

CRITICAL NOTICE

Describing Ourselves

Wittgenstein and Autobiographical Consciousness

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There is a fairly traditional perspective on philosophical problems about the existence of an external world and about 'other minds' which grants them a uniquely individual character: these perennial problems arise from a specific way of looking at things which is the special province of the philosopher, an individual whose training within a strict discipline allows him to exercise a set of particular skills shared with only a select number of other people. These skills distinguish the philosopher as someone involved in conceptual rather than in merely empirical investigations. The select group of which he is a member has, accordingly, a special dispensation to question the kinds of philosophical standpoints underlying and implied by everyday talk. The members of this group would take it for granted, for example, that the application of ordinary criteria in terms of which people talk freely about their own thoughts and emotions and those of other people in a common world which exists independently of the viewpoints from which they individually perceive it, cannot in itself be accepted as a sufficient philosophical justification for adhering to the kinds of ontological claims to which the language they use unquestionably commits them.

For those who have been nurtured on an enlightened diet allowing them to become familiar, perhaps from an early age, with the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, this approach must now seem to be at the very least uncommonly old-fashioned. From the different perspective of that philosopher whom we have come to know as the later Wittgenstein, if not equally from that of his earlier self, it would now be generally accepted that the viewpoint adopted by that select group of philosophers referred to embodies presuppositions which Wittgenstein questions on every page of the *Philosophical Investigations*, presuppositions which were central to the attitude adopted by Bertrand Russell when he complained of the later work of his former pupil:

During the period since 1914 three philosophies have successively dominated the British philosophical world: first that of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, second that of the Logical Positivists, and third that of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Of these, the first had very considerable influence upon my own thinking, though I do not now think that this influence was wholly good. The second school...had my general sympathy though I disagreed with some of its most distinctive doctrines. The third school....remains to me completely unintelligible. Its positive doctrines seem to me trivial and its negative doctrines, unfounded. I have not found in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* anything that seemed to me interesting and I do not understand why a whole school finds important wisdom in its pages. (1)

Even today this passage is sufficiently uncompromising to bring the reader up with a start. The later Wittgenstein referred to by Russell '...seems to have grown tired of serious thinking and to have invented a doctrine which would make such an activity unnecessary....if it is true, philosophy is, at best, a slight help to lexicographers, and at worst, an idle tea-table amusement.' (2) Russell ends his criticism of Urmson by complaining that whilst philosophers from Thales onwards have tried to understand the world, the new philosophy to which he refers - the philosophy of the *Philosophical Investigations* - 'seems to concern itself, not with the world and our relation to it, but only with the different ways in which silly people can say silly things.' (3)

Russell's complaint is now part of our shared philosophical heritage. It reflects the important principle that whilst the philosopher can see well enough how our ordinary discourse obviously and unquestioningly involves its users in precise philosophical commitments of an ontological kind about the existence of an external world and about 'other minds', the sceptical challenge which he legitimately takes to undermine these commitments, also serves to reveal

in what regard 'the different ways in which silly people can say silly things' cannot even come close to providing it with an adequate 'common sense' answer. The answer which Wittgenstein provides in the *Investigations*, on the other hand, is of an entirely different character: it consists in undermining from the outset the presuppositions which make it seem to the philosopher that there can be a challenge to the philosophical commitments of ordinary discourse; for it is central to his thinking to deny that ordinary discourse can embody commitments of this kind. It is this idea that misleads the philosopher into thinking that 'what we ordinarily say' can from his philosophical perspective be in any sense open to question. If there are no commitments, there can be nothing to be sceptical about. The philosopher begins from a faulty understanding of what it means to talk about - in his terms - an external world or the reality of 'other minds'. What appears to be an uncompromising ontological commitment on the part of ordinary discourse is, for Wittgenstein, no more than a misconstrual on the part of the philosopher of the roles played by our ordinary talk about our own thoughts and feelings and those of other people against the background of a world which, if it can be said to exist independently of the individual viewpoints from which it is perceived, does so only insofar as this can be said to be a harmless reflection of the practice of talking about different kinds of individuals by those who enjoy the viewpoints referred to.

Wittgenstein can therefore be said to turn the original philosophical perspective inside out: what appeared to have the characteristic of the most important thing, the distinctive ontological commitment that made the sceptical challenge possible, is no more than a picture that has become an incidental accompaniment to our talk within a particular realm of discourse - otherwise a language-game - about the philosopher's external world, his 'other minds', or his rules as rails that predetermine the results, say, of his arithmetical calculations. The philosopher's viewpoint rests on nothing more than a faulty understanding of our grammar, in Wittgenstein's unique sense, a grammar resting on the bedrock of our actual practices of talking about the philosopher's external world - 'external' only from his own distinct viewpoint - the thoughts and feelings of ourselves and others, and about his making a calculation in the course of working through a mathematical proof.

In all these cases the individual practice is accompanied by a picture which in this sense is doing no real work, and this is indeed why Wittgenstein is so often inclined to suggest that we just surrender ourselves to the picture whilst asking how it might be applied. (*Investigations* §§ 422-425). The implication, of course, is that the picture has - in philosophy - no application, although outwith philosophy it may indeed be no more than a harmless accompaniment to the practice of talking, say, about our own feelings and those of others, where the real burden is carried by the practice which - in contrast to the philosopher's metaphysical commitments - is in the final analysis the ultimate source of the meaning bestowed on the distinctions ordinarily employed between inner/outer, private/public, or mental/physical. The concept of therapy, for Wittgenstein, gains its application in this context from the role it acquires within this new and liberating methodology: our understanding is now achieved not from contemplating the results of metaphysical reflection, but from describing and assessing the circumstances in which the appropriate concepts embodying those dichotomies (mental/physical, private/public) which were previously the source of the philosopher's sceptical difficulties, are shown to have a new and revolutionary role within a social practice:

