubbed the ‘Augustinian Picture’ because, as he sees it, Wittgenstein has no genuine criticism of Augustine at all. Far from illustrating his possession of a ‘language of thought’, Augustine’s child is a subject who seeks, possesses, rejects and avoids things, a child who learns words in contexts in which his intentions and bodily movements are part of the natural language of all peoples by which they first express states of mind. By at least indirectly drawing our attention to a central feature of Wittgenstein’s thinking, one indicating that we directly experience another person’s anger, fear, or pain *as* pain-behaviour, ‘Augustine is articulating a piece of common sense that Wittgenstein famously explored and legitimized in his treatment of the relation of inner and outer.’ *(Ibid., 40)*. Luntley’s Augustine has turned into Wittgenstein’s hero of the piece instead of into his villain.

It is perhaps to be expected, therefore, that Luntley should see the builders in § 2 as agents who direct their behaviour towards things without exhibiting a capacity which is already conceptually structured *(Ibid., 44)*, just as he takes the training in § 6 to involve the exercise of a capacity on behalf of an active agent to direct responses to things actively attended to. Training is *not* a form of stimulus-response conditioning in which pre-existing ‘causal wiring’ leads only to repeated causal regularities. Indeed, he disagrees with Meredith Williams over what he sees as her acceptance of precisely this model (1), one involved in her distinction between the roles she allocates to master and apprentice, where all the real work is effectively done by the teachers who, as it were, have

constantly to give their pupils the 'benefit of the doubt' in order to prime their gradual advance into and through the learning process (Cf. *Ibid.*, 46. Footnote 34). For Luntley, on the other hand, a subject already exhibits a basic normativity prior to concept possession through 'holding oneself to account for how one's actions bear on one's engagement with things' (*Ibid.*, 45). This, for Luntley, is a form of individual self-legislating, a form of score keeping which is definitely not social in nature; and here he once again points out how distanced he takes himself to be from Meredith Williams with his adoption of a stance on the opposing side of the community *v* individual divide (*Ibid.*, 48).

Whilst admitting that his idea of a basic directedness to activity prior to concept possession is something of a promissory note in Wittgenstein's text, something about which Wittgenstein actually says very little, Luntley believes that he has provided an 'individualist' explanatory account of how language-learning gets going which does not presuppose prior conceptual mastery. There can be little doubt that both Luntley and Williams are to some degree involved in a reconstruction, rather than in a mere interpretation of Wittgenstein's texts, yet this need not be regarded as a fault on the ground that unless the commentator makes certain initial assumptions, he will be in danger of having nothing (theoretical) to say. But if we accept that even Williams does not treat the mind of her pupil as a *tabula rasa*, and that basic perceptual capacities and competencies of some kind must be a prerequisite for training into language acquisition, then the strictly philosophical question at stake must lie in asking what those capacities and competencies ought initially to presuppose.

But how can this possibly be decided? The reader is bound to be suspicious of Luntley's talk of individual self-regulating and score keeping, just because this would appear to gain what meaning it has from the kind of application we might make of it in everyday life. Can these more sophisticated ideas really be applicable to the child prior to the acquisition of a language? Indeed, can Luntley's half-way house between his rationalist and his empiricist account really be anything more than a redescription of the phenomena which merely serves to smuggle in these pre-conceptual if normative capacities through the back-door? The fact that the answer to this question turns on nothing more than how one chooses to describe the phenomena, that we are *not*

dealing here with anything that might be regarded as a verifiable hypothesis, otherwise we would be taking part in an entirely different form of activity - though there are empirical questions in the neighbourhood - ought to make us suspicious about the nature of the enterprise. As it turns out, not all empiricists have been as parsimonious as Luntley actually suggests. Here is Ayer:

The simple point which I am making is that no child could be taught a language unless he were able to perform acts of primary recognition. He has to recognise the visual, tactile, and vocal manifestations of his mother as the same as their forerunners, and he has, in the same fashion, to recognise the sign 'Mamma' or something like it, as designating these phenomena. I have spoken of them as instances of one or other kind, because I assume that to acquire the concept of one's mother, or indeed of oneself, as a particular object, persisting in time, is a relatively sophisticated achievement, proceeding from a prior identification of recurrent patterns. (2)

The tendency amongst at least some modern empiricists has been to regard this capacity to 'identify recurrent patterns' either as the foundation for, or as something which is already taken to involve, our manifest ability to identify and reidentify items of the same kind; and it is wholly characteristic that Ayer should precede these comments with the claim that whilst as a matter of empirical fact, it is improbable that a wolf-child left without any form of human contact would be able to acquire a language by himself, this is at most a causal and not a logical impossibility.

But where does this lead us? It would appear that if we insist on beginning with a rigid dichotomy between the normative and the non-normative, where the normative includes the possession of language and concepts, then the (philosophical) question of how something non-normative can become something normative will always appear to require the exercise of a magic wand; and whilst it is Luntley's aim to overcome this dichotomy, it is open to question whether his way of doing so avoids charges of begging the question, if it should be an inevitable

consequence of this kind of attempt to provide within a *philosophical* context an *explanatory* account of language acquisition, that it should have to presuppose what it actually has to prove.

Yet Luntley's general approach is very much in keeping with a principle which is distinctly Wittgensteinian, even Aristotelian, in spirit, the principle that in nature as we relate to it there can be no sharp dividing line between what we take to be the normative and what we take to be the non-normative. There can be no sharp dividing line in practice between behaviour which is mechanical, without thought, the manifestation of Luntley's purely causal interactions, and behaviour which can gradually come to be the expression of thought, of intention, of goal directedness and, ultimately, of language acquisition and of concepts.

