Why We Need Ordinary Language Philosophy
Sandra Laugier, *Translated by Daniela Ginsberg,*
The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2013, pp. 168, £ 24.50.
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-47054-2 (cloth).
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Originally published in French in the year 2000, the English version of Sandra Laugier's short

book of 10 Chapters plus an Introduction and Conclusion, has a 7 page Preface, 9 pages of Notes, a brief

Bibliography and 121 pages of actual text. The reading of Wittgenstein and Austin that she provides is

distinctly Cavellian in character. Indeed, Stanley Cavell in a dust-cover quote, remarks that her work is

already influential in France and Italy, exciting as it does a new interest in 'language conceived not only

as a cognitive capacity but also as used, and meant, as part of our form of life'. Cavell goes on to say

that this new translation is not merely welcome but indispensable, and has at least the capacity to alter

prevailing views about the philosophy of language, so affecting what we have come to think of as the

'analytic-continental divide'. Toril Moi of Duke Uni., in another dust-cover quote, states that Laugier's

reading of Wittgenstein-Austin-Cavell shows how their claim that 'to speak about language is to speak

about the world is an antimetaphysical revolution in philosophy that tranforms our understanding

of epistemology and ethics.' She concludes with the thought that anyone who wishes to understand

what 'ordinary language philosophy' means today should read this book.

This is a large claim to make, and anyone who is inclined to read Wittgenstein and Austin

strictly in their own terms, and with their own avowed intentions - where discernible - steadily in view,

is almost bound to conclude that it is simply not true. 'Ordinary Language Philosophy', as we take

that term to apply to the work of a wide range of philosophers who operated, primarily from Oxford,

during the 1950's and 1960's, was always a rather broad church. Consequently, a detailed investigation

of the role played by 'ordinary language' or 'the ordinary use of language' in their philosophical work

is required if we are even to approach some understanding of how 'the ordinary use of words' could

be employed to undermine what a number of these thinkers thought of as the conceptual confusions or

misunderstandings underlying at least some of 'the traditional problems of philosophy' (1).

Nevertheless, this point is quite independent of the light that a Cavellian reading *can* throw on the work of Wittgenstein and Austin. Laugier is adamant, for example, that from his earliest writings, Cavell was rejected by the partisans of what she refers to as a 'real' science of language, *e.g.*, Katz and Fodor, those who in later years turned to a cognitivist understanding of linguistic functioning, because they misunderstood 'the problematic nature of our relationship to language and of my position as a *subject* of common language' (*Ibid.*,114).

This point is intimately connected to Cavell's unique and unusual notion of *scepticism*, which in his seminal essay 'The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', is captured in the thought that following the teaching of words in their particular contexts of use, their projection into further contexts of use has no *guarantee* as a philosopher might wish to understand this term. 'Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than.....' 'our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of fulfilment', all the 'whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls "forms of life"' (Cavell as quoted, 81). This 'terrifying vision' with its first person perspective is at odds with 'a cognitivist understanding of linguistic functioning', which on a Wittgensteinian reading involves conceptual *confusions*. This point can be clearly divorced from another claim that no one would deny, *viz.*, that there are genuinely scientific questions to be asked about the human ability to use and understand language, and how these may be related to the functioning of the human brain.

On Laugier's Cavellian interpretation, there can be no *treatment* for scepticism because it 'emerges out of the fragility of our agreements' (*Ibid.*, 83), and 'is inherent to all human practice' (*Ibid.*, 82). This notion of *scepticism* is at odds with a more traditional notion, one that is compatible with a Wittgenstein who shows that scepticism about 'other minds' is misconceived because it is based on a misleading *picture* in which validating a 'belief in other minds' would *have to* require peering into the private contents of another person's consciousness (2). This *picture* has no application, for Wittgenstein, relative to the circumstances in which we do 'talk about other minds', and in which we are justified in our claims to know what other people are really thinking and feeling.

On a Cavellian reading, by contrast, we are constantly living with a '*scepticism* about other minds' insofar as there is an inherent *uncertainty* in our relationships with other people about our standing with them, an uncertainty stemming from 'the fragility of our agreements' (*Ibid*.), and the 'ever present possibility of a break in the linguistic contract' (*Ibid*., 117). This, of course, is not to say that there can be no *ordinary* circumstances in which we are genuinely justified in making claims to know with *certainty* what another person is thinking or feeling. The Cavellian point on this reading can, somewhat ironically, be regarded as one that is strictly philosophical.