What Wittgenstein's later writings offer us is - to put the matter in a different way misleadingly briefly - a way of seeing philosophical problems that constitutes, as has been claimed throughout this book, a *radical* departure from the approaches of Frege, Russell, Quine, and so many others. (But this is, of course, not to suggest that we will not gain much from keeping those authors, as foils, in view as we assess Wittgenstein's methodological radicalism - quite the contrary.).....he himself, wary of too simply or too conventionally characterising his own ways of working, appeals repeatedly, as we have now seen, to the notion of therapy. This is a fitting concept for a moment in philosophy's history of radical departure and an ensuing process of radical change. (4)

It is a measure of Gary Hagberg's success in his new volume that the extent to which he is in tune with the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* can be measured by the way in which he is able to extricate from the texts the degree to which the philosopher already referred to is, in any particular case, prone to misconstrue the significance of what is no more than a picture, taking it to be the important thing when it is really playing no role in the game at all. Hagberg stresses this point, for example, in his final chapter devoted largely to memory. Having already drawn our attention to *Investigations* § 604 and having still to lead us to what is importantly said in § 305, he points out that the memory-experience is not playing the central role in a proper understanding of the concept of *remembering* that the philosopher is almost inevitably drawn to believe that it does:

But of course it is difficult to suppress the powerful sense that there simply must be such an image that constitutes the inner content of the remembering. And one reason for this insistent picture is that we *can* have what Wittgenstein calls 'accompaniments' to remembering - and these, to confuse the issue, may well be visual images. (5)

In short, the visual image, as Wittgenstein indicates in the penultimate section of the *Investigations* to which Hagberg also refers (Part II, xiii), although an incidental accompaniment to the mental process of remembering, is neither necessary nor sufficient for remembering: not necessary because the remembering can take place without it, and not sufficient because one could have the image without knowing whose image it is. To paraphrase Hagberg, remembering grandfather, and remembering what he looks like are two entirely different things. Hagberg then continues by providing an insightful discussion of memory in which Augustine is portrayed as an adherent of a 'storage and retrieval' concept of memory underlying the kind of views normally associated with classical empiricism. Yet for Wittgenstein it is central that the language-game of remembering is prior to, rather than consequent upon our propensity to conjure up visual images

which, in an empiricist fashion, may be thought to be intrinsically meaningful as the source of our linguistic capabilities. (This, of course, does not at all rule out the thought, of which we may be only too familiar in scientific contexts, that for particular purposes, there may indeed be a value attached to looking upon the brain - in connection, say, with the diagnosis and cure of disorders resulting in loss of memory - as a storehouse of encoded information.)

The fact that Hagberg takes the old order to be overthrown here in the same way that it is overthrown in Wittgenstein's questioning of the philosopher's desire to reify his external world or his 'other minds' in the course of raising a sceptical difficulty about the ontological status of questionable entities, is one significant feature of Wittgenstein's thinking that acts as a *leitmotif* throughout his later work. Slightly earlier in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein applies the same principle even to the Jamesian phrase 'The word is on the tip of my tongue' (Part II, xi) where the almost inevitable tendency to which Hagberg draws our attention in relation to memory is repeated in the desire to say that this phrase designates an experience, when what it does refer to are in fact certain characteristic features of the behaviour and experiences which may or may not accompany those circumstances in which we do indeed go through the process - the mental process - of trying to find a word that has escaped us, and which we nevertheless hope to find.

But Hagberg's major goal here is to reveal how his enquiries into memory are only one aspect of Wittgenstein's work importantly contributing to our understanding of autobiography. Far from having the passive, oversimplistic relationship to our past suggested by the picture of ourselves as containers of memory-images retrieved in an autobiographical narrative, Hagberg presents us with a much more complex and dynamic proposal:

Rather, we are in a continual process of reconsideration....,
of reflective restructuring, and of repositioning the actions,
events, occurrences, interactions, efforts, aspirations, achievements,
intentions - in short our words, deeds, and everything in between that,
taken together, form the teleological trajectories, the narrative threads,
of our selves. (6)

Two of the major questions raised by his approach, concern the extent to which what he is saying here can be said to be of philosophical import, and also whether literature and the literary examples he uses can be taken *per se* to express his specifically Wittgensteinian proposals. He continues:

And the very phrase 'looking into the past', if taken as a rhetorical flourish that admittedly accentuates ocular experience and visual scrutiny, can be harmless if it is meant as a colorful way of alluding to the many and varying processes of retrospective self-investigation. If, conversely, it is taken to name a uniform process of mental-image retrieval and passive looking, then it can, in establishing deeply misleading analogies with only a few rhetorical moves, do more harm than good. It prevents us from seeing - well, comprehending - the multiform employments of the word as it is used. (7)

If there is any doubt over what Hagberg is doing here, it arises from a certain ambivalence which appears to be an almost integral feature of the discussion, an ambivalence arising from an uncertainty whether we are, in saying what we are saying, doing philosophy; and this to some extent does turn on whether the very phrases we use on these occasions are taken in themselves to have philosophical implications. It is a sound principle of Wittgenstein's to claim that *per se* they do not. Consequently, insofar as it might be said to be true that memory is a means of looking into the past, then if in one respect this is nothing but a harmless truism, then from another philosophical point of view it becomes a metaphor. Like the Jamesian phrase 'the word is on the tip of my tongue', it does not, philosophically, signify an experience. What it is, or is not intended to signify depends on how it is used, and it is another sound Wittgensteinian principle that the philosopher is prone to misconstrue - when doing philosophy - the implications that our ordinary use of words can be taken to have when he attempts to employ them in a special way and for a very special purpose outwith the normal circumstances in which they have an application. (*Investigations* § 116).

We can take it, then, as a sound Wittgensteinian principle that if, for example, in the course of enjoying a performance of *Hamlet*, I find myself imaginatively participating in Hamlet's soliloquies, with the consequence that I am given to claim that I have a very good idea of what is really going on inside him, then it must be remembered that there is a very important sense in which this claim as normally made has no philosophical implications whatsoever. But can this be reconciled with what we can surely feel entitled to treat as a central feature of Hagberg's methodology ?