On this presentation, which is *descriptive* of how we relate to the phenomena as agents acting in the world, there will inevitably be a hierarchy of forms beginning - no doubt the choice here is totally arbitrary - at one end of the scale with the amoeba or with the worm, and ending at the other with the articulate human being as the possessor of a spoken language expressing concepts. But on this view, just what it is to possess a concept, especially amongst the higher animals, will itself be a matter of degree, just because what it is to possess a language - written, spoken, sign, gesture - and what communication *is* amongst various differing species, is something that we might wish to be much more clear about when doing philosophy. Yet the kinds of concepts, including *thinking* and *understanding*, that Wittgenstein discusses, directly enter into this wider perspective, reflecting a certain specific way of approaching the phenomena which is *not* explanatory, but which views us as agents. There can be little doubt that Luntley's paper in discussing those important topics in the way that it does, adds considerably to our understanding of what this debate is or ought to be about, whether or not one is inclined to side with its heroic interpretation of Wittgenstein's Augustine.

Dale Jacquette in 'Measure for measure ? Wittgenstein on language-game criteria and the Paris standard metre bar' echoes the puzzlement of a number of commentators by asking just what it is that Wittgenstein is up to with his claim (§ 50) that there is *one* thing of which one can say neither that it is, nor that it is not one metre long. It is worth noting in passing that in the course of coming to grips with

Wittgenstein's thinking on this question, he has occasion to disagree with a 2002 paper of Heather Gert (*Ibid.*, 50 Footnote 1), who has recently repeated her claim that the standard metre *is* one metre long, in a new paper in the 2010 Jolley collection (*Wittgenstein Key Concepts*, Acumen). Jacqueline begins by making a fairly common assumption about one practical role performed by the standard metre bar:

When questions arise as to whether a linear measurement is correct, the matter can in principle be settled by appeal to the Paris metre bar, which has been chosen as setting the standard. The problems that should continue to haunt us are: (1) how the standard metre bar can possibly decide questions about whether or not anything is exactly one metre in length if it is not itself exactly one metre in length; (2) how the logical consistency problem can be overcome without substituting predicate complementation for Wittgenstein's negation ('not' '*nicht*'); and (3) whether the language-game role played by the standard metre bar can be properly understood without exempting it from itself either being or not being precisely one metre long (*Ibid.*, 50 et seq.).

It may be thought that his first question pretty much answers itself because - as Jacqueline will come to show - the condition under which the standard metre bar as a *means* of representation can after all be used to measure *other* things is precisely that it cannot be used to measure *itself*. The second question arises because Jacqueline has already suggested that Wittgenstein's statement about the standard metre bar, is a way of drawing our attention to a Rylean category-mistake along the lines of asking to be shown the college after having been taken on a tour of all its buildings and grounds. Yet he has decided that it is rather more than this because Wittgenstein is really referring to the clear inapplicability of predicating *length* to the bar. Yet there is no genuine reason not to conclude that this is a category mistake of a special kind, in which case it may appear that Jacqueline is making rather heavy weather of Wittgenstein's text in raising a logical consistency problem at all. It may also be thought that the answer to the third question automatically follows from the answer

provided to the first.

But the more interesting question here is why we should be led to believe with Jacqueline that the standard metre bar 'serves as a model by which other metre sticks are judged accurate' (*Ibid.*) unless this is just a way of saying that it represents a standard. The fact remains, however, that an appeal to the standard metre bar *per se* at *any* particular point in time would by no means always count as the last word on defining a distance of one metre. If, for example, the weather were exceptionally hot, then the bar might have expanded to such a degree that it could no longer act as *the* criterion for determining what a metre is. This would, of course, tend to presuppose that considerations of temperature had already entered into the original definition of the length of one metre as, say, that of a bar of some material or other that satisfied certain atmospheric criteria. In fact, it is worthwhile recalling that the famous prototype metre bar lodged at Sevres in 1889 and made of platinum and iridium, was intended to represent a length of one metre defined in exactly this way, the relevant temperature being in this case the melting point of ice. The actual metre bar in Paris of a much earlier vintage (1799), and made of platinum, was a prototype resulting from a definition of length that depended on an accurate calculation of the distance between the Earth's equator and the north pole. In this case, the length of one metre was defined as one ten millionth part of what this distance actually is, a distance represented within the 'length' of the bar.

This points first of all to the total inaccuracy of the not uncommon idea, often assumed in discussing the metre bar in a philosophical context, that the standard metre as we know it is the consequence of someone's deciding that a chosen bar of some arbitrary length shall hencefore set the standard in terms of which the term 'one metre' is defined, and that it is *ultimately* by comparison with this bar that the accuracy of our implements can be determined. Consequently, and more importantly, it points to the conclusion that from the perspective of our going about our business of taking metric measurements, the fact that there *is* a standard metre bar in Paris or anywhere else is quite irrelevant to what is clearly the Wittgensteinian point that what *really* matters in the application of our system of metric measurement is the agreement that

we share in how our rulers and tape-measures should in practice be used. Consequently, if we wish to resolve a dispute about the actual length of an item as determined by a particular tool in cases where some doubt or inconsistency has arisen, then we will employ appropriate criteria within these particular contexts - checking with other rulers *etc.* - to determine where the fault arises. The proper practical 'standard' of what a metre is, is in this way carried by all the tape-measures and rulers that there are, insofar as they are all used in the agreed practice of (metric) measurement. Jacquette's idea that 'the standard metre bar can be used as intended to check the accuracy of metre sticks designed for industrial and household use' (*Ibid.*, 53), whilst not obviously inaccurate, only serves to mislocate any *genuine* role that can have been originally granted to the metre bar by the French National Assembly.

In the course of his exposition, Jacquette raises a fourth question, one relating to the *Tractatus*, about the significance of Wittgenstein's statement about the standard metre bar for the meaning of the claim that one can attribute neither being nor non-being to elements, 'a point that has not usually been emphasized by commentators on PI 50' (*Ibid.*, 52); and here his final answer, not unreasonably, is that 'He seems to want only to understand what it would mean for someone - his earlier self - to deny that fundamental elements could be the meaningful subjects of existence or non-existence predications' (*Ibid.*, 59).