Nevertheless, that Wittgenstein does not propose a *refutation* of scepticism by an appeal to what Laugier calls the *ordinary*, is recognised in her claim that 'the appeal to ordinary language is not at all a facile solution to philosophical problems, and it most certainly cannot be reduced to a return to good sense or common sense' (*Ibid*., 86). Arguments from the paradigm case, for example, may, though not always, involve a commitment to a common sense metaphysics like that espoused by Moore, one in which there *really* are 'other minds', 'physical objects' *etc*., and Laugier is quick to disassociate Wittgenstein and Austin from any commitment to approaches of this kind, because these inevitably take for granted the misleading *picture* that Wittgenstein, at least, so often intends to expose. As she puts it, arguments to the effect that 'I know that *you* now see me and hear me, and furthermore I know that my wife has a toothache, and therefore it follows that sensations, feelings, experiences other than my own exist' (*Ibid*., 87), share the same 'problematic' as the thesis they are trying to refute. She even argues (*Ibid*., 86), that an attempted refutation of *scepticism* by the *ordinary* would be circular, 'for the ordinary is precisely what is threatened by skepticism', although this makes sense only on Cavell's own unique conception of what scepticism is.

Her commitment to Cavellian ideas of this kind allows Laugier to adopt what in some quarters would be regarded as problematic proposals: she is happy to share the view that, as she expresses it in a paper, 'The Trans-Atlantic Ordinary: from Concord to Chicago via Oxford' (John Hopkins Humanities Centre, on-line): 'the specific and contemporary theme of the ordinary sets off from America and the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau, in order to reinvent itself in

Europe with ordinary language philosophy, and reappears in a transformed shape in America, in order to, next go back to Europe: and so on.' For Laugier, the significance of ordinary language as this is revealed in the 'linguistic turn' that analytic philosophy took in the 20th Century, is to be discovered in the truth that 'ordinary language already gives us everything there is to know and that there is nothing more' (*Ibid*., 115). Laugier finds that this idea is 'repressed' in 'the American analytic philosophy whose history I have tried to sketch' (*Ibid*.). Quoting Cavell:

> When I ask whether we may not see [Emerson and Thoreau] as part of
> our inheritance as philosophers, I am suggesting that our foreignness as
> philosophers to these writers......may itself be a sign of an impoverished
> idea of philosophy, of a remoteness from philosophy's origins, from what
> is native to it (Cavell, as quoted *Ibid*.).

Whilst this appropriation for philosophical purposes of two writers who are prominent in 19th Century American literature, is almost inevitably going to seem extremely problematic to many commentators on Wittgenstein and Austin, it is very much in line with what Laugier refers to as her 'nonconformist' reading of the history of the philosophy of language (*Ibid*. 118). This in her terms would be a reading in which *realism* or, in Cora Diamond's words, a 'realistic spirit', based on 'the real immanence of ordinary language' would be placed at the centre of her project for a philosophy of language. If a 'conformist' reading of the history of the philosophy of language would involve the 'natural progress from the establishment of logical positivism to the triumph of cognitive sciences' - a reading which in these terms appears rather oversimplistic - then a 'nonconformist' reading would be of a 'history rich in reversals, critiques and questionings, as well as in heritages both successful and ambiguous' (*Ibid*.). As examples, she quotes Quine's inheritance of Duhem and Carnap, and Cavell's of Emerson, Wittgenstein and Austin.

One important consequence of these considerations for Laugier is a reappraisal of what is regarded as the cleavage between the analytic and Continental traditions in philosophy, a reappraisal which recognises 'the discovery of my ordinary *voice* in the world, and acceptance,

rather than demonstration, of the world's existence and my existence in it' (*Ibid*., 119). This is seen to be making a response to Kant relevant to the present day, a response that Laugier takes to be raising 'the same problem of the philosophy of knowledge as the one already raised by Kant on the basis of Hume: the problem of how it is possible for man to speak the world of which (with his language and science) he is part, to find his *voice* in the world he describes' (117, *Ibid*.) A 'realistic' position in this context would be one, like that espoused by John McDowell in *Mind and World*, in which a naturalism of 'second nature' replaces a reductive 'bald naturalism'.