Here too I believe it is literature, theater, and film that provide a great, and irreplaceable service to philosophical understanding, specifically in the sense that we are shown by these arts cases of human interaction and the forms of understanding of others and of selves that neither illustrate nor correspond to Cartesian or behavioristic conceptions of the self. Indeed, such cases function as 'reminders', in Wittgenstein's sense, of what 'lies before us' as our lived practices that are distorted in the prism of theory, and when such cases are not within our imaginative grasp, we can find either or both of the opposed philosophical pictures of selfhood once again plausible. (8)

If there is an inclination to respond that this cannot be right, for the simple reason that literature and the arts are philosophically neutral in just those respects which are relevant to the implied Cartesian or behavioural conceptions referred to, this would appear to be confirmed by Hagberg's immediate qualification that 'the arts do not do the philosophical work *by themselves*', and that it is Wittgenstein's treatment of these questions that reveals where and how we are to look in theatre, film and the arts for the kinds of illustrations Hagberg seeks that would show how inapplicable the Cartesian/behavioural dichotomy really is. But these examples can only be used in this way if one has already, and surely justifiably, become attracted for sound

philosophical reasons to the kind of proposals that Wittgenstein espouses. But in the absence of these purely philosophical considerations, there is nothing to show that any example from literature or the arts that one might feel free to choose - like finding out what is going on in Hamlet's soul - could not be used, in itself, to count philosophically in favour of whatever you please. So Hagberg is both right and wrong because it is only insofar as the examples chosen can be taken to illustrate a Wittgensteinian approach for strictly philosophical purposes, that they can play the roles he wishes to grant to them.

Hagberg adopts the same approach in an earlier chapter when, in surveying the solipsistic outlook which he charges Wittgenstein with having adopted in the *Tractatus*, he is given only too easily to see this outlook - which we need not interpret as Hagberg does if we grasp the true significance of 5.62 and of what solipsism *means* to say - as a feature underlying our attraction to those aspects of autobiography in literature that are his central concern:

The philosophical intuitions concerning the nature of the self that are formed and fueled by the conceptual picture Wittgenstein has adumbrated in his early writings in fact account for a good deal of our attraction to autobiographical writing.....we thus think of autobiographical writing as a kind of literary antidote to the true element of solipsism to which Wittgenstein referred within the larger context of his Tractarian metaphysics, and we - if only in a sense that could never attain true or complete entry into the mind of the other but still holds out the promise of other-mind understanding - expect a view not merely of what it is like for another to live in our world, but rather the far more personally and philosophically compelling view *into another's world*. (9)

But this, as an illustration of what attracts us to autobiographical writing, assumes too much in the way of a philosophical picture of the enlightenment we gain from autobiography,

when there is nothing to show that our enjoyment of this category of literature embodies any philosophical presuppositions whatsoever.

This is quite apart from the overall cogency of Hagberg's philosophical account - an entirely different matter - of Wittgenstein's struggle with a certain picture which he goes on to see him battling with in the *Blue Book*. It is captured in a distinction Wittgenstein draws between 'I' as subject, and 'I' as object, where the impossibility of taking one's toothache for someone else's in the former case has to be compared with the possibility of mistaking a certain broken arm one identifies for one's own in the latter. (10) This is the famous point echoed later in *Investigations* §§ 404 - 410 that the use of the first person personal pronoun with 'I' as subject is immune from errors of misidentification because it is not used to identify anyone at all. Yet even here Hagberg is given to remark that if we can make the mistake of thinking that we can be wrong about the pain in the same way that we can be wrong about the arm - an idea central to the model of the private object - then this 'makes a Cartesian interior seem to be precisely what we want autobiographical writing to report on, i.e. the "walled garden" to which we want, as readers, entry.' (11)

In this same chapter on 'Autobiographical Consciousness', Hagberg gives a good account of Wittgenstein's treatment of consciousness. By illustrating how a surely innocuous description of consciousness as a characteristic possessed by persons but not by trees and stones (§ 418), can so easily in philosophy turn into a *picture* illustrating the attribution of a contingent *inner* property which either is or is not in any particular case attached to *outer* behaviour, he points to how Wittgenstein is already gesturing in this passage towards the idea that it is expressive human behaviour - with the attendant problems of interpretation and imputations of behaviourism that Hagberg will later go on to discuss - that constitutes the paradigm governing our understanding of what gives content to the very idea of third person attributions of feeling and sensation. This, of course, does not rule out the *fantastic* in imaginative literature or in science fiction, but that again is another story. If we are ever surprised that philosophers do not find § 419 with its chief who surely must have consciousness, more amusing than they do, this can only be because they either do not share Wittgenstein's sense of humour, or they

are perhaps more entranced by the engaging picture being criticised than they may sometimes be willing to admit. Hagberg in any event has its proper measure, in pointing to the tendency in philosophy to enquire into the nature of consciousness in isolation from 'the human practices, engagements, and interactions that assure the intelligibility of the concept of consciousness in the first place' (12), although even here he cannot avoid repeating his earlier claim that if we miss this important element in Wittgenstein's thinking we will look towards autobiography for an insight into the inner realm of solipsistic selfhood, and thus deeply miscast its nature.

Once again, Hagberb is inviting the charge that he is making assumptions about what attracts us to autobiography that we have no reason to believe have any bearing upon the ordinary enjoyment we derive from autobiographical writing: we as readers are accused of being obsessed by a concern about what is going on in the inmost soul of the writer which, whilst on one interpretation the result of an adherence to a misleading philosophical picture, is on another a perfectly good expression of why we actually and quite normally read autobiography in the first place, something that has no philosophical implications at all.

