CRITICAL NOTICE

Wittgenstein : Mind, Meaning and Metaphilosophy

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Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed

to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for

a while I could not enter, for the way was barred to me.

There was a padlock and a chain upon the gate. I called in

my dream to the lodge-keeper, and had no answer, and

peering closer through the rusted spokes to the gate I saw

that the lodge was uninhabited.

The first four sentences of Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* are so well-known that they require no introduction. They express a perfectly ordinary understanding of what it is to have a dream *as* the occurrence of an experience undergone during our sleeping hours, that it would seem perverse to question it. Yet in those well-known passages in which Wittgenstein may *appear* to be questioning it by drawing our attention instead to the circumstances in which we talk about them, we ought rather to see him only as describing the features which belong to the language-game in which we recount our dreams. Insofar as we understand it to be a feature of this game that we report on waking what we have experienced whilst asleep, then that is what the game is about: there is no genuine question whether that is what it is *really* about, whether - as philosophers are inclined to put it - there is a 'fact of the matter' about what we experience whilst asleep, over and above or outwith this description of the familiar accounts we provide of what it is for us to dream.

Yet to many philosophers this ordinary understanding of what it is to dream as expressed in our claim to recount what we experience whilst asleep, *is* genuinely at odds with Wittgenstein's rather meagre descriptions of dreams as stories about which, for example, the

question whether the dreamer's memory deceives him cannot arise, or in which people merely narrate tales to us upon waking. Here it does appear *as if* he were reducing one thing to another, defining what it is to dream in terms of a tendency to tell stories called 'dreams' after having been aroused from our nightly slumber. This, in fact, is the interpretation that Norman Malcolm is usually understood to have placed on Wittgenstein's texts in his famous monograph *Dreaming* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959). Having earlier quoted Wittgenstein's puzzling passage in *Investigations* Part II, vii, 184, Malcolm goes on to argue:

> What would be one's criterion for saying that a sleeper is
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> aware of his dream ? I do not see what it could be other than
>
> his telling a dream on waking up. If that is what it is then the
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> use of the philosopher's sentence 'People are aware of their
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> dreams' is the same as the use of the sentence 'People have
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> dreams'. Consequently, the philosophical claim, 'When people
>
> dream they are aware of their dreams' (or: 'Dreams are conscious
>
> experiences') says absolutely nothing (Malcolm, *Op. cit.*, 59).

But Wittgenstein is not in the business of denying that dreams are conscious experiences, for this makes it look as if there were a genuine metaphysical question whether people *really* do have conscious experiences called 'dreams' during sleep, a question to which the philosopher is in a position to provide an answer. The point is rather that the entirely convincing *picture* of dreams as conscious experiences enjoyed during sleep, which accompanies the recounting of our dreams, gains its significance from all the surrounding circumstances in which we talk about dreaming, and about analysing our dreams in the course of attempting to understand their function in our lives. This *picture* is alright if we properly understand its role in our ordinary thinking. We misunderstand that role if, for example, we begin to question whether dreams are *really* conscious experiences *because* we are given to claim that neither we nor the dreamer can have any means of verifying whether he has provided an accurate account of them.

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In the first of this new collection of essays, William Child in his 'Verificationism and Wittgenstein's View of Mind', discusses dreaming in the course of considering Wittgenstein's suggestion that 'we can make perfectly good sense of ascriptions of thoughts and sensations that we have no means of verifying: thoughts and feelings that not only *are not* but *could not be* manifested in behaviour.' (*Ibid.*, 13) But these cases for Child's Wittgenstein make sense against a background in which it *is* possible to tell what people are thinking and feeling. Quoting *Investigations*, Part II, xi, 222-3, with its important reference to the special criteria of *truthfulness* that follow from the fact that the criteria for the truth of a *confession* (*e.g.*, about dreaming) are not the criteria for a true *description* of a process, Child seems almost to be following Malcolm in his account of what Wittgenstein is about:

> We have no concept of what it is for a subject's report of what
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> she has just thought to be *true* other than by reference to the
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> *truthfulness* of the report. So all there is to its being true that
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> I was just thinking that it is Friday is that that is what I am
>
> sincerely inclined to report that I was thinking. Similarly, all
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> there is to its being true that I dreamed I was the Prime Minister
>
> is that, when I wake up, that is what I am sincerely inclined to
>
> report that I dreamed. (*Ibid.*, 14)

But as already indicated, this can be importantly misleading as a guide to Wittgenstein's approach to philosophical questions. Taking as an example Wittgenstein's mention of Lytton Strachey's surmise regarding what Queen Victoria may have seen in her mind's eye just before her death, Child interestingly provides three possible interpretations of his reaction to this case based on what he actually says. On the first view, Wittgenstein is straightforwardly 'realist' in proposing what Victoria's thoughts were as she was about to die, even in circumstances where there is no possibility of verifying what we can surmise to have been their content. On his second interpretation, Wittgenstein is 'anti-realist' if not verificationist in proposing that we

ought to regard this kind of case not as an ordinary example where we can in fact find out what someone is thinking, but as a special extension of the use of the term 'thought' which is more akin to the kind of use we might provide for it in discussing fiction. On a final, wholly 'verificationist' reading, we are to see the content of Victoria's thinking not as verifiable in terms of her thoughts or actions, but in terms of the traces they may leave in her brain, so that the kind of *meaning* we can ascribe to attributing thoughts to her at all in this case is dependent on the possibility that this sort of physical evidence may be available to us.

Child ends his paper by proposing that Wittgenstein's final position lies somewhere between an acceptance of the first 'realist' and the second 'anti-realist' proposals he provides, a point borne out by the fact that the temptation towards this 'anti-realist' model is shown in his asking *how* we are to *understand* the ascription of thoughts to individuals when there is no accepted means of verifying what they actually are (as quoted, *Ibid*., 26). This suggests, on Child's estimation, that Wittgenstein wishes to 'extend' the concept of *thinking* in a special way to these kinds of cases. The significant point for Child is that Wittgenstein tends towards 'anti-realism' insofar as he questions whether we can genuinely understand his Queen Victoria example in the way that we understand ordinary cases of finding out what someone is thinking:

> If he accepts the second model, his account will not be a form
> of verificationism; but it will certainly be a form of antirealism.
> For it will explain the meanings of these ascriptions in a way
> that gives up the idea that there is a straightforward fact of the
> matter about what Queen Victoria was thinking in her dying
> moments (*Ibid*., 28).

But to see Wittgenstein as giving up the idea that there is *really* a 'fact of the matter' in these kinds of cases is to see him embroiled in the kinds of philosophical problems that he implicitly undermines. When he asks whether we *understand* Strachey's surmise about the thoughts of Queen Victoria in circumstances where we have in principle no means of finding out what they

might have been, as distinct from cases where we allow, say, for the discovery of a hitherto hidden journal revealing her final thoughts, he is questioning the *point* of making these idle speculations in circumstances where there is no possibility of ever finding out whether they might have applied. His response is rather similar to that offered by Horatio:

> *Hamlet*: To what base uses we may return, Horatio ! Why may not
>
> imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find
>
> it stopping a bung-hole ?
>
> *Horatio*: 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.
>
> (*Hamlet*, Act V, Scene I).