Prior to his section about Saul Kripke on the standard metre, Jacquette provides a thought experiment which strangely neglects the usual surrounding circumstances in which measurements take place. If, on his example, we make a replica from the standard metre bar in Paris, and the replica is at some point used to 'measure' the standard bar, then if there is a discernible difference in the expected result of measurement, there will be no way of telling which bar had altered in length, or even if both bars have actually changed. This is the basis for his suggestion that certain alternative possibilities 'cannot be criteriologically distinguished in practice' (*Ibid.*, 57). But it is perfectly clear that this little scenario could never be realised in practice, precisely because it is proposed in the absence of any normal surroundings which would provide available criteria enabling us to determine what changes in the bars, if any, had in fact occurred. This has a bearing on his criticism of Kripke.

The final part of Jacquette's paper criticises Saul Kripke on the standard metre, where the fundamental point does not lie with the criteriological problem that he sees as an insurmountable barrier for Kripke's argument. Whereas Kripke's distinction between the *epistemological* status of the statement that stick S is one metre long at time t_0 as *a priori*, and its *metaphysical* status as *contingent*, is arrived at by looking at this statement in complete isolation from any practical circumstances in which someone might wish to use a ruler to measure the length of an item, Wittgenstein's distinction between a means of representation and something represented relates directly to the role of *any* tool in the practical business of taking measurements. Whilst this standard metre can be thought of as a *practical* means of comparison, this is not its *primary* role, since in practice it need not exist at all. Kripke inhabits a different (philosophical) world from Wittgenstein, who would recognise no employment in this case for any distinction between the *epistemic* and the *metaphysical* within the language-game, for it has no bearing on the *role* played by the standard metre in the practice of measuring.

If Jacquette's actual criticism of Kripke misfires, this is rather because Kripke does not make the false assumption that there is an *independent* standard for inches 'in terms of which the length in inches of the metre stick can be evaluated', an invalid assumption because 'this papers-over the criteriological problem to which Wittgenstein in the target passages calls attention' (*Ibid.*, 61 *et seq.*). Yet there is no criteriological problem. Jacquette is thinking of a situation apart from any normal context. As he puts it:

To posit an equivalence between metres and inches can never amount to anything more than approximation, if the two units are truly independent and their equivalence not merely stipulative. We must then ask whether we can ever get exact equivalences where entirely different units are concerned.....because even in principle we can only physically compare them, and physical comparisons and judgements of coextension are inherently approximate (*Ibid.*, 61)

If this sounds astonishing, it is because we do in practice 'stipulate' or come to an agreement over just how 'long' one metre is in imperial terms. We can, for example, alter or extend our 39.37 inches

to as many decimal places as we require in order to reflect in imperial terms the level of accuracy at which we have arrived for specific purposes in defining a length of one metre. Jacqueline concludes by claiming that his approach has managed to make clear, coherent sense of Wittgenstein's seemingly paradoxical claim about the standard metre, and on this single point one cannot but agree. But the route to this conclusion has not only been rather circuitous, but the reader is bound to conclude that it has also involved a number of wrong turnings as well.

In 'Wittgenstein on family resemblance concepts', Michael Forster explains that in § 65 Wittgenstein uses the notion of family resemblance to defuse the objection that he had up to this point purposely avoided answering the question that originally had provided him with his greatest headache, the question about '*the general form of propositions and of language*'. But Forster takes this notion to have a far wider significance in Wittgenstein's oeuvre than is often realised, a fact obscured by the extent to which the text of the *Investigations* has been 'pruned' to its bare essentials. Whilst this ought theoretically to be irrelevant to a proper understanding and appreciation of its content, Forster makes the clearly valid point that an appeal to surrounding works and papers can help in our appreciation of the wider significance that family resemblance plays in Wittgenstein's later work. He also clearly argues that whilst many concepts do conform to the family resemblance model, this is not true of all concepts, and it is not true of concepts of colour (*Ibid.*, 57 *et seq.* and Footnote 8). He takes it that Wittgenstein has no intention to deny that such a concept has instances that share a common feature, only that this is not what justifies its general application, and he claims that it would be wrong to think of central examples like 'game' as having more than one meaning. He does, however, criticise Wittgenstein for failing to distinguish properly between family resemblance and vagueness, and he also takes him to task for failing to distinguish between a concept that is already of the family resemblance kind, and one that may be developed in this general direction.

On a wider front, Forster's Wittgenstein is fundamentally opposed to a basic Platonic idea, that any general term must pick out a single form shared by all its instances and capable of being defined in terms of conditions both necessary and sufficient for its application; although, as he

reveals, complications arise from a failure to properly distinguish between what are in effect these two separate conditions. Of rather more interest, however, is the related question whether concepts which are rule-governed can also be of a family resemblance kind, because, as Forster notes, there simply are no non-trivial necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of this kind of concept *at all*. As he puts it:

Just as Wittgenstein's point about vagueness shows that 'rules' in the relevant sense must not (as might initially have seemed natural) be equated with *strict rules*, so his discovery of family resemblance shows that they must not (as might also initially have seemed natural) be equated with, or conceived as requiring, *specifications of non-trivial essential necessary and sufficient conditions for application* (*Ibid.*, 76 *et seq.*).

Having expressed what is surely an acceptable account of Wittgenstein on rules, however, he continues by drawing a conclusion which can only serve to arouse puzzlement in his reader:

This *negative* moral, emerging as it does at *PI* 65ff., foreshadows, and illustrates by means of an especially dramatic example, the broader lesson of the rule-following argument that grasping a rule is not fundamentally a matter of being able to give an 'interpretation' of it (even when that can be done), but rather of being able to conform to it in particular cases:In the area of family resemblance concepts the failure of a picture of grasping rules as fundamentally a matter of having an 'interpretation' is especially dramatic because here it turns out that there *is no* satisfactory 'interpretation' (*Ibid.*, 77)

In short, what Wittgenstein calls obeying the rule and going against it in actual cases (§ 201) is clearly identified by Forster with applying a term correctly 'to the various particular collections of features which relate to one another in the appropriate "criss-crossing" or "overlapping" fashion' (*Ibid.*). Yet this indicates that Forster is equating the notion of *interpreting a rule* with the idea of

providing non-trivial necessary and sufficient conditions for its application, a point confirmed by the suggestion that when we do ordinarily obey the rule in some particular case by applying a term to some appropriate collection of features, there *is no* satisfactory 'interpretation'.