This has a bearing on the use Hagberg makes of the literary examples quoted later in the chapter. After a discussion of that passage illustrating perhaps the highest expression of Wittgenstein's art, § 426, where he captures the way in which in philosophy we can be taken in by a picture, 'the straight highway before us which is permanently closed', we are treated to several literary excerpts reminding us that Wittgenstein's attitude towards a soul can run 'along a continuum, from barely noticing the presence of a person (but still, most significantly, *barely* ; i.e. the attitude is eliminably present as constitutive of person-perception) to being acutely aware of one person's presence in a large crowded room - where one's attention is, seemingly beyond volition, magnetised to a single human focal point despite where one is visually looking.' (13)

The subject of this experience is one Ellen Glasgow, and its nature that of her evident attraction to a man with whom she proceeds against the conventions of her time to have a secret

affair, one carried out behind a mask of conformity. The point of the story in this context for Hagberg is that if we see Ellen Glasgow's language at *work*, what is hidden behind the mask here can in no way be construed as something which is metaphysically hidden in terms of a philosophical picture of the inner and the outer. Quoting from Wittgenstein's *Last Writings on The Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 1, § 974, Hagberg stresses his perceptive remark to the effect that in the case he is discussing, nothing is hidden, and if he were to assume that there were something hidden, what would then be hidden (metaphysically) would be of no interest:

Glasgow's secret, what one might term the ontological nature of her hiding, should be placed on a continuum of cases next to the hiding of a diary and not at all next to the imagined metaphysical 'hiding' (where indeed the inner is modeled on the outer and the grammar of hiding objects generates the picture of hiding inner, private objects) within a Cartesian interior. (14)

But if we are to quote examples, the relevant one here is surely Horatio's remark: 'There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave, To tell us this' (*Hamlet* Act 1, Sc. 5). The issue is not so much that the Wittgensteinian interpretation is so obviously true that the very idea of our interpreting Ellen Glasgow's story in a Cartesian or behaviouristic way is unthinkable, as that for us to participate in, and derive enjoyment from her tale does not require us to have any kind of philosophical presuppositions whatsoever. Furthermore, a philosopher really wedded to behaviourism or dualism, would simply reinterpret Glasgow's story in such a way that all statements apparently about Glasgow's mental states would be argued to be 'really' statements about her behaviour, or vice versa. The question at stake would then become one of ascertaining the role of what she is actually saying from a philosophical perspective; and that is not something that is implicit in the text itself. Consequently, if we do, with obvious justification, follow Hagberb in the adoption of those well-established procedures

expressed in Wittgenstein's methodology, and so agree with his interpretation of what is going on in Glasgow's case, and in Ryan's, and in the war memoir of Siegfried Sassoon, we should reflect that our doing so is not going to cut any ice with someone like Russell, for example, who sees no value in Wittgenstein's methodology whatsoever.

This is borne out by the fact that, at one level, Hagberg is obviously correct to conclude that, as ordinary readers of Sassoon's story, we naturally sympathise with the righteous indignation he feels at having to suffer lectures from a junior officer who has never even seen the field, when Sassoon has already endured the full horrors of the Western Front. We can also agree with Hagberg that, as he puts it, our attempts to guess Sassoon's thoughts and feelings in these circumstances cannot be seen as an attempt on our part to overcome 'any metaphysically enforced epistemic limit': they instead express an empathy with someone whose feelings, given his predicament, are surely transparent. But it does not follow that this is because the truth of Wittgenstein's assessment shines through. A distinction still needs to be drawn between innocently participating in a practice and obtaining what Wittgenstein regards as a 'perspicuous presentation' of that practice (*Investigations* § 122); and that - a point central to Hagberg's own thinking (15) - whether this can in any particular case be said to have a therapeutic value or not, is still in an important sense a strictly philosophical question the answer to which cannot be taken to be already implicit in the literary text *per se*.

Again, philosophically, Hagberg is surely correct in his understanding of Wittgenstein in these contexts: it would be totally misleading to think of facial features as external evidence for internal mental events, when it is much better to see what is 'inner' expressed directly in the facial features themselves. To see grief in a face is not in this sense to see the facial expression as a physical intermediary; and this has a great deal to do with his attempts later in the book to clarify what Wittgenstein is saying in order to avoid naively construing him as a behaviourist: Wittgenstein does not see himself as dealing here with ontological categories. At the same time, the picture of gaining access to what is hidden in the inner recesses of someone's mind when one cannot

get a grasp of what he is up to - Wittgenstein's example of finding someone a complete enigma to him - gains an application in appropriate circumstances, just as at other times the idea that someone's behaviour is so transparent that we have no need to speculate about the motives behind it, are for all practical purposes figures of speech that, *per se*, need not be assumed to have any philosophical import.

This is relevant to Hagberg's perceptive reading of Stanley Cavell who makes his first major appearance in Chapter 2, 'The Self Reflected'. The question at issue here turns on how Cavell's reading of Wittgenstein in which there is a 'truth in scepticism' relates to what Wittgenstein has to say about the metaphysical claim that one person cannot experience the experiences of another person. Following an interesting discussion in which Hagberg quotes John Cook's classic paper 'Wittgenstein on Privacy' - in which he adopts the standard line that since there is nothing in which having someone else's experiences can even be taken to consist, this idea is irremediably incoherent so that there is in effect nothing here that one cannot do - Hagberg presents Cavell as struggling to capture an important insight that he is not finding it easy to fully articulate. Quoting from an early passage of Cavell's in his essay 'Knowing and Acknowledging', in which Cavell contrasts the obvious sense in which two people can enjoy having the same experience, with another in which this appears to be a form of contradiction, Cavell is seen to be making the attempt to express a sense of separateness that is more than just a matter of logic. Hagberg shows just how difficult this sense is to capture:

Full engagement with the problem, with the nature of (as well as the articulation of) the metaphysical predicament or condition of the self that runs through Cavell's work, demands the recognition of a deep problem doubled: the asymmetry between the first and third person can be mirrored in an internalized version of this problem, such that the self does not understand, does not know, itself. This, one might say, is the internal psychological doubling of an external

social problem, or the single-mind version of the other-minds problem, or to express it still another way, perhaps the solipsistic turning of scepticism on itself. (16)