Yet to say that a speculation about Queen Victoria's dying thoughts is idle because there is no conceiveable way of finding out whether it ever applied, as distinct from saying that the existence of evidence in its favour in the form of one of Victoria's missing journals, is highly probable, is not to say that Wittgenstein is adopting either a 'realist' or an 'anti-realist' outlook. There is no 'extending' of the concept of *thinking* in these kinds of cases, because the issue at stake is why we might be thought to be wasting our time making wholly idle speculations of precisely this kind, when there is no real means of finding out whether they capture what was so.

  Certainly, when Child refers to Wittgenstein's talk about the secondary sense which comes into play when he calls Tuesday fat and Wednesday lean in *Investigations*, Part II, xi, 216 (*Ibid*., 29), 'fat' and 'lean' are clearly not being used in a normal, yet not in a metaphorical way. Indeed, this inclination to use these terms in *this* way may for many people have little or no meaning, a point indirectly pointed towards when Wittgenstein refers to the possible causes of this strange phenomenon. Similarly, calculating in the head makes sense for us since we first *understand* what it is to calculate on paper or out loud *because* our concept of what *calculating* is, gains its sense from those ordinary public surroundings of its application. But Child suggests that Wittgenstein is making a mistake should he be tempted towards introducing a similar kind of 'secondary' sense *via* an extension of the concept of *thought* in the Queen Victoria case. The

obvious reason for this is that on Child's reasoning, the 'realist' point of view rather than the 'anti-realism' consequent upon this extension of the concept, is clearly the correct view to adopt. But Wittgenstein sees no need for an extension of the concept because this is a debate in which he is taking no part. As in the example of dreaming, where our concept of what *dreaming* is gains its sense from all the surrounding circumstances in which it is applied, the issue at stake is not whether to adopt either a 'realist' or an 'anti-realist' point of view, but to consider the role that idle speculations about Queen Victoria's never-to-be-discovered-thoughts might be understood to play in our considerations. Child's discussion provides a worthwhile and stimulating entry to the selection of papers on *Mind* which make up Part I of the book.

Joachim Schulte, in 'Reading-Machines, Feelings of Influence, Experiences of Being Guided: Wittgenstein on Reading' provides an interesting mix of detailed scholarship and philosophical assessment with his overview of the familar *Investigations* passages §§ 156 - 178. The significant fact to which he draws our attention is that these sections originally appeared as part of the abandoned German translation of the *Brown Book*, yet were carried forward in their entirety almost unaltered into the original manuscript of the *Investigations*. This is a sure sign for Schulte not only, and clearly that their original composition was early because the dictation of the *Brown Book* in English dates from 1934-35 (Rhees), but also that Wittgenstein was satisfied with these passages from their very beginning. A distinction must be drawn, however, between §§ 156 - 164 and the remainder, for the former are more or less a translation of the English *Brown Book* sections, whilst the rest were added during the period of his German revision of this earlier material.

Schulte believes, surely with some justification, that these sections as they appear in the *Investigations* have failed to acquire many admirers: either they are regarded as feeble forerunners of the later remarks on rule-following, or as a bewildering attempt to sum up remarks on understanding that precede them (*Ibid*., 33). Schulte however, partly because of Wittgenstein's evident satisfaction with the passages themselves, would like to regard them as self-contained, and here it is significant that in their original *Brown Book* context, the earlier sections occur in a part of the book in which

Wittgenstein stresses that 'Our method is *purely descriptive*; the descriptions we give are not hints of explanations' (as quoted, *Ibid*., 32). Wittgenstein's method in these sections is wholly descriptive, yet is is precisely because it is, that many readers have been puzzled about their real import, and Schulte admits to being perplexed over how in the final analysis they ought to be read.

The position is not helped by Wittgenstein's remark in § 156 that for the purposes of his investigation he is not counting the understanding of what is read as part of his remit, given that the cases he almost immediately goes on to discuss are those which surely fall into this very category:

> A person, let us say an Englishman, has received at school or at
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> home one of the kinds of education usual among us, and in the
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> course of it has learned to read his native language. Later he reads
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> books, letters, newspapers, and other things.
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> Now what takes place when, say, he reads a newspaper ? -....(*Ibid.*)

What follows is a careful description of the eye passing along printed words, their being said out loud by the reader or to himself, and that another criterion of having read them rests in the ability to repeat them almost word for word. Again, a distinction is drawn between reading in a rather mechanical fashion with no attention to what one is doing, and reading with what must be a clear understanding of the content of what is being read. He interestingly remarks that as far as concerns uttering any *one* of the printed words, the same may be taking place in the consciousness of the pupil who is only beginning to read and has not yet mastered the art of reading, and in that of the practiced reader who is evidently reading with understanding.

This indicates that one major question which is being asked here is what constitutes the difference between reading a passage mechanically without taking account of the meaning of what is being read, and reading it with evident concentration and with this end in view. One can imagine Wittgenstein asking his reader to carry out this very experiment, and in doing so it is evident that just what this difference consists in is almost impossible to describe. The inevitable tendency to

fall back on differences in what goes on in the medium of the mind - or, famously, in the brain - are dismissed with the statement, surely valid, that these supposed mental or physical mechanisms are themselves only models designed to sum up what is observed.

Yet it is hard to see where else the investigation ought to go from here, a sure sign that there is something not quite right about the context in which these kinds of questions are being asked, and Schulte is led to suggest that what Wittgenstein is getting at in offering his live reading-machines as examples is that they can provide non-mechanistic models in terms of responses and patterns of behaviour which adequately describe what human reading is about (*Ibid.*, 36). The tendency already referred to, to fall back on kinds of experiences or feelings that are *sui generis*, *e.g.*, when being guided in the course of reading, fails to say anything, a point reinforced by comparing it with the thought that memory images are distinguished from other mental images by a special characteristic (§ 166).

Wittgenstein is all the time drawing our attention away from the tendency to look for particular mental accompaniments to reading, (*Cf.* talk about our memories or our dreams *etc.*), as ways of picking out what distinguishes reading from not reading. He is moving towards the conclusion that what makes reading *reading*, is to be discovered not in the mind, but in the surrounding circumstances in which, say, we express our understanding of what we have read, so that reading gains the significance that it has in our lives from the multifarious interlocking activities in which this practice is embedded. Quoting § 175, Schulte reminds us of the tendency Wittgenstein emphasises towards introducing ethereal, intangible influences verging on the indescribable as ways of locating what is 'going on' when we read. For Schulte, the message that Wittgenstein is providing is clear, although he nevertheless feels that 'his success in getting it across is perhaps not sufficient to explain Wittgenstein's satisfaction with the section on reading' (*Ibid.*, 44). Mentioning the sensitivity with which Wittgestein engages with the tendencies and temptations to which thinkers are naturally subject when they consider what reading is, tendencies which doubtlessly affected Wittgenstein himself, Schulte has managed to throw light on one of those parts of the *Investigations* whose overall significance for many commentators is still very much a matter of dispute.