But this is an extraordinary conclusion to draw, and one totally unwarranted, because what *is* meant in the text by giving a rule an 'interpretation' is that we (mistakenly) treat our intention of following it as a way of making a stab in the dark, 'as if each [interpretation] contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it' (§ 201). That is why Wittgenstein suggests that we restrict the term 'interpretation' to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another, because the idea that our following a rule should appear to us to be a matter of making a stab in the dark, is the consequence (when doing *philosophy*) of our being caught between two misleading pictures, one which tells us on the one hand that the future development of the expression is in some way already present in grasping the use, yet is not really present (§ 197), and one which tells us that every course of action we propose can be made out to accord with the rule (§ 201).

Forster elaborates on Wittgenstein's anti-Platonic stance in the pages which follow, finding that in relation to our psychological concepts, the continuing demand for a single common feature and non-trivial essential necessary and sufficient conditions for a term's application contributes to the philosophical error of *dualism* (*Ibid.*, 80). This problem Wittgenstein confronts, according to Forster, with the response that psychological concepts 'refer to patterns of physical behaviour (albeit in a distinctive "criterial", or assertibility-conditioned, way)'. For those who see Wittgenstein wedded to the more sophisticated concept of expressive behaviour, and therefore in this context to the *grammar* of truth-conditions, this will seem unduly regressive, a return to ideas which have surely been superseded in the secondary literature. The notion, which Forster classifies as straightforwardly behaviourist if nevertheless controversial as applied to Wittgenstein (*Ibid.*, Footnote 46) that 'the psychological state or process in question can be found at the level of the physical behaviour' (*Ibid.*) whilst in this way a retrograde step, is nevertheless found by Forster to be a *virtue* of Wittgenstein's thought: his *special* type of reductionism does not conform to the usual reductive model which does

require strict necessary and sufficient conditions for the reduction of mental states to physical states. This confirms his adherence to the 'assertibility conditions' model, a point echoed in Forster's claim that whilst one component of the reduction, the *behavioural*, is susceptible to reduction in the manner of family resemblance, the other component, the *real disposition*, is not, a recognition that this separate component *is* playing a special role in his thinking about Wittgenstein on other minds (*Ibid.*, 86). Forster has provided a perceptive account of family resemblance concepts, even if it is at times accompanied by some rather surprising and perplexing, if nevertheless illuminating proposals.

Hans Johann-Glock extends our understanding of 'Wittgenstein on Concepts' by providing a much more general account than Forster of just what a concept is and how we are to understand its use in Wittgenstein's oeuvre. Concepts, for example, cannot be *equated* with the meanings of words, although he claims that they are individuated along the same lines. If, however, we take what he understands to be Wittgenstein's notion that meaning is determined by explanations of meaning, and combine it with the Fregean notion of cognitive equivalence, then an adequate criterion of the identity of concepts may be seen to emerge. By outlining connections between concept-possession and concepts, and explanation, understanding and linguistic meaning, Glock sees Wittgenstein as the provider of an important if not definitive addition to our understanding of what a concept is. His motivation is outlined as follows:

While there are theories of concepts inspired by Wittgenstein, I know of no scholarly interpretation of his own views concerning the nature of concepts. There is a straightforward excuse for this failure, namely that these views are hard to pinpoint. With two exceptions. The first is material from the early 1930s - especially dictations to Waismann and Schlick; the second is material from his final period. In these passages Wittgenstein discusses the nature of concepts explicitly and at some length. What is more, he links it to central topics of his later work, notably meaning, understanding, rules and the nature of philosophy.

These ideas have not been appreciated sufficiently by scholars.

My essay is an attempt to fill this lacuna. (*Ibid.*, 91)

Few scholars today would wish to tackle these questions at the appropriate level of generality, and Glock is undoubtedly one who can assemble within the short space of twenty pages or so the extraordinary range of considerations that enter into filling the lacuna that he discerns, including concepts as the source of philosophical problems, as the basis for 'analysis' (§ 383) through describing the use of words, as reflecting our interests and form of life, and as a pointer to the autonomy of grammar (*Ibid.*, 91). Furthermore, in philosophy there has been a fundamental distinction between 'objectivist' notions of concepts as objects or abstractions from linguistic practice, and 'subjectivist' notions of concepts as phenomena of the human mind or brain. Glock sees the former (roughly) represented by Wittgenstein, Ryle, and neo-Fregeans, the latter by Fodor and others. Glock raises five questions about concepts which he considers throughout the remainder of his paper, and Wittgenstein's answers to these as assessed by Glock relate to concept-possession (*priority* question), the mastery of the use of an expression (*possession* question), the way in which and the degree to which concepts are as distinguishable one from another as are word meanings (*individuation* question), the technique of using words (*definition* question), and the role of concepts in classification and inference (*function* question). Glock's paper demands close reading, yet those who are already committed to a more therapeutic perspective than he is, are almost bound to see even the attempt to classify Wittgenstein's reflections in this way as somehow at odds with his overall perspective on philosophy. Glock's paper offers a significant challenge to this opposing approach.

The major difficulty a reader will encounter in coming to terms with 'Wittgenstein vs contextualism' by James Bridges, will inevitably rest in his ability to acquire a proper grasp of what *contextualism* is, and as a first approximation he takes it to be the view that 'the content of an utterance is shaped in far-reaching and unobvious ways by the circumstances, the context, in which it is uttered' (*Ibid.*, 109). Consequently, the same sentence uttered at different times might vary in 'content' - surely a highly dangerous word - content that fails, as Bridges puts it, to 'map' onto any obvious indexical

elements in the sentence' (*Ibid.*)

One of the worst possible ways of treating the writings of Wittgenstein is to first of all create a pigeonhole prior to discovering whether, with sufficient ingenuity, it is one in which his thoughts can be made to fit, and it may at first sight appear that the position in this case is made more difficult by the choice of Charles Travis as the prime expositor of Wittgenstein as a philosopher who is intent on introducing and explaining 'the pervasive context-dependence of content': Travis is far from being an easy writer, both in *The Uses of Sense: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: OUP 1989) and in the later work *Thoughts Footing: A Theme in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: OUP 2006), so the interpretation of his views itself requires careful consideration.