This reading of Cavell in which a person can become a complete enigma even to himself, let alone to anyone else, allows Hagberg to draw the pertinent conclusion that the problem of other minds, which in this case becomes a problem of 'other-understanding', points towards the human complexity of any biographical and autobiographical undertaking. But the important question is how far all of this accords with the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*; and here one can obtain part of an answer by considering that Cavell after all does agree with the conclusions of what he calls Ordinary language philosophy, as reflected in his assessment of the teachings of Austin and Wittgenstein, insofar as these discredit a move to the metaphysical as an expression of scepticism:

Such metaphysical utterances, such skeptical claims, are indeed examples of what Wittgenstein called 'language gone on holiday', the transgression of the bounds of our language-games. But Cavell is here too, as in his commentary on Cook's linguistic analysis, unwilling to give up the seriousness, perhaps the human profundity of the insight, born of the inward phenomenological feeling of human separateness or isolation, that in part motivates these conceptual-linguistic transgressions. (17)

So Hagberg interprets Cavell as saying that scepticism as such is not discredited by Wittgenstein, so much as scepticism's own pictures of its accomplishments. But if Cavell does have a valid point to make here, it is one that cannot be arising at the same level as these transgressions referred to. Hagberg has already covered Wittgenstein's philosophical stance adequately in his treatment of a passage from the *Blue Book*, where the issue is taken to be perfectly straightforward:

[Wittgenstein] is, rather, asking if the very formulation of the problem (now demoted to a 'puzzle') can make sense, and the tribunal that judges that question will not be the Schopenhaurian metaphysics of selfhood, but ordinary linguistic usage. Looking to see how such phrases *are* used in our language will break the hold of the picture, which it does by calling into question the very sense of the various articulations of that picture. Now Wittgenstein is placing that picture-driven and conceptually bewitching language up against the standards of our usage, and he will go on to conclude that there indeed can be, and are, contexts of human discourse within which we intelligibly speak of not knowing what someone sees, but these will prove soberingly unlike the problem of other-minds skepticism and mind-enclosed solipsism seen here: they do not reduce to the problem of not being able to get access to the inner content - the putative immediate content - of his experience. (18)

The point is made in a more sophisticated way in that famous passage, *Investigations* § 300 - a further example of the highpoint of Wittgenstein's art - where the use of the concept of pain in the statement 'he is in pain' is said not to be dependent, as one might be only too easily tempted to assume that it is when doing philosophy, on the ability to have a picture of a pain, derived from one's own case, which can then be variously ascribed to whoever you please, but on the circumstances in which there are evident criteria for the application of the concept. The picture is incidental to the circumstances in which the concept has an application, and that is why 'an image is not a picture', although we can obviously draw a picture illustrating someone in pain (§ 301), where this would, for example, be an illustration of something patently unphilosophical, a picture of someone writhing in agony.

The Cavellian point then relates to an element in a person's experience with others where the issue of the possibility of others cannot be in question: Cavell's 'scepticism', as

described by Hagberg, is better accounted for as a permanent aspect of the human condition that reveals itself in our existing practices as an integral feature of our lives with others, one in which there are aspects of our lives giving rise to a permanent sceptical threat, rather than as a fundamental philosophical 'puzzle' forever putting in question the very possibility that there might even be any others at all. Hagberg, unfortunately, does not quite interpret Cavellian scepticism in this light, a point consistent with his earlier statement that we are to view Cavell's inward feeling of separateness or isolation as partly motivating the conceptual-linguistic transgressions to which he refers:

The appeal and the threat, consistent both with Wittgenstein's vision of the organic growth and ever-changing evolution of our language (-games) and his insight into the myriad tricks that language plays on its users and the ever evolving 'bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' present themselves in ever-new guises. To employ the language of Wittgenstein's therapeutic analogy for ordinary language philosophical work, to diagnose one case is not to cure all cases - just as it is not necessarily to *cure* the case diagnosed. (19)

The problem here is that Hagberg is now attempting to find room for Cavell's reading, as his earlier *Blue Book* treatment reveals, at a level at which it does not apply. The mistake rests on treating the Cavellian sense of separateness as giving rise, at least in part, to the conceptual-linguistic philosophical problems Wittgenstein discusses, when it in effect can only take place against the background of the very practices that are central to Hagberg's earlier discussion, practices the nature of which are misconstrued in his 'conceptual-linguistic transgressions'.

Chapter 3, 'The Self Speaking' has Hagberg undermining any attempt to see Wittgenstein as a behaviourist, elaborating on the now generally accepted point that in the act of rejecting the application of a certain picture of 'object and designation', it appears that the

existence of mental processes has been denied, 'and naturally we don't want to deny them.' (§ 308). Commenting that Wittgenstein's phrase 'not a *something* but not a *nothing* either', seems hardly the most helpful of responses to the charge that he is denying the reality of sensations, (§ 304), Wittgenstein could have replied that it is not a *something* because not construable on the private object model, yet not a *nothing* because an item we talk about freely every day. But he could do so only in the act of confirming that the very way in which we quite naturally refer to the sensation inevitably turns it (in philosophical reflection) into the *grammatical* fiction referred to in § 307.

Justifiably doubtful about attributing to Wittgenstein what he refers to as the slightly more refined view that all propositions containing mental predicates can be reduced to propositions expressing behavioural dispositions, on the grounds that it would surely be bizarre to think of having to study one's own behaviour in order to find out what one was feeling, Hagberg continues by claiming that we can often know in any event what someone is feeling without being able to specify in any detail why this is so. He then characteristically argues that whilst this appears to be a case of knowing, the truth is really far more nuanced, pointing to film, theatre, opera, literature, sculpture and painting as a way of illustrating that in these cases we can often be concerned with 'sensing, suspecting, believing, half-believing, seeing-but-not-wanting-to-see, or any of very many other phenomena of emotionally informed person-perception that range across a vast spectrum.' (20).