Frederick Stoutland in 'Reasons and Causes', abandons the Wittgensteinian slogans of the 1950's and 60's which supported the claim that 'reasons are not causes', in favour of a more measured view in which the work of Donald Davidson can be used in aid of the claim that rational explanations are indeed causal explanations, only that they relate to the activities of an agent intentionally deciding to act for the reasons that he does. This indicates that in his earlier work, Stoutland was prone to interpret Davidson in terms of 'the standard view' which saw him fundamentally opposed to Wittgenstein on action, an interpretation which Stoutland came to abandon when he began to see Davidson aright (*Ibid*., 65 and Endnote 9). Indeed, Stoutland sees rational explanation as conceived by Anscombe and von Wright *as* causal explanation, on the grounds that a rational explanation is causal if it renders intelligible why an agent acts as he does.

This inevitably means that what is being referred to here is a different kind of causal explanation to that commonly applied in the natural, or even behavioural sciences, and Davidson is quoted as supporting the claim that 'there is an irreducible difference between psychological explanations that involve the propositional attitudes and explanations in sciences like physics and physiology' (Davidson, as quoted *Ibid*., 63). Stoutland introduces Collingwood as someone whom Davidson favours in making the claim that the methodology of history or of the social sciences differs markedly from that of the natural sciences.

On this view, it is clear that from the pre-Davidsonian perspective adopted by those philosophers like Anscombe and von Wright, the claim that reasons are not causes is acceptable on at least one fairly common interpretation of these terms, and Stoutland quotes Davidson as someone who famously thought Anscomble's *Intention* (Basil ,Blackwell, 1957) 'the most important treatment of action since Aristotle'. Yet it is perhaps unsurprising that Davidson became identified as the major protagonist in Stoutland's 'standard story' about intentional actions which are part of a physicalist ontology in which they become bodily movements caused by beliefs and desires regarded as inner events in the mind or brain of the agent. After all, Davidson held that beliefs and desires are causes of bodily movements, and these movements are physical events which instantiate

a law of physics. However, Stoutland maintains that Davidson's claim concerning an agent who acts for a reason only if this reason causes bodily movements, is far more nuanced than the rather naive physicalist ontology of the 'standard story' would appear to imply, even to the extent of arguing that in the final analysis, Davidson's account of intentional action as bodily movements causally explained by an agent's reasons, need not be regarded as being all that far from the best accounts to be derived from Wittgenstein's way of thinking (*Ibid*., 60). This interprets Wittgenstein's work in a way which would find a place for him within the analytic tradition as broadly conceived, and therefore in a way totally at odds with a more therapeutic perspective on his work. Stoutland nevertheless does an excellent job of illustrating the historical background to the 'sea change' that replaced the Wittgenstein-inspired thinking of philosophers like Anscombe, Kenny and Ryle with this supposedly physicalist Davidsonian story, the inadequacy of which he shows every sign of having successfully uncovered.

If most readers will be inclined to agree with the conclusion that Alberto Voltolini arrives at in his paper 'Was Wittgenstein Wrong about Intentionality ?', *viz.*, that complex thoughts require articulation in a public language, they may find themselves less persuaded by the rather convoluted reasoning which precedes it. Part of the problem rests with the use of four terms, 'intentionality', 'normativity', 'language' and 'thought', in various different combinations, added to which are a number of unargued for assumptions concerning, for example, Wittgenstein's reasons for rejecting the possibility of a private language. At the beginning of his paper, he offers an argument in favour of a 'linguistically normative intentionality' from the premise that 'there cannot be a priority of thought over public language', an argument which assumes that 'if there were a prelinguistic thought, this could only be expressed by an impossible private language' (*Ibid*., 67). This, however, requires the premise that 'any language is a normatively imbued structure'. There is an indirect argument for the same conclusion which lies in the thought that 'public language cannot derive its meaningfulness from a prelinguistic thought not only originally but also intrinsically, endowed with intentionality, for there is no such thing: any attempt at singling out such a thought is doomed to fail, for it faces an infinite

regress problem' *(Ibid.)*. One is left with the idea that what Voltolini is pointing towards here is the inherent emptiness embodied in the notion of Augustine's child who is pictured as conceptually articulate prior to learning to speak, but even if this is what is really at stake, readers may find themselves puzzling over the passage that immediately follows:

> Yet even this argument relies on a tacit premise claiming that thought has a physical design component, it is a (psychic) fact. This premise cannot be taken for granted if one accepts that intentional states have both original and intrinsic intentionality. These two elements - having both original and intrinsic intentionality - can indeed be simultaneously accommodated if one maintains that intentional states are abstract particulars having no physical basis (*Ibid*.)

This to many readers will constitute a rather heady brew, to be compounded in the next section with the claim that the 'undoubedly valid' private language argument (§§ 258 - 261) of the *Investigations* reveals that 'there is not even a thought prior to language' because a private language 'would break normativity by making following a rule collapsing onto believing that one is following such a rule' (*Ibid*., 69). Although one occasionally glimpses, therefore, where this is all going, it is not at all clear whether this is what § 258 is about, for any ideas that we might wish to attribute to Wittgenstein about the incoherence of acquiring concepts prior to acquiring a public language ought rather to be sought in the *methodology* of §§ 1-2, § 32 and elsewhere.

Fortunately, the Editorial Introduction to the book throws some light on Voltolini's paper, for the Editors (one of whom is Voltolini) inform us that what is being argued for is the claim that Wittgenstein's appeal to the private language argument against a pre-linguistic conception of thought is vitiated by an ungrounded assumption, the assumption of the normativity of language (*Ibid*., 5). Furthermore, the famous later criticism that Wittgenstein is said to make of his 'younger self' who held that mental states are endowed with 'both original and intrinsic intentionality' is equally vitiated by yet another assumption, *viz.*, 'the factual nature of mental states prompted by their

representational character'. Once those assumptions - and especially the latter - are dropped, the Editors inform us that according to Voltolini there is room for a pre-linguistic conception of thoughts 'endowed with both original and intrinsic intensionality'. If this already seems puzzling, what is one to make of their claim that Voltolini finds this conclusion not utterly anti-Wittgensteinian ? The reason for reaching this conclusion, which incidentally takes us back to where we began, is that complex thoughts, unlike simple thoughts, require a public language in order to be articulated.

Whatever one may think of Voltolini's contribution, it concludes Part I of the book on *Mind*, at which point any reader would be forgiven for thinking that the four papers already considered constitute the usual mixed bag that one finds in volumes of essays about the work of Wittgenstein. In these cases, it is reasonable to assume that experts in various fields have been asked to contribute material of interest relating to their particular specialties. But in fact, the entire book presents the proceedings of a Conference on Wittgenstein held in Reggio Emilia, Italy in 2006, entitled 'Is There Anything Wrong with Wittgenstein ?' It may be for this reason that the Introduction has at least the appearance of dramatically presenting Wittgenstein as a philosopher in whom interest has been steadily declining for over 20 years. We are advised that whilst the work of Frege and Russell is painstakingly investigated and discussed in detail, no one now reads the *Tractatus*, and that the 'later' Wittgenstein presents a paradigm of bad philosophy to most young American philosophers today. He has become a figure to be grouped in the 'despicable company' of Dewey and Heidegger (*Ibid.*, 1). Furthermore, the 'bizarre exegetical claims' made by 'so-called "New Wittgensteinians" ' Cora Diamond and Jim Conant who 'overemphasize the opposition between Wittgenstein and the dominant style of analytic philosophy' only serve to reinforce the prevailing opinion of him as 'the monopoly of an embattled, yet insular minority...' (*Ibid*.)