According to Laugier, 'the central problem facing analytic philosophy today does indeed lie in defining naturalism' (*Ibid*., 116), which she sees as having split in two directions, one which is clearly equivalent to something like McDowell's bald naturalism, and the other 'which grounds our knowledge of the world in the immanence of our form of life and our uses of language' (*Ibid*.). Surprising as it may seem to some readers, she actually sees these two versions of naturalism as remarkably having taking shape and having been blended together in Quine:

> the naturalised epistemology version (immanent to science itself)
>
> and the anthropological version, the indeterminancy of radical
>
> translation. It is equally remarkable that these two naturalisms
>
> today seem to have become incompatible and trace two radically
>
> different interpretations of the problem of realism and the possibility
>
> and necessity to speak the real (*Ibid*.).

Laugier repeats that from the anthropological perspective she favours, 'thinking the relation between language and world' cannot have any place 'within an epistemology condemned to scientism or relativism'. Ordinary language as the language of speaking subjects, is the sole repository of what we *understand* by 'real' (*Ibid*., 117). In Chapter 1, 'From Empiricism to Realism', Laugier finds a useful point of departure for discussing these questions in what she refers to as three different 'stagings' of language (*Ibid*., 15): the first is Quine's scene of radical translation in which the field linguist has to interpret the meaning of the native's utterance of 'gavagai'; the second the scene

at the beginning of *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 2) in which the mason A and assistant B are using the words *block*, *slab*, *pillar*, *beam*, in the course of bringing the relevant object 'which he has learnt to bring at that call'; and the third, from Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, in which the priest elicits the verbal response of 'I do' at a wedding, or a celebrity at a launching ceremony in the shipyard pronounces 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*'. Whilst Laugier stresses that Austin's examples differ from the other two only insofar as they already take place within a social and institutional context, the significant message that they convey lies in a shift of interest Laugier discerns from the first Quinean scene of radical translation to the institutional nature of Austin's examples, *via* a specific *interpretation* of the Quinean scene that is authorised by the critique embodied in Wittgenstein's example of the builders. The critique is that of the *myth of meaning as* 'the myth of a core common to different languages' (*Ibid.*, 16), and in Quine this is said by Laugier to be an *anthropological* critique as much as it is in Wittgenstein and Austin.

Whilst this requires clarification, it may be thought that there is already something not quite right here, because it is difficult for us to see the field linguist in practice as someone who would have to worry whether the native is referring to 'an undetached rabbit part, 'a rabbit stage', or a full-blown rabbit. If these possibilities arise at all, it is solely because Quine *begins* from the supposition that the linguist is presented with data impinging on our 'nerve endings', surface stimuli, and other 'surface irritations' which require *interpretation* in precisely these terms. But the linguist, following Cavell, would be someone who already sees himself as sharing, in the most general terms, those 'routes of thinking and feeling, modes of response' *etc.* which he would take to be common to all human beings no matter what vast cultural differences must exist between the (scientifically based) society of the linguist and that of the native he is investigating. This point is captured by Laugier in describing what Quine's scene of radical translation actually leads to:

> This typically Quinean vocabulary should not make us forget where
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> all this ends: in the constituted conceptual scheme - that is to say, in
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> language, our language, which speaks of objects. It is Quine's very

empiricism that inaugurates the distance - the underdetermination -

between our ('surface') data and our objects, from the most ordinary

to the most refined. And it is this empiricism that gives rise to the

seemingly 'relativist' or, in any case, instrumentalist remarks on the

'myth of objects' in the 'Two Dogmas' (*Ibid*., 21).

There follows Quine's description in which 'physical objects' are imported into our 'accounts' of our 'experience' solely as tools, as 'irreducible posits' which play a philosophical and ontological role - or, quoting Quine, an 'epistemological' role - comparable to that performed by the Gods of Homer. From Laugier's point of view, this means that the question of realism, of the *reality* of the entities postulated by theories to account for experience, and of the irreducibility of these entities or posits to what she refers to as sensorial data (*Ibid*., 22), 'is at the very starting point of Quine's philosophy'. This is part of our Humean heritage, yet Quine as Laugier sees him never goes on to question this presupposition. But, of course, in order to arrive at the kind of realism that Laugier favours, 'one inherent to our common use of language', the price to be paid inevitably involves a renunciation of the form of empiricism that would 'expect knowledge to come from our "nerve endings"'.