Bridges succeeds in making his, and his reader's task easier, however, by spending almost half of his paper discussing the familiar topic of Wittgenstein on proper names. The 'Moses' examples of § 79 and § 87, as interpreted by Travis, form Bridges' main subject for debate, and in a nutshell he initially presents a Travis who argues for the conclusion based on § 79 that in different contexts of utterance, Wittgenstein stipulates that the name 'Moses' would have different 'senses' because it would be 'associated' with different descriptions, even although something called the 'meaning' of the name, encapsulating its 'permanent' semantic properties, would remain constant. This overall standpoint for Bridges is a form of contextualism.

Yet it is precisely the idea that the sense of the name varies from one context to another that Bridges takes to be the very target at which Wittgenstein is aiming in § 79. The reason for this is that Bridges wishes to distinguish between the sense of the name as it is generally applied, and the requirements of the particular context in which the name may be used, *e.g.*, one in which a piece of information about Moses previously unknown to someone is illuminately conveyed to him in conversation. Bridges argues that satisfying this requirement does not affect the general 'meaning' of the name. Furthermore, in his reference to the death of the individual named 'N', Wittgenstein is clearly not prepared to endorse the idea that the 'sense' of the name in a statement about the death of N is going to vary depending on whether N was originally thought to satisfy some description which is

later found to have been inapplicable to him.

What Bridges would appear to be indirectly pointing towards here, although there is no indication that this is something with which he would agree, is that in the final analysis the items of information about its bearer which a person might very well mention, when asked to do so, in order to explain his use of the name of some historical person like Moses, are in *one* respect quite incidental to his understanding of the name in the contexts in which he uses it. Although this must seem paradoxical, it is consistent with what must surely be the wholly Wittgensteinian point that to actively participate in the practice of using a name correctly to talk about its bearer, a speaker need not in doing so have any of these items of information about him, or any associated images relating to him, actually in mind. The paradox arises solely because it would normally be taken to be incumbent upon anyone who claimed to know *who* Moses is, to be able to relate information of precisely this kind, even if this should be on a sliding scale from 'the man mentioned in passing by Jones in our Biblical discussions' onwards to a complete familiarity with the biography of Moses. Whilst indirectly 'reminding' us of facts of this particular kind, Wittgenstein nevertheless has no intention of providing a *theory* about proper names in which these facts may play any significant role.

Bridges continues by discussing the notion of family resemblance, and here Travis is understood to be guilty of claiming that what we state to be so of an object, in called it a 'game', say, will vary from occasion to occasion; so that the varying features of different activities that are collectively called 'games' will themselves determine that different 'understandings' will surely accompany these different applications of the term. Bridges once again argues that Wittgenstein aims to establish that exactly the opposite is so, because what is being applied from case to case is the *same* concept. Bridges' paper illustrates the tension, even conflict, that seems integral to the interpretation of Wittgenstein on these and similar matters. It results from a failure on the part of the reader, if not on the part of the commentator, to reconcile the temptation to enter into theoretical debate, with the methodological pronouncements with which we are all only too familiar.

Richard Rorty begins his paper 'Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn' with the controversial

question whether Wittgenstein is even worth reading, and can anything be learnt from him? He remarks that philosophers differ profoundly in their assessment of Wittgenstein. In Rorty's view, these differences of opinion reflect parallel disagreements over the extent to which philosophical problems are understood to be problems about language. Philosophers whom he calls 'naturalists' typically see little value in Wittgenstein's work, and neither do they think that 'the linguistic turn' was a good idea. Rorty introduces Philip Pettit as someone who claims that Wittgenstein has nothing to tell us about the central problem of philosophy, the clash between our ordinary world of spontaneous everyday practices and the world of clinical scientific investigation. Timothy Williams equally wishes to break free of Kantian and Wittgensteinian ways of thinking with his suggestion that perhaps there can be no thought or talk about reality without reflecting on reality itself: 'What there is determines what there is to mean.' (*Ibid.*, Williamson quoted by Rorty, 130).

Within his first two pages the reader will therefore find that Rorty's discussion is taking place at a fairly high level of generality. Not only does it beg a number of questions, but to most philosophers today the very notion of 'the linguistic turn' must seem outdated because, for them, there can be no possible conception of philosophy to which this term could *not* apply. Not only that, but Rorty himself has been convinced by Wittgenstein that the 'central problem' to which he refers is one that Wittgenstein effectively dissolves: Rorty's naturalists are no more than reactionaries who neglect the lessons that Wittgenstein has to teach. However, he sees a disagreement between those 'pragmatic' followers of Wittgenstein, including himself, who regard the 'later Wittgenstein' as the provider of a better theory about the relation between 'language and non-language' than the 'early Wittgenstein', and 'therapists' who see Wittgenstein as the repudiator of temptations to indulge in any form of theory about this 'relation' or about anything else. If Ricketts, Goldfarb, Diamond and Conant are 'resolute therapists' who renounce philosophy as an enterprise, then Rorty's 'pragmatists' are able to detach Wittgenstein's peculiar view of philosophy itself from his successful (theoretical) treatment of philosophical problems. *They* see Wittgenstein as the provider of a new outlook which releases philosophers from a Cartesian-Lockean mindset (*Ibid.*, 132).