Continuing in the same melodramatic vein, we are presented with a Wittgenstein who is seen as unnecessarily cryptic, rambling and neurotically incapable of philosophical professionalism, someone whose views on reasons versus causes have been refuted (Davidson), and whose arguments against private language have been 'thrown into the crowded garbage can of verificationism' (Fodor).

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Even the current sociology of academia is invoked as an additional reason for the continuing rejection of an anti-theoretical Wittgenstein into the new millennium, when theory is very much in the foreground: witness Kripke's theory of reference or Rawls's theory of justice. Whilst these are hardly new, we are to presume that the Editors are inviting the reader to witness a persisting trend, one involving specialised journals which emphasise the continuity between philosophy and science, with referees who preside over the competition amongst theories and the personalities with whom they come to be identified. This is of course entirely at variance with a Wittgenstein who felt himself completely at odds with 'the great stream of European and American civilization to which we all belong' (*Ibid*. 2).

Whilst the importance attributed by any commentator to Wittgenstein's work within the current philosophical milieu is inevitably going to depend on his personal assessment of its value, what the Editors initially decided to do was to invite eminent commentators and 'benign' onlookers to contribute to a Conference about Wittgenstein in order to evaluate his current philosophical relevance under the three categories of *Mind*, *Meaning* and *Metaphilosophy*, reflecting three major aspects of his work. Prior to providing brief overviews of the 12 papers which make up the book, they ask whether these papers *have* succeeded in answering the question whether Wittgenstein's work is still 'alive' in contemporary philosophy, only to claim, disappointingly, that they are unable to provide a definitive result. But this is not in any event a question that any individual philosopher *can* answer in general terms: the work of Wittgenstein only gains its relevance to the problems of philosophy in general, or indeed to particular trends in current thinking, against the background of the influence it exerts on those writers, for example, who comment favourably on it. It is only within this context that each paper in its own way can serve as an illustration of how 'alive' that work is. It is clear, therefore, that just because of the wide range of subjects that they cover, these papers can hardly fail to collectively form something of a mixed bag.

Hans-Johann Glock, in 'Does Language Require Conventions ?' wishes to defend 'an affirmative communitarian answer against the new individualist orthodoxy' (*Ibid*., 86) which he finds in thinkers like Chomsky and to a lesser degree Davidson: whilst Chomsky regards language as an internal state of an individual which causally underlies his idiolect, a psychologistic conception that severs language

from any 'essential' connection with communication, Davidson whilst acknowledging the link with human communiction, nevertheless argues that linguistic communication does not presuppose shared rules or conventions. This 'semantic individualism' is the object of Glock's attack, and he argues that two current debates centering on the 'normativity of meaning' and the 'conventionality of language' both emerged from Wittgenstein's philosophy. The 'communitarianism' that Glock wishes to defend he takes to be derived from the work of Wittgenstein and some of his followers (*Ibid*., 87). According to Glock, it is because of the influential interpretation of the 'rule-following considerations' offered by Saul Kripke, that 'semantic normativity' came to occupy the centre of attention in relevant philosophical circles, and this centre has shifted post-Kripke relative to its original roots in Wittgenstein's work. Glock sees the 'current debate' as involving 'a whole barrage of normativity claims' (*Ibid*., 89), including the idea that 'contentful thought as well as meaningful speech - entails the existence of certain normative phenomena'.

The paper as a whole illustrates how good Glock is at providing an overview of the 'issues' as they are currently conceived within at least one corner of the philosophical field, and he introduces two claims regarding *bare normativity of meaning* and *rule-based normativity of meaning,* the first maintaining that if a word has meaning there must be conditions for its correct application, the second that meaningful expressions need the existence not merely of correctness conditions but also of rules of use, required to lay them down. Both Davidson and Boghossian are said to favour the former idea whilst rejecting the idea of rules of use, whilst both ideas are accepted by many 'Wittgensteinians'. There are however, as Glock would have it, 'unruly' followers of Wittgenstein, including Cavell, Hanfling and Rundle, who regard Wittgenstein's comparison of language to rule-following, game-like activities as a dispensable heuristic device (*Ibid*., 89). Glock continues by describing the move from an overtly 'calculus model' of language originating in the *Tractatus* to the distinctly non-intellectualist idea that linguistic understanding involves mastery of techniques concerning the *application of rules*. There are overwhelming reasons for affirming, on Glock's estimation, that Wittgenstein maintained not only his *bare normativity* but also his *rule-based*

normativity claims, and Glock spends the rest of his paper spelling out, amongst other things, what is involved in showing that there are compelling arguments in support of the idea that 'meaningful language requires the existence of conventions' (*Ibid*., 91). Believing in the final analysis that 'Davidson's scenario is oblivious to the profound anthropological function that a shared language has for our species of social primates' (*Ibid*., 112), Glock's extensive treatment of the surrounding highways and byeways concludes that 'communitarianism' provides a far more realistic picture than does Davidson's, because it relies on a 'largely nonreflective, conventional practice'. This will certainly not embody everyone's idea of Wittgenstein's intentions. Overtly theoretical in its approach, Glock's paper nevertheless provides a useful and up-to-the-minute account of the kind of thinking about language and conventions that is currently taking place in certain analytically-inclined circles.

The tendency for those passages in the *Investigations* concerning the 'rule-following considerations' - a phrase originating with Crispin Wright - to take on a life of their own and to be developed in directions which have little to do with the strictly philosophical questions that directly concern Wittgenstein in sections like § 198 and § 201, has been so widespread that those who would prefer to see a return to the original texts ought to welcome Paul Horwich's desire to develop an account relying entirely on insights derived from Wittgenstein himself (*Ibid*., 130). We are always free to see the directions in which Wittgenstein's thinking has been developed either as complete misinterpretations of what he is about, or as indications of the inherent fertility of his imagination, and Horwich would undoubtedly favour the latter in his attempt to show that the textual basis he finds for his claims 'is a solid illustration of the relevance of Wittgenstein's ideas to contemporary debates in philosophy' (*Ibid*.)