But if we accept that our ordinary discourse is philosophically neutral, then far from indicating that examples of these kinds already reveal how applicable a Wittgensteinian approach really is, all they need be taken to show is that the germs of Cartesianism, behaviourism and even of a more refined Wittgensteinian approach are already indirectly enshrined in the way we ordinarily talk. We often, for example, want to know what is hidden in the dark recesses of his mind; at other times we can see how transparent his behaviour really is although he naively believes that only he knows the (hidden) truth; and we can see the grief in his face, no matter how much he attempts to hide it. If these forms of expression are philosophically neutral in that they do not *per se* point towards the truth of any philosophical account, whether bypassing Hagberg's Cartesian/behaviourist dichotomy in a

Wittgensteinian fashion or not, it may be thought significant that the strict neutrality of our ordinary forms of expression, is the one possibility he fails to canvas when considering the following alternative proposals expressing the relationship between philosophy and the arts:

- (1) the arts show what philosophy says
- (2) the arts therapeutically remove confused metaphysical pictures in philosophy, yielding conceptual clarification
- (3) art itself becomes a manifest form or medium of philosophical thinking
- (4) the arts themselves are metaphysically confused and await the clarifications of Wittgensteinian analysis, and
- (5) the arts, as case-evidence, confirm or disconfirm philosophical theses. (21)

On his strictly philosophical assessment of Wittgenstein's approach, on the other hand, Hagberg once again conforms very much to a generally acceptable and conventional standpoint on his relation to behaviourism:

Thus, three fundamental elements of third-person behaviorism, i.e. (1) the characterization of our knowledge of another's emotional state as inferential, (2) the characterization of behavior as evidence which allegedly precedes our knowledge, and (3) the characterization of person-perception as body-perception, are met with strong anti-reductive arguments and counterexamples. It may indeed at times *appear* that Wittgenstein's position on the self is approximating one or the other of the formulations of behaviorism, but on closer examination it turns out to be merely an illusory proximity; he is certainly not a 'behaviorist in disguise.' (22)

Hagberg continues by discussing the complexity of what he refers to as Wittgenstein's doctrine of avowals, taking time to stress that it would be an error to disassociate this entirely from the claim that we can describe correctly or incorrectly what we feel, so allowing for the

fact that these claims can be expressed in true or false statements. Stressing that from the period of the *Blue Book* Wittgenstein is at pains to question 'our dualistic linguistic conception, the metaphysical view that the inner sensation is one thing - indeed one *kind* of thing (23) - and that the word that communicates it is another', Hagberg is pointing to two aspects of Wittgenstein's treatment of privacy, which to some degree are intertwined, firstly that if the sensation is one *kind* of thing, then in an empiricist fashion it is being assumed that the sensation is in itself intrinsically meaningful, independently of the acquisition of a public language; and secondly that if the sensation is *not* one kind of thing, then any attempt to talk about it is incoherent, a reflection of a requirement to confer meaning on a wholly private world.

Underlying Hagberg's account is the implicit realisation that Wittgenstein's objection to this extreme idea of privacy as he conceives it is ultimately methodological: we can have no appreciation of what this esoteric concept of privacy could be, for either the notion of privacy with which we operate in philosophy is one with which we are already familiar, in which case it derives what sense it has from our mastery of an existing public language, or it is irremediably incoherent. Hagberg will go on later to discuss this point - if altogether too briefly - in relation to the private language passages beginning with § 243.

En passant, Hagberg equally has no difficulty in describing self-deception, again with a characteristic reference to the kinds of examples which are readily available in literature, not in terms of a person's avoidance of hidden, inner objects concealed from introspection, but *via* his unwillingness to confront the facts as they really are, usually combined with a motivation he would refuse to acknowledge, to misconstrue them in a light favourable to himself. A philosopher, for example, may regard himself as making an original contribution to a branch of his subject when it is clear to his colleagues that his failure to see how derivative his work really is, results solely from his unwillingness to accept his regrettably plagiaristic tendencies. Whilst from a philosophical point of view it would be correct to say that one cannot be mistaken about being in pain in the way

that one can be mistaken about being in love, Hagberg comments rather dryly that from a literary perspective he would be hard put to find an example of the former whilst examples of the latter are too numerous to mention. Claiming once again that whilst artists are not philosophers and that whilst works of art are not philosophical texts, since their aim is not conceptual clarification, he remains wedded to the idea that their relevance to the kinds of philosophical investigations he is undertaking from a Wittgensteinian perspective, is integral to his undermining of the dualist/behaviourist dichotomy, suggesting that the literary texts have implicit philosophical import:

And we are particularly well positioned to learn from such cases in the arts, precisely because, while the relevant psychological concepts and enactments of introspection are presented within the stream of life depicted within the artwork, those concepts and enactments, here again, are not as we perceive them in motion within the stream of our *own* lives, i.e. it is in this precise sense that we have the luxury of viewing them from a safe, indeed aesthetic, distance. (24)

If this may be seen as going too far in one direction, Hagberg's philosophical perspective on Wittgenstein serves to provide a balance to his apparent attempts to read too much into these literary associations:

'The human body is the best picture of the human soul.' His position is thus *not* Cartesianism, *not* introspectionism, *not* behaviorism, not any kind of reductionism, eliminativism, nor.....monism in response to dualism. We have seen, in the discussion of first-person avowals and their third-person receptions, something approximating a positive basis on which to proceed, but that discussion is as much designed to loosen the grip of a philosophical picture - or a conspiring cohort of them - as it is to advance any genuinely positive thesis. (25)