Having introduced these three separate camps, the naturalists who do not even read Wittgenstein, and another two sets of followers who read him very differently, it is Rorty's aim to explore the differences between these followers in greater detail. This is quite apart from any misgivings the reader may by this point be harbouring over Rorty's belief that the real issues at stake can even be properly discussed at this level of generality. Whilst Rorty then claims to have been persuaded 'by reading Conant, Witherspoon, Diamond and other contributors to *The New Wittgenstein*' (*Ibid.*, 137), that with their evaluations of 'nonsense' and of a Wittgenstein who aimed to produce the *Tractatus* as a self-imploding work, they have succeeded in providing him with a truly illuminating account of Wittgenstein's intentions, he nevertheless wishes to retain his wholly 'pragmatic' outlook. As he earlier argues, Wittgenstein's real contribution rests in his having been able to formulate arguments which anticipated, complemented and reinforced Quine & Davidson on the language-fact distinction, and Sellars & Brandom on knowledge by acquaintance. According to the pragmatic Wittgensteinian, 'comparing and contrasting the writings of these later philosophers with the *Philosophical Investigations* helps us filter out what is merely idiosyncratic in Wittgenstein's writings. Pragmatic Wittgensteinians do not want to recapture Wittgenstein's own way of thinking, but rather to restate his best arguments in more effective ways' (*Ibid.*, 134).

The reader will have heard all of this before, and from lesser philosophers than Rorty, so that even if the dispiriting effect of these observations is partly alleviated by his mildly amusing aside that '*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre*' (*Ibid.*, 137) - commenting on a resolute interpretation - he will unfortunately discover that the remainder of the paper serves only to restate Rorty's basic claims. He observes towards its close, for example, that rather than regard philosophical talk as something which needs to be 'elucidated out of existence' (*Ibid.*, 144), it should be regarded as just another, yet different way of talking, 'on all fours with suggestions made by scientists and poets' (*Ibid.*)

Any reader who is even remotely inclined to see this disappointing reaction as a failure to engage with the spirit of Wittgenstein's writings and with the way in which his approach is capable of illuminating the nature of philosophical problems, regardless of any temptation he may have to

gravitate towards either wholly 'resolute' or 'irresolute' readings, with their varying interpretations of therapy, must feel that Rorty's discussion of Wittgenstein at this point reveals little appreciation of the real nature of his contribution to the subject. Rorty simply fails to observe Wittgenstein 'at work' in the elucidation and resolution of specific philosophical problems. Wittgenstein's philosophy is just not amenable to the kind of objective assessment in which the value of his 'arguments' in the discussion of familiar philosophical problems can be assessed alongside those of his contemporaries. Those markedly 'idiosyncratic' features of his method which Rorty wishes to 'filter out', for example, are usually those which play an active role in undermining the *pictures* that are responsible for the philosopher's inability to look at things from a different and more illuminating perspective.

It is therefore hardly surprising that in 'Rorty's Wittgenstein', Paul Horwich should issue a reply to him that incorporates a notion of 'therapy' stronger than that which he believes that Rorty is seeking to undermine. Assimilating the notion of *philosophical confusion* to *irrationality* rather than to *senselessness*, for example, Horwich would prefer to employ a rather loose, informal notion of 'nonsense' in using which Wittgenstein need not be seen to be regarding the theoretical positions he is normally understood to be attacking or undermining as examples of literal gibberish. Indeed, it is hard to see how a philosopher who is mistakenly adhering to a misleading *picture* could be adhering to something which is totally without *some* kind of meaning, even if Wittgenstein is particularly adept at illustrating how something which has all the *appearance* of sense (e.g., *thinking* as a particular *process* in the brain) is not compatible with the way in which the relevant term is ordinarily used. The claim that the philosopher is then providing it with a *special* use for particular purposes rather begs the question why there should be thought to be a *philosophical* problem at all about *thinking* if the concept is not being used as it is ordinarily understood. This is a familiar point, originating with Cavell, and it is precisely by introducing similar considerations that Horwich argues for a less extreme therapeutic approach than Rorty attacks. Rorty gave his paper to Horwich in 2006, a year before Rorty's death, and Horwich's reply has already formed a subject for discussion at a Rorty conference in 2008, prior to being further revised following a British Wittgenstein Society presentation in 2009.

In his 'Are meaning, understanding etc. definite states?', John McDowell reminds us that Wittgenstein is not objecting to our ordinary ways of talking when we say, for example, that in coming to understand the principle of a series, we have come to grasp something which in a rather innocuous way can be said to determine the answer one will be inclined to give at some later point in its development (*Ibid.*, 176). What Wittgenstein is objecting to is the kind of mythology which begins to surround this way of talking when doing philosophy, a mythology which would include a picture of our 'mental equipment' in which our capacity to 'grasp a rule', for example, appears as some kind of 'configuration in the occult medium of the mind' (*Ibid.*)

This would suggest, in more general terms, that our 'ordinary ways of talking' ought not to be regarded *per se* as incorporating philosophical (metaphysical) presuppositions. Yet that these forms of expression are so often taken for granted to presuppose just this, is a point that Wittgenstein emphasises in § 402, where disputes between Idealists, Solipsists and Realists are described in the following terms: 'The one party attack the normal form of expression as if they were attacking a statement; the others defend it, as if they were stating facts recognised by every reasonable human being'. The 'normal form of expression' is automatically seen by one party to incorporate metaphysical presuppositions, which can be attacked on philosophical grounds; and the opposing party automatically defends the ordinary way of speaking *as if* confirming that there really were presuppositions of this kind at stake. But for Wittgenstein, what are being attacked and defended are 'houses of cards' (§ 118). Our ordinary ways of speaking are not up for this kind of philosophical assessment, because it is central to his methodology that these ways of speaking are only 'after all performing their office'.

McDowell quotes § 195 as a classic confirmation that what we actually mean when we talk about grasping a sense is nothing to do with the *causal* determination of future use. It seems only that in a *queer* way the use is already in some sense present; and so it is, Wittgenstein confirms, 'in *some* sense'. Understood apart from its ordinary everyday use, and incorporated into a 'special' language-game supposedly invented by the philosopher, it becomes *queer*; but the very idea that

there could be any genuine application for a language-game of this kind is an illusion. In § 689, for example, in which one is imagined to be thinking of N, how is it that one can pinpoint N amongst all the various people who may have the same name? Surely there must be a special form of connection at work ensuring that HE is picked out from amongst all the others? Certainly, Wittgenstein replies, but not in terms of the operation of a mental *mechanism*. McDowell's Wittgenstein objects to the metaphysical portrayal of mental mechanisms, as pictured in § 454, for example, where the arrow's pointing is *not* a matter of 'a hocus-pocus which can be performed only by the soul' (*Ibid.*, 168).