Whilst the main, and original part of his paper 'Regularities, Rules, Meanings, Truth Conditions and Epistemic Norms' (*Ibid*., 134 and 138 Footnote 33) presents a picture 'based on Wittgenstein's ideas about meaning and rule following' (*Ibid*., 113), a picture Horwich takes to be in conflict with accounts presented by Kripke and Wright, Horwich's new Appendix is the main source for the Wittgensteinian credentials he claims for his overall presentation. Beginning with the idea that Wittgenstein commits

himself to a 'deflationary' attitude towards truth, reference and extension, captured in his later 'rejection of the Tractarian focus on meaning *qua* referent in favour of a focus on meaning *qua* use', Horwich quotes *Investigations* § 43 with its identification of *meaning* with *use,* as Wittgenstein's way of presenting a self-evident truth intended to demystify the 'emergence' of meaning, and as a reminder of what gives life to 'dead' signs. In rectifying a 'mentalistic' view of meaning, it would therefore be a mistake to identify *meaning* as *use* as something to be discovered *via* the *beliefs* or *intentions* of speakers. Because Horwich wishes to understand these *beliefs* or *intentions* 'in terms of the *meanings* of the sentences which articulate them', he takes Wittgenstein's conception of 'use' to be what he describes as thoroughly *nonsemantic.*

Whilst this may require further articulation, the self-evident 'truth' that *meaning is use* ought rather to be regarded as a fundamental element in a new methodology, a new way of looking at the phenomena of meaning.   We are free to see this reflected in Horwich's claim that the very idea of 'following rules for the use of words' has to be identified in the main, and for the majority of our most basic language-games, with *implicit* as distinct from *explicit* rule-following. Here we are invited, on at least one interpretation, to see Horwich proposing that we look upon the child beginning to master a technique, as an individual who is being *trained* into reading the rules off the practice of the game, as distinct from becoming acquainted with a (mental) formula the grasp of which 'guarantees' how a word is to be applied.

Horwich next discusses the prevalent idea that meaning is essentially *communal*, an idea he discovers in the work, amongst others, of McDowell, Kripke, Rorty and Brandom. This idea he identifies with the claim that 'a word's meaning can derive only from a practice that involves interaction between people' (*Ibid*., 132), and although as presented this has all the *appearance* of a valid empirical hypothesis, it is actually intended, as *usually* cited in a philosophical context, to be a form of *metaphysical* thesis. This raises the evident difficulty that as presented, its denial can hardly be understood to be self-contradictory. We ought in any event to see Wittgenstein's various *reminders* of how children acquire a language in a *communal* setting, not so much as a claim about what *must*

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be so, in some elusive sense, but as a way of drawing our attention to the surrounding circumstances in which we *in fact* apply the ideas of *learning* and *training* into a *practice,* ideas which are part and parcel of the contexts in which our ordinary notions of both the *communal* and the *individual* are actually used. Far from proposing that in some sense language is 'essentially communal', or in some opposing sense that it is 'essentially individualistic', what is being issued is a reminder that if we stray too far from these ordinary contexts - for example, by proposing outlandish thought-experiments - we will end by severing the original connections which hold between the use of our concepts and of our public language, from the quite ordinary circumstances in which this language is actually learned in practice, and from the background against which our ordinary terms find their applications. A classic example of this kind of thought-experiment would be Augustine's child who is *pictured* as conceptually articulate prior to being able to talk.

Horwich, on the other hand, shows every sign of following Peter Hacker in his adherence to a 'conventional' reading on one side of the communal-individualist divide by arguing in favour of - in contrast to what is often erroneously believed to be the import of § 202 - the idea that the concept of following a rule is not *necessarily* to be construed as a *social* phenomenon but as a *practice* which *can* be the practice of an individual. At this point he mentions the naive idea of a 'usage sanctioned by others', as one to which he is inevitably opposed. But even the most staunch adherents of a sophisticated 'communitarianism' have never been generally inclined to define correct use in terms of 'what the community agrees'. It is arguable, as already suggested, that this entire approach to the communal-individual divide is misconceived.

Horwich's next topic is the concept of normativity: for Wittgenstein it is *how* a word is used and not how it *ought* to be used that provides its distinctive meaning, a point which Horwich defines in terms of the claim that whilst meaning has normative *import* it would be wrong to say that it is *constitutively* normative. It is open to question whether this is the kind of issue in which Wittgenstein would even become embroiled, and Horwich ends his paper with a brief discussion of the over-familiar metaphilosophy as outlined in §§ 89 - 133, claiming that the tension commentators often

discover between the methodological remarks and Wittgenstein's actual argumentative practice is entirely illusory. Horwich does not see his own approach in his paper as providing what Wittgenstein would have understand to be *theories* in any conventional sense. Horwich is assembling 'potentially obvious points' (*Ibid.*, 134) which can always be missed by those looking in the wrong direction. He does provide a welcome and thought-provoking paper which is accompanied by five pages of detailed footnotes elaborating on his various themes.

Diego Marconi in 'Wittgenstein on Necessary Facts' offers a fairly straightforward account of a Wittgenstein who from the *Tractatus* onwards forms part of a hallowed tradition which does not believe that there are any 'necessary facts', and of a Saul Kripke as a newcomer who '*broke with that tradition*' (*Ibid.*, 143). Whilst the Kripkean conclusions will be more than familiar to most readers, Marconi's account is interesting insofar as it sees a place for Wittgenstein in this debate; and he is also good at presenting the *basic* issues at stake in a stark and simple form, one which helps to explain why those who even today still harbour traditional empiricist leanings, are likely to give short shrift to current thinking about the necessary *a posteriori*. Take, for example, Marconi's 'Simple Argument against *a posteriori* necessity', which in one form or another he claims to have been widely discussed in the literature: for every proposition *p*, if it is conceivable that *p*, then it is possible that *p*. It follows that since it is conceivable that 'salt = NaCl' is false, then it must be possible that salt is *not* NaCl, so that 'salt = NaCl' cannot be a proposition which is necessarily true. Marconi claims that this argument does not explicitly assume that 'salt = NaCl' is *a posteriori*, and indeed that if the truth of 'salt = NaCl' were known *a priori* then its denial would be inconceivable. From this we are invited to deduce that it must be *a posteriori* after all.

These considerations, however, would had had no influence on a Putnam (1) who originally argued in 1975 (as quoted, *Ibid.*, 150) that even if we can imagine circumstances in which water *isn't* H_20, so that this eventuality *is* conceivable, it does not follow that it is 'logically possible'. But since this conclusion depends on the assumption that the operational definition of water in terms of its manifest observable properties is not what ultimately determines how we are to define 'same liquid as'

'in all possible worlds', a determination that is instead to be arrived at in terms of microstructure alone, then it may be thought hardly surprising that philosophers like Ayer (2) felt compelled to conclude that Putnam's evident break with an empiricist tradition that would define what is possible in terms of what is conceivable, amounts to little more than a matter of the adoption of an arbitrary convention.

Saul Kripke's position is different insofar as 'Kripke's way out' as described by Marconi, one which retains the connection between what is conceivable and what is possible, is just to claim that although it *seems* that we can imagine a situation in which salt is not NaCl, so that this *must* be possible, what we are *really* imagining is a situation in which an epistemically indistinguishable counterpart of salt and *not* salt itself - which *is* necessarily NaCl - is imagined to have a different microstructure than has salt. But if we already have the distinction between *epistemic* and *metaphysical* possibility, the one determining what might have been otherwise, and the other determining what is actually so, then we can see why it follows, assuming some basic essentialist claims and utilising the notions of *rigid designation* and of *identity across possible worlds*, that although it may have been epistemically possible that water is not H_2O, then given that water is as a matter of fact H_2O, it does indeed follow that this is a metaphysically necessary truth.