Yet at another point in his discussion, Hagberg appears to adopt a more complex approach to the relationship between philosophy and literature, for in the course of pointing out that whilst the misleading (Cartesian) picture of the mind to which we are attracted in philosophy tends to suggest that mental events are 'isolable and given in psychological experience with clearly delineated boundaries', our practices outside philosophy instead reveal what is so often forgotten inside philosophy, *viz.*, that artistic representations and enactments involving our enquiries into ourselves reveal that they are not. Yet this statement is itself subject to a further important qualification:

But it does not follow from this truth being readily shown within our practices that we therefore, independently of philosophy, grasp the concept of real introspection clearly and in a way that allows us to state it perspicuously. It is a leitmotif of Wittgenstein's philosophy that, despite the implicit clarity of our practices, we are not routinely able to give surveys or 'perspicuous' overviews of the 'logic' of our deeds, the philosophical 'grammar' of our practices.....We are taught, or we learn from within our form of life, to use concepts, but we do not thereby learn how to describe perspicuously, or give a conceptually clarified account of, *how* we use them. (26)

This, according to Hagberg, is the task of the philosopher, and if, on his view, such a great gulf did not arise between our practices and our philosophical descriptions of them, there would be no conceptual confusion and the philosopher would be out of a job. On the other hand, if we take it - as I think we should - that the role of philosophy in the provision of an overview of a practice, involves a procedure wholly distinct from what it is to participate in the practice itself, then the idea that the gulf between them might disappear is one that can have no application, since this gulf is integral to our understanding of what

a philosophical overview is. The philosopher's real difficulty is not so much that of providing a 'perspicuous representation' of a practice in any particular case, as that of understanding what providing this kind of overview amounts to, and how it relates to indulging in the practice itself. Whilst Hagberg may be right in saying that the purpose of his study is to provide a perspicuous grasp of autobiographical language, one that for him meets the demands of what Socrates called the life worth living, this may also require meeting the even more important demand of acquiring the requisite degree of what we have come to think of as true Socratic ignorance.

Hagberg further reveals how complex this question really is when he mentions in a footnote, that whilst artists in general are not presenting philosophical overviews within their works, there are nevertheless some who are - to include, in his estimation, Iris Murdoch - pursuing explicit conceptual clarification, unlike the vast majority of cases 'in which, again, philosophically intricate psychological concepts are implicitly manifest in the work.' (27) So within Hagberg's presentation there remains this permanent ambivalence between the claim that literature and the arts inherently portray a Wittgensteinian perspective, and the lesser claim that it requires the philosopher to bring this out. This ambivalence goes to the very heart of what the role of philosophy is in this context, because there can be an equally strong inclination to claim that literary examples *per se* - insofar as we understand them in their own terms and imaginatively participate in the lives of Hagberg's fictional characters - embody no implicit presuppositions of a philosophical kind whatsoever.

In the remainder of his chapter 'The Self Speaking', Hagberg may to many readers again appear to overstate his case that real concealment in human behaviour, as he takes his references to this phenomenon in literature and the arts to clearly show, is not a matter of concealment in the metaphysical terms required by the dualist-introspectionist picture. The point is repeated again and again. Yet it serves only to invite the reader to respond with the counter claim that to ordinarily enjoy the kinds of literary and dramatic episodes he describes,

is not in any event to have an inclination to adopt the Cartesian picture he is at pains to reject, not because for Wittgensteinian reasons it has no philosophical application, but because in this context the question of its application does not even arise.

Having used Kierkegaard's 'Diary of a Seducer' from *Either/Or* as his prime literary example in 'The Self Speaking' he continues in the next chapter 'The Self Thinking', by using the examples of Augustine's *Autobiography* and Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*. Once again, the philosophical articulation of Wittgenstein's methodology is sound, whilst the constant repetition of the claim that the 'dualist-introspectionist metaphysical picture' has no application to the examples of concealment chosen to illustrate his point, serve only to beg the question why (outside philosophy) anyone might be led to think that they do. The discussion of Wittgenstein on private language is bound for many readers to seem disappointing, because it does not engage in any real depth with the two passages chosen, § 258 and § 293. Having concluded that Augustine's autobiographical practice reveals that his private thought is not private in any metaphysical sense, Hagberg is content to state that what gives meaning to the private complaints of the Underground Man is that they are made '*within*, and in no intelligible way prior to, the public stream of life into which his (and our) words have what Wittgenstein referred to early in his work as functions, later as uses, and still later as practices.' (28) Certainly, Hagberg may justifiably feel that he has already spent more than sufficient time demolishing the pictures associated with this 'dualist-introspectionist metaphysical dichotomy'; but concerned readers will naturally prefer to know in more detail, as the voluminous secondary literature on this subject illustrates, just how these passages actually work to achieve their ends. Whether seen from a distinctly literary perspective or not, merely to replace one misleading Cartesian picture with a more appropriate illustration of a sensation language at work within the context of a living social practice, will by many be thought not to be enough.

The topics covered in the remainder of Hagberg's book are fairly complex. He begins with a chapter on 'True Self-Interpretation' which variously discusses, as he puts it, Wittgenstein on meaning, Augustine on self-interpretation, and certain presuppositions of a metaphysical-linguistic kind, which

are too often embedded in the very formulation of what he regards as the puzzle of true self-interpretation.

The passages chosen to discuss Wittgenstein on meaning are those late entries in Part I of the *Investigations* running from §§ 661-693, which in many respects again reveal the high point of his art, yet which are also closely connected to the famous rule-following passages earlier in the book centering for present purposes around §§ 194-202. The fundamental point underlying Hagberg's presentation is captured differently in different contexts. Here is § 196:

In our failure to understand the use of a word we take it as the expression of a queer *process*. (As we think of time as a queer medium, of the mind as a queer kind of being.)

The point Hagberg emphasises is also captured in *Investigations*, Part II,xi (218):

Meaning is not a process which accompanies a word. For no *process* could have the consequences of meaning.