This issue is central to McDowell's treatment of the paradox involved in following a rule. The paradox arises from the initial assumption that acting on an understanding of the requirements of the rule consists in putting an interpretation on it. Yet this is already to sever the rule from its practical context in the day-to-day affairs of those who follow it. What one has to do at *this* point in following the rule then has all the appearance of being a stab in the dark. As McDowell puts it, the behaviour aimed at conforming to the requirements of the rule, is pictured as having to bridge a gap, yet anything that serves to bridge the gap can be taken to conform to some rule or other.

The paradox results from the clash of two opposing pictures. The attempt to avoid the *apparent* metaphysical consequences of the claim (§ 197) that one could 'grasp the whole use of a word in a flash', leaves the philosopher with the problem of what decision to make at *this* point. Yet this is a problem that arises only when doing philosophy, and not in the context of everyday life. To assume that following a rule is a matter of putting an interpretation on it, renders the paradox unanswerable. But it has already been shown that the idea of grasping a *meaning* only seems queer when we view it outwith our normal language-game. McDowell concludes that what is natural involves *no* paradox:

..our propensities to find things natural are partly constitutive of the identity of the definite state that we come to be in when we come to understand the principle of a series - a state that sets in in its entirety at the relevant moments, and in the light of which it is completely settled what number it is correct to write when one reaches a certain point in extending the series (*Ibid.*, 177).

In his 'Another strand in the private language argument', David Stern draws his title from a well-known 1998 paper of John McDowell in which he argues that the value of Wittgenstein's reflections on the impossibility of a private language, rests in their ability to capture the fundamental principle that the very notion of a primitive 'given' with no conceptual content can have no genuine application. Wittgenstein, if indirectly, is drawing our attention towards the Kantian idea that there can be no such thing as an experience which is not already immersed in concepts. Yet Stern points out that this leads McDowell to reject Wittgenstein's dictum that a sensation 'is not a *something*, but not a *nothing* either' (§ 304), for if it can be brought under concepts, then for McDowell it must always be a 'perfectly good something' after all.

But here it is arguable that McDowell is failing to sympathise with the methodological point of § 304, which is that the sensation is something 'about which nothing can be said' only if it is construed on the model of an 'inner object'; and Wittgenstein goes on to say that knowing that this colour is red (§ 381) is a matter of having 'learnt English', just as one learns the *concept* of *pain* when one learns language (§ 384). In both cases first-person sensation-ascriptions are made without applying *criteria*, which they would have to do if one were genuinely referring to *objects* of experience (§ 288). This is in keeping with Stern's claim that Wittgenstein is turning his back on the idea of a *pre-linguistic* conceptual content of experience. Yet this point *is* a methodological one: it is expressed in the claim that the philosopher comes to think in this way only because there are circumstances in which we do have new kinds of experiences for which we may require to invent new 'names'. Yet our ability to do this *in fact* only gains its sense against the background of our *prior* acquaintance with a public language.

Before discussing the main subject of his paper, the place of solipsism in Wittgenstein's work from 1929 onwards, Stern reviews the presuppositions found in the secondary literature about the argument against a private language, pointing out that the argument is often regarded as a deductive, *reductio ad absurdum*, whereas in his estimation it is better seen from the perspective of his Pyrrhonian tradition which stresses instead Wittgenstein's criticisms of the assumptions that lie behind the philosopher's desire to introduce arguments of this kind. This conclusion will be familiar to those

who have some prior knowledge of Stern's work. He goes on to point out that very little space is taken up in the *Investigations* by the relevant passages §§ 243 - 315 in comparison to the vast quantity of material about this subject in the *Nachlass*. Dated mainly from 1937 onwards, the material finally used comes almost exclusively from the second half of 1944.

Devoting the remainder of his paper to § 403 and its connection to solipsism, Stern warns that with other commentators on the so-called 'middle Wittgenstein', there had been a tendency which he had shared to see Wittgenstein's discussion of solipsism in the *Philosophical Remarks* as an extension of the discussion in the *Tractatus*, missing what he now believes to be the salient point that Wittgenstein was actually articulating Tractatian views in order to criticise them. Here Stern elaborates on an aspect of Wittgenstein's method which he has previously stressed in his book on the *Philosophical Investigations* (Cambridge 2004), showing that he employs a variant on the method of § 2, in this case by pointing out that the universal applicability of the solipsist's language amounts to nothing more than a doomed attempt to say something outwith any ordinary language-game. It is as if the solipsist were, from Wittgenstein's new methodological perspective, 'inventing a new way of looking at things' (*Ibid.*, 196), almost as if he were providing a novel kind of poetical discourse. David Stern offers an illuminating account of § 403 and its immediate surroundings, a further 'case-study' to add to his previous informative treatment of § 293 in another context (3).

In 'Deductive inference and aspect perception', a title which might lead the reader to expect a paper which could be about a number of different things, Arif Ahmed looks at Wittgenstein's reference in his Lectures to the temptation the philosopher undergoes to think that we can deduce the rules for the use of a word from its meaning (*Ibid.*, 199). As Wittgenstein indicates in § 559, it appears that we derive the rules from a 'meaning-body', a mysterious source of its use that a word carries around with it. Ahmed argues in detail that this target of Wittgenstein's is attacked by him utilising similar weapons to those he employs in the rule-following considerations. Yet deductive inference expressess an element of creativity that directs Ahmed towards the stance of Michael

Dummett, who expresses an alternative view that so-called meaning-bodies act as fixed objects of logical insight. Yet Dummett's pattern-recognition is only analagous to the noticing of an aspect, whereas Ahmed wishes to employ this idea in his attempt to throw light on a view of logical insight that we may correctly take Wittgenstein to adopt. This is another paper requiring close reading, if the reader is to agree with Ahmed that it comes close to capturing what Wittgenstein is really about.