This latter argument is the one that Marconi attributes to Soames (3), who is said to interpret what is conceivable as what is *epistemically* possible, even if the metaphysical necessity of 'water = H_2O' rules out the (metaphysical) possibility that what *is* so might have been otherwise. But are we duty bound to accept these essentialist proposals, together with what some regard as the metaphysical baggage that is carried along with them ? Marconi provides no definite answer, although he is prone to believe that his Simple Argument favouring the Humean conclusion that whatever is conceivable is possible, still stands. So why do we 'intuitively' think in these essentialist terms ? One reason is that philosophers have been prone to believe that when we make scientific discoveries, we are not merely contenting ourselves by playing with words. We must be doing more than merely extending or altering the meaning of terms like 'water' or 'salt'. We like to think that we are making genuine *discoveries* about

the *real* inner nature of things, and it is this belief which, in a philosophical context, can at least partly motivate the metaphysical urge reflected in these tales of metaphysical necessity and epistemic possibility.

Marconi derives Wittgenstein's argument against his 'necessary facts' largely from the *Tractatus*, yet if we look closely at Wittgenstein's methodology in his later writings, one can detect a way of thinking which would have searched for an explanation for the *tendency* to treat statements like 'salt = NaCl' as *necessarily* true, in the *role* performed by these statements within the context of a body of theory which, in roughly Quinean terms, faces the tribunal of experience as a whole : in this case, the failure of any part can bring down the entire edifice. Marconi's example 'salt = NaCl', which points to the Periodic Table of Elements, a body of evidence that meets the tribunal of experience in just this way, reminds us of the consequence that should a statement like water = H_2O be put in question it would force us to reconsider our entire way of looking at things: this discovery is so well-established and attested to within a system of related propositions that it has become exempt from doubt. The observations, predictions, calculations and measurements by which we arrive at this equation are integral to the role it plays in the system (*On Certainty* § 105, § 167), to the extent that were it to be put in question it would make this entire framework unworkable.

This point is expressed by Wittgenstein in his statement that 'Further experiments cannot give the lie to our earlier ones, at most they may change our whole way of looking at things (*On Certainty* § 292). It is captured by Peter Hacker in his claim, contra Kripke, that those kinds of wild counterfactual speculations about varying microstructural properties proposed for a given substance, which are used in the course of stressing that substance terms are 'tied' to microstructure instead of to manifest observable properties like taste, weight, texture and colour, only serve to misconstrue the practice of scientific investigation:

> Were it discovered that a substance might be identical in all its properties
>
> and powers with water, yet differently constituted, then the whole of our
>
> chemical theory would collapse, and with it the very reasons we have for

ascribing importance (let alone criterial status) to the molecular constitution

of substances. (2)

When we look at things from this distinctly methodological perspective, stories about epistemic and metaphysical possibility which are written into the nature of things can seem rather forced. What Wittgenstein provides is a new way of looking at things that, with respect to Marconi's example 'salt = NaCl', can serve to illuminate our thinking about necessity and natural kinds. If it should seem a disadvantage that this way of thinking is not something that we might feel like extending to our empirical propositions in general, given that they form such a motley crew and are not for the most part taken by us to require inclusion in some wider theoretical edifice, then that would be some kind of confirmation of a Wittgensteinian standpoint: that looking at things from a scientific point of view is something that we do for particular, non-metaphysical purposes. Marconi has managed to write a paper that is almost bound to stimulate our thinking about Wittgenstein's work insofar as it can be taken to bear upon a subject that is still to the forefront of debate.

Eva Picardi in 'Wittgenstein on Frege on Proper Names and the Context Principle' begins her paper by comparing three quotations, one from Frege on the context principle, one from the *Tractatus* (3.3) ostensively saying something very similar, and one from *Investigations* § 49 about the role of naming only within the language-game, in which Wittgenstein ends by saying that Frege is really saying the same thing as he is about naming, when he claims that words have meaning only in the context of a sentence. The question Picardi asks is whether in the final analysis Wittgenstein and Frege can be regarded as saying the same thing, and warns that it would be mistaken to take these quotations alone as the basis for a definitive answer. She does, however, believe that Wittgenstein in his later writings, unlike in the *Tractatus*, does have many interesting things to say about the meaning and use of proper names, and that these are broadly in line with Frege's account of their sense and reference. This requires that attention be paid to *context* in communication, and if this is done, a fruitful comparison between Frege's and Wittgensten's comments on the fluctuating meaning of proper names will allow for a new perspective on the thinking of both philosophers.

Introducing Charles Travis as a 'Radical Contextualist' who finds his inspiration in Wittgenstein, we are invited not to think of a simple sentence like 'There is milk in the refrigerator' as expressing a proposition outwith a particular context of utterance in which it would be used to make a *point*. In fact, there is an interesting passage in the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein does comment in general terms about the significance of context:

> 'After he had said this, he left her as he did the day before' -
>
> Do I understand this sentence ? Do I understand it just as I
>
> would if I heard it in the course of a narrative ? If it were set
>
> down in isolation I should say, I don't know what it's about.
>
> But all the same I should know how this sentence might perhaps
>
> be used ; I could myself invent a context for it.
>
> (A multitude of familiar paths lead off from these words in every
>
> direction.) (§ 525)

Picardi emphasises, however, that after 1930 Wittgenstein never tires of pointing out that the same sentence can be used to make many different assertions, yet not for the reasons provided by Frege and contemporary Contextualists like Travis, but because they have a different *grammar* (*Ibid*., 172), where she stresses that what is important here is not the specific circumstances in which a sentence is uttered, but the different *types* of language games that can be played with it. This point requires more elaboration.

Later on in her paper, Picardi takes Wittgenstein's main assertion about proper names in the *Investigations* to be that there can be no uniform account of their semantic role, and although this on the face of it is contrary to what Frege believed, what Wittgenstein says about 'Moses' in the *Investigations*, for example, is not antagonistic to Frege. Regarding the concept of a proper name like 'Moses' as a 'family resemblance' concept on the grounds that the name is used without a 'fixed' meaning, she evidently differs from Baker and Hacker on their assessment of the value of what are sometimes regarded as Wittgenstein's 'descriptivist'

leanings. She concludes, after some discussion of Scott Soames's 'Hempel' examples (*Ibid*., 183 *et seq*.), that the perspective on proper names shared by both Frege and Wittgenstein is certainly not rendered obsolete by the opposing picture provided by causal theories of reference.