This, incidentally, and from a strictly Wittgensteinian perspective, does not mean that 'physical objects' then acquire a special ontological status, for 'physical object' is a philosophical concept. The point is rather that from within the context of our *practice* of talking about different *kinds* of items in the world around us, the *given*, there can be no genuine question whether these items *really* exist or not, beyond the factual questions which daily arise for us. What Laugier sees Quine and Wittgenstein as sharing is a certain *anthropological* structure based on behaviour, although it ought to be fairly obvious by now just where their differences lie. Once we begin to examine the idea of anthropology and of a 'form of life', it becomes 'impossible to make naturalism a la Quine and naturalism a la Wittgenstein...hold together' (*Ibid*., 80), for they break apart precisely at that

point at which a radical empiricism involving what impinges on our 'nerve endings' is renounced. Nevertheless, what is shared between Quine and Wittgenstein is the thought that 'a child, by definition, cannot speak at birth. She or he has only the language of others available - not her or his own' (*Ibid.*, 79). Laugier quotes § 32 of the *Investigations* in which Augustine describes the child *as if* he were already aware of different kinds of items in his environment before going on to *name* them, as if he were already in possession of 'a language of thought'. But, on the contrary: 'Children learn *all* their language from others; language is an inheritance - thus, Wittgenstein defines language learning at the beginning of the *Investigations* as "training"' (*Ibid.*).

There is nothing uniquely Cavellian about this way of thinking, although there are aspects of Laugier's discussion of Wittgenstein that utilise the work of Cavell, but which are bound to lead some commentators to question how these can possibly be related to the texts. An obvious example lies in her treatment of 'private language':

> The error of post Wittgensteinian scholasticism is to see the
> private-public duality as a strict alternative (this is the prejudice
> underlying the interminable discussions of 'the private language
> argument'). Cavell explodes this alternative. To not be public is
> not to be *private*: it is to be *inexpressive*. Voiceless. If I do not speak,
> it is not that there is something inexpressible, but that I *have* nothing
> to say (*Ibid.*, 94).

The point is repeated later on, where Cavell is said once again to radically reverse the investigation of 'private language': 'The question, from this point forward, is no longer being able to access language or the community of speakers, or finding one's voice: it is being able to bear, precisely, "the (inevitable) extention of the voice, which will always escape me and find its way back to me"' (*Ibid.*, 105). While this is not particularly clear in itself, a better appreciation of what Cavell is doing in these pages of *The Claim of Reason* (O.U.P. 1982, 343 - 351) is found in his remark that the very frame of the 'argument' against private language has been miscast, insofar as he finds

little that is said in the relevant passages (§§ 243 - 271) that is not said more clearly elsewhere in the *Investigations*. The general point he makes here relates to 'the dependence of reference upon expression in naming our states of consciousness', and insofar as this is a statement concerning the criterionless nature of first-person sensation-ascription, it is certainly valid. However, he says certain things which are open to question, like one comment on § 270 : in correlating the sign 'S' with a rise in blood pressure, Wittgenstein's 'it seems indifferent whether I have recognised the sensation *right* or not' is said to be a way of saying, for example, that 'it doesn't matter whether I keep calling the sensation a tingle when it is really a mild sting' (*Op. cit.*, 350), when the point at issue here is the straightforward one that in our ordinary language there is no question of *recognising* the sensation right or not *because* in talking about our sensations the notion of *recognition* plays no role. Yet this is the very point that Cavell can be understood to be making about 'the dependence of reference on expression'.

From this perspective, there does after all appear to be a point at which each of Wittgenstein's attempts to realise the *fantasy* of a private language, as Cavell puts it, has to overcome voicing or writing down my experiences ('expressing' them) in an ordinary way, for a private language is *defined* in terms which require sensations to be *recognised,* and this is completely at odds with the role that our ordinary sensation language actually plays. Of course, Cavell wishes to go further than this in his famous passage in which the wish to *deny* the publicness of language that underlies the fantasy of the private language, is said to be an attempt to realise a fantasy or fear of inexpressiveness, or in which what is expressed by me is beyond my control (Cavell, *Op. cit.*, 351). This, however, is very difficult indeed to relate directly to the text of the *Investigations* itself.

Laugier begins her book with a Preface, the main purpose of which is to provide an account of the role that analytic philosophy actually plays in France at the present time. On this issue, readers in the UK and USA unfamiliar with this particular milieu, may be surprised to find that the 'dominant' strain of interpretation is towards the 'dogmatic', partly because those who espouse analytic philosophy see it as 'a minority and even missionary force', and so fail to capture the 'diversity and

plurality' that is integral to the 'American model' from which it is derived (*Ibid*., vii):

> The fact that Wittgenstein and Austin arouse suspicion and sarcasm
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> in the majority of analytic philosophers in France - reactions that are
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> reinforced and even justified by the local success of a certain postmodern
>
> and consensus-based reading of Wittgenstein - demonstrates that a
>
> rather specific version of analytic philosophy has become dominant,
>
> not (or no longer), in the United States, but in France itself (*Ibid*., viii).