Much the same may be said of the final paper in the book, William Child on 'Remembering intensions', where the issue of realism *v* anti-realism is raised in the first few paragraphs: 'There is, we suppose, a fact of the matter about what I intended to say when I was interrupted, a fact of the matter that is independent of what I am subsequently inclined to judge that I was going to say' (*Ibid.*, 215). In this example, the phenomenology and epistemology of the question about one's knowing what one was going to say (§ 637) is distinguished from the metaphysics of the case (*Ibid.*) in a way which, arguably, is just not in keeping with a Wittgensteinian perspective. For Child, there is a *genuine* question at stake over what one intended to say, with his anti-realist arguing that all talk of 'remembering' and 'forgetting' is not directed towards an 'independently existing fact of the matter'. On the contrary, it is simply another element in the practice, to be understood on anti-realist lines.

This indirectly suggests that Wittgenstein is actually correct to construe the distinction between realism and anti-realism as one which rests in the *role* allocated to the misleading *picture* that in any particular case is directing the course of philosophical thinking; because the realist and anti-realist alike, in common with the Solipsist, Idealist and Realist of § 402, do not recognise any *practical* difference in the outcome of their investigations. Child indirectly illustrates this point in the following:

I prefer to see the realist and anti-realist as agreeing that someone who says 'I was about to say..' is reporting what she was going to say, but disagreeing about the proper philosophical treatment of such reports (*Ibid.*,219, Footnote 2).

But as Wittgenstein asks in a well-known passage from *Zettel* (§ 414) concerning the difference between the children of the realist and of the idealist who are both taught to fetch a chair

by being taught the meaning of the word 'chair', 'Won't the difference only be one of battle cry?' Far from adopting a stance on either side of the realist *v* anti-realist divide, Wittgenstein's method points towards a rejection of the *philosophical* question. Child takes Wittgenstein to be espousing a realist thought in § 187, the thought that it is true that 'I meant him to write "1002" after "1000" ', yet rejecting only a particular (metaphysical) version of realism, *viz.*, that having *meant that* is to be identified with a 'mental act that somehow already contains every step to be taken in following the instruction "+ 2" ' (*Ibid.*, 221). Instead, the realism of Child's Wittgenstein consists, very roughly, in the identification of his having *meant* the pupil to put '1002' after '1000', with the *whole* complex of dispositions he had at the time (*Ibid.*).

Yet in quoting the content of § 692, Child has already said everything that needs to be said. There is no need of any *further* answer to the question of what makes it true that 'I meant you to...in this case' even if he did not think of this case at all as he gave the rule, *beyond* mentioning his participation in the practice in which he has mastered a particular arithmetical technique, one that allows him to teach the pupil how to expand the series. *That* is intended to bring the discussion to an end. This point emerges even more clearly during Child's treatment of § 353, where Wittgenstein says that a contribution to the grammar of the proposition is made by showing how *meaning* is related to the means of verification. Yet Child protests on behalf of the realist that what a proposition *means* is one thing and how we can *tell* that it is true is something else again (*Ibid.*, 229):

And even though Wittgenstein allows that we understand propositions about others' minds that we have no way of verifying, there is room for debate about the extent to which his account of *how* we understand them really does avoid verificationism (*Ibid.*)

It is central to Wittgenstein's method, however, that a proper understanding of these statements does consist in our grasping the role that they play within the practice in which we *do* talk about the thoughts, sensations and emotional states both of ourselves and of others. The idea that there is something that we have no means of verifying rests on the philosopher's adherence to the *picture*

of 'other minds' that merely accompanies our practice, yet which he is almost irresistably inclined to see as encapsulating the *meaning* of these statements about others' private experiences.

This message is conveyed in that sequence of passages centred on § 426, where the straight highway leads right up to the picture - in this case of 'other minds' - that it seems he cannot apply in the way that the philosopher is inclined to think that he *must* be able to apply it *if* he is to be a *realist* about other minds. Just as realism accepts that the *picture* properly conveys what these statements actually mean, anti-realism complains that we cannot really have any proper *conception* of where the highway appears to be taking us, because we have no way in principle of finding out whether what is portrayed in the picture *is* really so. Wittgenstein's principal point, however, is that *if* the highway is leading nowhere, it is rather because the determination to adopt *either* a realist *or* an anti-realist outlook, depends on granting to the picture a *role* in one's thinking that is doing no *real* work, because the real work is being performed through active participation in the practice itself.

Arif Ahmed contributes an Introduction of ten pages, in which he claims that the *Philosophical Investigations* is probably the most disturbing work of philosophy since Hume's *Treatise*, disturbing because it shatters certain images of mankind that have been important within the Western Tradition. He follows a brief survey of the relationship between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* by listing 15 topics that the *Investigations* is said to discuss, 10 of which are covered by his chosen authors. The remainder of the Introduction is occupied with brief synopses of the papers which follow. Whilst the overall direction of the volume is towards the theoretical rather than towards the therapeutic, with possible exceptions in the cases of McDowell, Stern and Horwich, the end result, as is usual with volumes of this kind, is something of a mixed bag, so much so that it would not be entirely true to say that every paper *critically* engages with the text of the *Investigations*, as the book's inclusion in the Cambridge series would suggest. This would clearly be less true, for example, of the three more therapeutically inclined examples already mentioned. Arif Ahmed has nevertheless done a pretty good job of ensuring that the volume does make a useful contribution to our understanding of Wittgenstein.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Meredith Williams: *Blind Obedience Paradox and Learning in the Later Wittgenstein* (Abington: Routledge, 2010).
- (2) A.J. Ayer: 'Reply to David Pears', *The Philosophy of A.J. Ayer* ed. L.E. Hahn (La Salle Illinois: Open Court, 1992) 403.
- (3) David Stern: 'The Uses of Wittgenstein's Beetle: *Philosophical Investigations* § 293 and Its Interpreters' in *Wittgenstein and His Interpreters Essays in Memory of Gordon Baker* Edited by Guy Kahane, Edward Kanterian and Oskari Kuusela (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 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 organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. His latest, on Wittgenstein, appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, with a further in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010.