Whilst it may be thought to be going too far with this pragmatic approach to claim that Putnam's 'meaning ain't in the head', 'admits of a variety of construals' (*Ibid*. 185), Picardi presents a paper that includes a wide variety of different elements, and one wonders whether they might not have been welded together a bit better than they are. She is correct, incidentally, to claim that for all that was known at the time (*Ibid.,* 187. Endnote 22), Le Verrier was right to say that there might have been a planet called 'Vulcan' orbiting between Mercury and Venus, postulated in response to observed perturbations in the orbit of Mercury, since this captures the ordinary idea that what is so yet might have been otherwise. Any inclination we may nevertheless have to claim that within the framework of Einstein's Theory, the behaviour of Mercury could not have been otherwise, then results from the *role* we attribute to this theory in successfully explaining the observed phenomena in the way that it does. This would in any event be what we can surmise to have been Wittgenstein's response to the - for him, surely extravagant claim - that although one thing (the existence of Vulcan) may have seemed epistemically possible, it was discovered only later that something much more sophisticated (an explanatory role for Relativity theory) has proved to be metaphysically necessary.

If readers of Wittgenstein who are inclined to a more therapeutic assessment of his work, will already have found a number of the papers in this volume rather too theoretical to be classed as truly Wittgensteinian, they will be no less disappointed by Timothy Williamson's 'Sceptical Conclusions about Epistemological Analyticity'. Not only is this probably the most obviously technical paper in the entire collection, but it is presented by a philosopher who describes himself as having been invited to the Reggio Emilia Conference 'as a specimen anti-Wittgensteinian, the equivalent of the psychopath whom psychoanalysis cannot reach' (*Ibid*., 209 First Endnote). Wryly adding that he has been on the receiving end of 'Wittgensteinian therapy on average at least once a month since 1973

without showing any sign of improvement', he uses his paper to argue that as defined by him, epistemological analyticity is an illusion. Taking as an example, 'Necessarily, whoever understands the sentence "Every vixen is a female fox" assents to it' (*Ibid*., 189) , failure to give assent to this sentence is not merely *good evidence* for failure to understand but *constitutive* of this failure. The link between understanding and assent, however, is joined to concerns about knowledge, about justification and about truth; but since assenting to something does not entail knowing it, we are invited to ask how understanding-knowledge links are to be extracted from understanding-assent links. Williamson finally concludes that '*No* given argument or statement is immune from rejection by a linguistically competent speaker' (*Ibid*., 201), and that 'The attempt to base the epistemology of obviously valid inference rules such as conjunction elimination on preconditions for linguistic competence with them rests on a confusion between linguistic competence and logical competence' (*Ibid*., 209). This is a paper in which the ghost of Quine hovers very much in the background.

Pasquale Frascolla's book, *Understanding Wittgenstein's* Tractatus, was published in English translation in 2007 (Routledge), the Italian version having originally appeared in 2000. However, as Frascolla advises in his new Preface, the later version incorporates a new interpretation of *Tractatus* ontology, developed in a number of intervening papers: according to Wittgenstein's logical atomism, which Frascolla claims that he expressed - and not by chance - rather elliptically, *objects* are to be identified with repeatable phenomenal qualities, and *states of affairs* with the phenomenal complexes belonging to the various sense realms, which have *qualia* as their ultimate constituents. Frascolla states that the application of logic should show how the physical world is to be constructed out of this phenomenal world using 'logical machinery'. This phenomenalistic ontology based on *qualia,* he takes to satisfy an adequacy condition he frames using five theses, and his contribution to the present volume, 'An Adequacy Condition for the Interpretation of the *Tractatus* Ontology' is used to spell out how this condition is realised by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*.

It may be asked why this paper should be thought to be a suitable candidate for inclusion in the *Metaphilosophy* section comprising Part III of the book, and an answer of sorts is provided by Frascolla

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when he states at the very beginning that for those readers who are not already committed

to regarding the *Tractatus* 'as an extraordinary ingenious and extremely ironic exercise in

Kierkegaardian style', the problem involved in the interpretation of the ontology of the *Tractatus*

provides a genuine challenge to those who feel the inevitable need to flesh out the skeletal

ontological schema which most interpreters already discover in the book. The 'metaphilosophical'

point that Frascolla makes is expressed in similar terms in his original Preface:

>...if the current fashion of Wittgenstein studies is represented
>
>by the so-called 'New Wittgenstein', then my approach will
>
>seem terribly out of fashion, and will appear to be out of sync
>
>with the times. On the other hand, if my approach, which might
>
>safely be called an 'Old Wittgenstein approach' proves to have
>
>deeply penetrated the spirit and the letter of the *Tractatus*, then
>
>this interpretation will provide an excellent demonstration of
>
>just how mistaken and sterile the present fashion is (*Op.cit*. Preface x).

Frascolla is not alone in believing that the objects of the *Tractatus* are to be identified

with phenomenal qualities, and this thesis is central to a book, much criticised by a number of

reviewers on its initial publication, but a substantial achievement for all that, by Merril B. & Jaako

Hintikka (*Investigating Wittgenstein*, Blackwell 1986). Still well worth reading, their book claims

amongst other things that Russell's objects of acquaintance are identical to *objects* in the *Tractatus*.

Certainly, as Frascolla quickly reminds us, Wittgenstein did not see fit to provide any 'practical'

example of what either an *object* or a *state of affairs* actually is, a point reflected in his later remark

to Malcolm that as a logician he at that time adopted what might now appear to be the rather

haughty posture that it was not his business to decide on the application of his work to what were

effectively empirical matters (Wittgenstein, as quoted *Ibid*., 215). Nevertheless, Frascolla works

hard to provide the backing he discovers in the *Tractatus* for this still relatively unpopular outlook

on the nature of *objects* in the *Tractatus*.

The second and final paper in the *Metaphilosophy* section is 'Method and Metaphilosophy in the *Philosophical Investigations*' by Meredith Williams. The version as printed here evidently forms an earlier working out of material that later comprises the first chapter of her new book, *Blind Obedience: Paradox and Learning in the Later Wittgenstein* (Routledge, 2010), and those readers who have already had the opportunity to study this, will immediately recognise a high degree of repetition, a fact mentioned in its *Acknowledgements*. Williams introduces the *constructivist* who sees the style of Wittgenstein's writing and the remarks in §§ 89 - 133 as features incidental to his constructive and ultimately theoretical insights, and the *quietist* who regards the metaphilosophical remarks as an expression of Wittgenstein's attempt to dissuade his reader from taking part in an ultimately sterile philosophical enterprise. Whilst recognising that the quietist can certainly be found in the texts, Williams nevertheless sides with the constructivist who notices that there are obvious discrepancies between Wittgenstein's largely argumentative practice and his clear metaphilosophical pronouncements. Furthermore, Williams wishes to take a step beyond both protagonists by showing that an answer can be provided to the question why the metaphilosophical remarks occur where they do in the *Investigations*, an answer that cannot be provided by the constructivist, who is ever eager solely to latch on to those passages in which he sees his theoretical reflections confirmed, and the quietist who, whilst sensitive to Wittgenstein's subtle and careful ordering of his remarks, manages to entirely miss their profound theoretical content (*Ibid*., 230).