Laugier agrees with one 'American observer' who regards this reaction as very *French*, in that it is at once exclusive, polemical, and even scornful, all characteristics which one would tend to associate with what is in effect a 'minority' viewpoint within the French academy, one that neglects the diversity of analytic viewpoints that are found within the United States. It almost goes without saying that Laugier 'would like to allow a slightly different voice to be heard' (*Ibid*., xi), one that shares the direction followed by a number of the 'most creative American philosophers' by returning to 'the origins of analytic thought'. The philosophers in question are Cavell, Putnam, McDowell, and Conant, all of whom in one way or another are in search of that 'realistic spirit' found in the work of Cora Diamond. There then follows what must seem to many readers a rather scholastic discussion about the significance of the 'real' that we find in Austin and in Wittgenstein, the 'real' in the ordinary rather than in the philosophical sense, the real that as philosophers we do not *want* to see, but which these thinkers can reveal to us. What disturbs philosophers in general about the approach of Wittgenstein and Austin, with its 'antimetaphysical radicalness' resulting from this taking of ordinary language as its starting point, is the '*critical* novelty' of their investigations, a novelty taken by Laugier to unsettle those who find comfort in 'traditional thematics or in the more recent certainties of the cognitive sciences' (*Ibid*., xii).

If we accept that Laugier in these initial pages is attempting, mainly with a French audience in view, to explain what she understands to be important in the approach she favours, then this tendency to deal almost exclusively in vague generalities may be excused, although part of the

problem may lie in the translation. To some extent this problem also affects the Introduction, where Laugier attempts to provide a context in which to discuss generally the history and development of analytic philosophy and of the importance of the work of Austin and Wittgenstein as it primarily relates to that of Quine. The aim, as shown already in discussing these philosophers, is to be realist in Cora Diamond's sense without being empiricist, and this 'necessitates a rereading of the recent history of philosophy, at least on American shores' (*Ibid.*, 13). This is an extraordinarily difficult undertaking within the space available, and although it is clearly not controversial, for example, to insist on the (ultimately) European origins of much contemporary analytic philosophy in America, Laugier once again cannot avoid nailing her colours to a Cavellian mast by insisting on 'Emerson's influence on the European nineteenth century, repressed along with America's transcendentalist past' (*Ibid.*). Arguing that the history of analytic philosophy 'is certainly more complex than is believed', Laugier draws the conclusion that only in the recent past has it managed in its 'scientific' guise to distance itself from any concern with the ordinary use of language, because what we think of as ordinary language *philosophy* 'is a continuation of logical empiricism and at the same time a critique of it' (*Ibid.*). The work of Waismann, who at first found a role within the Vienna Circle before being profoundly influenced, though admittedly also profoundly exasperated, by the 'later' Wittgenstein, is presented as a testament to this point of view.

Readers of this book will not be inclined to underestimate the role played by the work of Quine in these first few chapters, for he dominates the discussion, and it is only towards the end of Chapter 3 and into Chapter 4 that Austin's work on 'Truth' is discussed, with some mention of Strawson in addition to Quine. In fact, the book is as much an account of the development of analytic philosophy in general, particularly as illustrated in the work of Quine, as it is a way of showing 'why we need ordinary language philosophy'; and readers who come to it expecting detailed discussions about Wittgenstein's work in the *Investigations*, are bound to be disappointed. The treatment is geared towards revealing why we ought to favour 'ordinary language philosophy' because it exemplifies the concept of *realism* to be discovered in the work of Cavell, Diamond *etc.*,

so that direct and detailed engagement with Wittgenstein's texts plays a subsidiary role, if any role at all. Part of the work of J.L. Austin, on the other hand, is considered in rather more detail.

This is shown in Chapter 5, 'Empiricism Again', which is given over almost exclusively to *Sense and Sensibilia*, said to be Austin's 'least understood work' (*Ibid*., 54), partly because a superficial reading might lead one to believe that 'Austin defends a linguistic or language-based theory of perception'. It would, however, be false to say that 'Austin defends a form of naive realism', as distinct from defending ordinary language from the *philosophical* theses of realism and anti-realism (*Ibid*., 55). Although Austin's polemic was directed primarily at Ayer's *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1940), the fact that sense-data no longer retain the privileged status they once enjoyed, should not lead us to believe that his message has lost its relevance in a philosophical milieu in which 'current discussions of perception' involve the 'preconceptualization or "prestructuration" of the perceptual given, the question of meaning included within perception' (*Ibid*.,57), and on this point Laugier displays her Austinian, not to say Wittgensteinian credentials particularly well.