In § 663 'I meant *him*' will very likely be accompanied by a picture, perhaps even a picture of him or how I looked at him, *etc.*, but the picture is incidental to having *meant* him, and only gains its subsidiary role insofar as meaning him is already in place. All the time Wittgenstein is pointing towards the claim that Hagberg sees him making within these kinds of examples, that what once again seemed the most important thing, the mental act of meaning that pinpointed what was meant, is either playing no role in the game at all, or is itself a fiction. As Hagberg puts it, the object of the attack, at least *in the abstract*, is always what 'seems unavoidable in giving an account of what it is to mean something, namely, that there is some kind of mental object to which we give our inward attention when meaning something in particular'. (29)

Hagberg usefully quotes § 665, in which the use of the term 'abracadabra' to mean 'toothache', whilst at first appearing bizarre, turns out not to be in the least so because the word

could be defined to mean almost anything. The point here is that purely as a result of one's familiarity with the meaning of the word 'toothache', it begins to seem as if the mental activity of meaning something by this word encapsulates what it is to use it to mean *toothache*, a quality one might tend initially to deny to 'abracadabra' simply because one is not familiar with the way in which its meaning has been defined. Raising the question of what distinguishes *meaning* either the pain or the piano-tuning in § 666, Wittgenstein replies in § 678 that no answer of the sort one might be tempted to expect actually comes, although it is of course still correct to say one *meant* one or the other. The point is taken up again in a passage which Hagberg finds exasperating, § 682, in which 'it'll stop soon' is admitted by the speaker to have been a reference to the piano tuning, rather than to the pain; and the strange question arises whether this is an observation by the speaker about a pre-existing connection, or whether he is now making the connection in the act of stating that it is the piano tuning that had been referred to. It is Wittgenstein's answer 'Can't I say *both*?' which Hagberg finds exasperating, leading him to correctly surmise that Wittgenstein might have been better to say neither one nor the other.

So what does make it true that he was referring to the piano-tuning rather than to the pain? Well, his mastery of the technique of using the language to refer to the piano-tuning rather than to the pain. What makes it true (§ 689) that Wittgenstein is referring to 'N', in using this name, since that name can surely apply to any number of people whose name it conventionally is? Rehearsing the kinds of proposals that occur when doing philosophy, he suggests that there must be a different, special connection that pinpoints the real 'N' being referred to. Yet the answer he arrives at is that there is indeed such a connection, but not that of a mental *mechanism* that latches on to the object of reference. So how is the connection established, and in what does the answer consist? Well, in his mastery of the technique of using the name, for this is something for which there are after all perfectly ordinary criteria.

'He pinned him down by description', or 'he traced the name right back to its bearer', are the sorts of things that might be said in philosophy ; but there can also be quite ordinary contexts in which these statements would have an application. Throughout these passages, which bring Part I to a close, the salient point to remember when Wittgenstein asks how we are to judge whether someone meant such and such, rests on his having acquired the mastery of a particular technique, whether this is a technique in arithmetic and algebra, or a technique allowing him to talk about piano-tuning or pain. The point goes back to § 197, when the question is asked what the connection is between the sense of the expression 'Let's play a game of chess' and all the rules of the game: the answer lies in listing its rules, teaching how to play it, and in the day-to-day practice of playing.

Chapter 6, 'The Uniqueness of Person Perception', uses Goethe as an example of a thinker whose work is again illustrative of a Wittgensteinian perspective on the inner and the outer, and concludes with a long section on Iris Murdoch as an author whose reflections have a great deal to say about an individual's relationship to, and recreation of his own past life, raising questions which for Hagberg are not only directly relevant to his main theme of autobiographical consciousness, but which may also embody in their very articulation fundamental presuppositions of a Cartesian nature that must be explored and expunged.

The final Chapter 7 raises questions about memory which to some degree have already been considered, and ends with a discussion of Stanley Cavell's approach to Wittgenstein, one in which he also is seen as endeavouring to alter the readers's sensibility. The therapeutic overtones in these last few paragraphs are very much of their time, as indeed is Garry Hagberg's approach overall, which by exploring connections with literature and the arts, forms part of a more general trend to extend those fields to which Wittgenstein's writings have traditionally been thought to be relevant. Thoroughly Wittgensteinian in its approach, and steeped in the texts, Hagberg has provided an engagingly *dense* book with frequent detailed and extensive footnotes, which explore related aspects of a theme either close to or on the periphery of his primary tale. That tale raises fundamental questions about what philosophy is, and how it relates both to our ordinary practices and to literature. In this respect, the troubling questions to which Hagberg's work gives rise, are also Wittgensteinian in character.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Bertrand Russell: *My Philosophical Development*, (London: Unwin Books, 1959) Chapter 18, 160 *et seq.*
- (2) *Ibid.*
- (3) *Ibid.*, 170.
- (4) Hagberg, 243.
- (5) Hagberg, 232.
- (6) Hagberg, 236.
- (7) Hagberg, 237.
- (8) Hagberg, 89.
- (9) Hagberg, 18. What solipsism *means* to say is that insofar as ordinary language allows us to talk about our own feelings and those of others (5.5563), then the implication must follow that since there is nothing that is not open to view, there is equally nothing in which our either having or not having access to the experiences of persons other than ourselves could even be taken to consist.
- (10) Hagberg, 22.
- (11) Hagberg, 23.
- (12) Hagberg, 29.
- (13) Hagberg, 37.
- (14) Hagberg, 38.
- (15) Hagberg, 106. Footnote 44.
- (16) Hagberg, 65.
- (17) Hagberg, 72.
- (18) Hagberg, 19 *et seq.*
- (19) Hagberg 73.
- (20) Hagberg, 84.
- (21) Hagberg, 84, Note 15.
- (22) Hagberg, 87 *et seq.*
- (23) Hagberg, 91.
- (24) Hagberg, 102.
- (25) Hagberg, 96.
- (26) Hagberg, 106. Footnote 44.
- (27) Hagberg, 106, Footnote 45.
- (28) Hagberg, 151.
- (29) Hagberg, 162.

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.