Convinced that Wittgenstein's greatness as a philosopher within the Western tradition, is at least partly explained by his introduction of a fundamentally new way of looking at things that she finds expressed in *the problem of normative similarity*, Williams sees Wittgenstein structuring the *Investigations* around four ways of revealing and resolving this problem as it occurs in the relation of word to object and in rule-following in the philosophy of language, and in knowledge of self and in the ontological status of sensations in the philosophy of mind. Introducing what she refers to as six separate and methodologically crucial language games, the builders (§ 2 & § 8), the colour chart (§ 48) and the standard metre (§ 50), which three occur *prior to* the methodological remarks, and three

more which occur *after* them, the pupil learning numbers (§ 143), the private diary (§ 258) and the beetle in the box (§ 293), Williams discovers that Wittgenstein employs *regress* arguments in relation to the first three and *reductio ad absurdum* arguments in relation to the remainder. The regress or 'conflation arguments' play a central role in the first part of the *Investigations* - prior to the methodological remarks - where the relation between word and object is clearly to the forefront of debate, and the *reductio* or 'paradox arguments' come into play when discussing the private diary and the notorious beetle in the box.

Whilst few readers will fail to admire the elegance and simplicity of this structural edifice, there will be others who will only too readily notice that its very existence clearly depends on reconstructing rather than on merely interpreting the original texts. This is confirmed when we discover that Williams obviously feels the need to buttress her account by downplaying the power that Wittgenstein is often thought to assign to descriptions of how language is ordinarily used, as a way of dissolving philosophical problems. The J.L. Austin of *Sense and Sensibilia*, for example, is introduced as a superior player to a Wittgenstein similarly regarded as an exponent of 'ordinary language' philosophy, because the careful and nuanced descriptions of words that Austin employs in his successful attack on Ayer, has no counterpart in Wittgenstein's rather ineffective attempts to show that our 'ordinary linguistic practices are in order as they are and do not need any philosophical buttressing or underpinning' (*Ibid*., 238).

Even if we allow for the fact that both Ayer (4) and his admirers felt at the time that he more than adequately replied to Austin with a barrage of effective rejoinders, a point which is admittedly open to dispute, it is arguable that Williams is so wedded to a theoretical perspective that she simply fails to notice how powerful Wittgenstein's appeals to these descriptions really are. It is simply not sufficient merely to *ask* why the problem of other minds should be thought to dissolve at being instructed to look at a wriggling fly (§ 284) (*Ibid*., 238), or at being reminded that we react immediately to another's pain (§ 303). The value of Wittgenstein's attack on the idea of the 'private ownership of experience' does not lie *merely* in his remarking *en passant* that it never occurs to us in

a day-to-day context that the blueness of the sky to which we may refer in conversation is an impression that belongs only to the person who comments on it, any more than the reminder of the shopkeeper's diverse uses of 'five', 'red' and 'apples' should be thought to be enough to convince the philosopher to stop searching for a theory of language. Wittgenstein is not, in the manner of Malcolm, presenting an 'argument from the paradigm case', *as if* the philosopher's 'misuse of language' *per se* reveals that he is in some way breaching 'rules of grammar'. On the contrary, by claiming that there *really* are no 'other minds' or that the sky is not *really* objectively blue, the philosopher is shown to be entranced by a *picture* which he finds it almost impossible to relinquish, and this is largely what a great many of these examples serve to expose. They do not require to be buttressed by *additional* kinds of philosophical argument.

Whilst Wittgenstein's procedure is not entirely devoid of argument, to treat the fundamental role of descriptions as reminders of what we do *as if* they succeed only in begging the question against the refined, theoretical philosopher, can easily lead to a misunderstanding of what he is about. An aspect of her account which may also give rise to suspicion is that in favour of her thesis Williams picks six of the most famous passages in the *Investigations*, passages which are often regarded as so enigmatic that they have given rise to thousands of pages of commentary in attempts to unravel their secrets. To employ *these* passages in particular in the course of outlining what Williams believes to be a highly structured argumentative text, can hardly avoid leaving even her more sophisticated readers with the impression that she believes herself to have finally discovered *the* key which will unlock the treasures hidden within the *Philosophical Investigations*. For the reasons already given, this surely begs the question against what is nevertheless an admirable account.

Another author who has expressed the belief that it is difficult to reconcile Wittgenstein's argumentative practice with his methodological pronouncements, and 'that there were more things in his philosophy than could be confined within his metaphhilosophy' (*Ibid.*, 272) is Sir Anthony Kenny, and the final chapter of the book, 'Farewell Thoughts on Wittgenstein' sees him providing an overview of the contributions made by most of the other participants. This enjoyable piece contains a great deal of

vintage Kenny, with Wittgenstein on reading compared to Aristotle on the potentiality to learn Greek and the actuality to learn the language, this actuality itself a potentiality which is exercised when the student identifies a particular letter as alpha. Kenny introduces us once again to his well-known idea of the *vehicle* of a capacity, and repeats qualms he has expressed elsewhere over that notorious passage in *Zettel* (§ 610) where in appearing to neglect the (scientific) thought that memory requires a material vehicle, Wittgenstein may be compared to a Renaissance Aristotelian reacting unfavourably to Galileo in the face of the 'new science' (Ibid., 264).

Kenny sees himself siding with Horwich against Glock on the 'isolated individual devising a language' issue, pointing towards Peter Hacker's 'shareable with others' rather than 'shared' as the operating principle at stake; although here, as in the reactionary Aristotelian example, it is arguable that some misunderstanding of Wittgenstein is being expressed. Kenny provides an interesting aside on an invitation he once received to attend an OUP party to celebrate the publication of an authoratative dictionary of the English language, the point of which is worth reading in full, and manages to engage with Voltolini's paper in capturing the claim that whilst language is normative, thought is not, 'because it is only complex thoughts that require language for articulation' (*Ibid*., 265). Surveying Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' and how it relates to Davidson and Kripke, Kenny sweeps over the required ground, covering topics like the private language argument, dreaming, and the content of *On Certainty*, whilst stressing in more detail his allegiance to a viewpoint that would find impossible to reconcile the theoretical Wittgenstein he admires and the metaphilosophical Wittgenstein he finds it hard to understand (*Ibid*., 271). With his characteristic clarity of expression, Kenny covers an enormous amount of material within a relatively short space, throwing light on the various contributions he elects to discuss. His paper is a fitting end to an extraordinarily wide-ranging collection. The contributions as they stand must be left on their own to answer the question that the Conference was designed to explore: whether there is *really* anything wrong with Wittgenstein that it might manage to discover.

ENDNOTES

(1) Originally in 'The Meaning of "Meaning" ' in *Mind Language and Reality , Philosophical Papers Vol. 2* (Cambridge: CUP 1975), but modified, e.g., in 'Is it Necessary that Water is H_2O?' in *The Philosophy of A. J. Ayer* ed. Hahn, (La Salle Illinois: Open Court, 1992).

(2) A.J. Ayer: *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), Chap. IX, 270.

(3) See for example Scott Soames: *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century, Volume 2 The Age of Meaning*, Part 7, 333.

(4) A.J. Ayer: 'Has Austin Refuted the Sense-Datum Theory ?' in *Metaphysics and Common Sense* (London: MacMillan, 1969).

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.