She also mentions in this context the familiar question concerning how I *know,* for example, that there is a *real* goldfinch in the garden, a question that for Austin makes sense in ordinary contexts only when some doubt has arisen concerning its being, say, only a decoy or an ornament. As against this point, it has often been argued against Austin that whether or not a question of authenticity has arisen in any particular context, the item in question, in this case the goldfinch pottering around the lawn, remains the genuine article whether anyone finds reason to question whether it is 'real' or not. But whilst this in itself is not to give the term 'real' a philosophical application, it is moving in the direction of using terms outwith the ordinary circumstances in which we have reason to employ them. It therefore helps to contribute towards that contempt for the particular case, and so for the particular circumstances in which words are used, to which Austin directed our attention when he pointed out, for example, that to see an object *directly, i.e.,* without an intermediary, or *indirectly*, *e.g.*, *via* a mirror, has a perfectly ordinary application that does not justify or point towards a philosophical use for these terms.

The next Chapter 6 on 'Language as Given' elaborates on Austin's thinking, and emphasises a number of statements which are often quoted from his writings, including the thought that although ordinary language cannot claim to be the 'last word', it is nevertheless the 'first word'; that to explore ordinary language is to explore 'the inherited experience and acumen of many generations of men'; and this is said by Laugier to reflect Wittgenstein's 'project for a "natural history" of Man' (*Ibid*., 66). We are also reminded of Austin's remark that ordinary language 'embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing...in the lifetimes of many generations', distinctions more subtle and solid as Laugier emphasises than 'any that you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon - the most favored alternative method' (Austin, as quoted, *Ibid*.).

On Laugier's view, 'Austin's thinking on difference will be able to open the way for a particular form of realism' (*Ibid*., 68). Language is part of our natural history: 'it is immanent to it in the strict sense and evolves with it. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein speaks of agreement *in* judgements' (*Ibid*., 69). Words are 'part of the world, or if one prefers, part of our form of life, which is as real as our objects. Here we can see the proximity between Austin and Wittgenstein, which goes far beyond their defense of ordinary language. This is also one of Cavell's central points in *The Claim of Reason*.' (*Ibid*., 70). There follows a return to *Sense and Sensibilia* and the claim made by Laugier, and echoed by Cavell, that the difficulty with most empiricist approaches, with 'traditional epistemology', lies in the shift from an ordinary uncertainty concerning the presence of real bread, a real goldfinch, and so on, to the question 'of knowing whether I have before me reality or only its "signs"' (*Ibid*., 71).

The following Chapter 7, 'The Ordinary as Heritage', expands on the question Laugier has already asked of how the appeal to ordinary language acquires its legitimacy (*Ibid*., 74), and ends with the claim that Cavell's originality 'lies in his reinvention of the nature of language and in the connection he establishes between this nature and *human nature* - finitude' (*Ibid*., 84). Chapter 8 on 'The Myth of Inexpressiveness' discusses criteria, the autobiographical tone of the *Investigations*, the notion of *scepticism*, and the idea of a private language, amongst one or two other issues, and ends with the thought that, in 'spite of their differences, both Austin and Wittgenstein tried to render explicit that

language is part of our lives - this is what can be called their realism.' (*Ibid*., 96). Consequently, to bring words back 'from their metaphysical to their everyday use', back to what Laugier calls 'the shared ordinary, as Wittgenstein always sought to do, is not to do "philosophy of language": it is to come closer to the real.' (*Ibid*.)

Chapter 9, 'To Speak, To Say Nothing, To Mean To Say', begins with the thought that what is of interest to Laugier is what Wittgenstein and Austin have in common, not what separates them, and what does unite them in her eyes is once again 'a form of realism that one hardly dares call realism, since it is precisely what is forgotten or rejected by philosophy today' (*Ibid*., 97). In this chapter Laugier uses Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, in the course of emphasising 'the total speech act in the total situation', so that language 'is no longer solely descriptive or representative' (*Ibid*., 101), and this allows for the assimilation of constative statements to performatives (*Ibid*.,102):

> Austin's philosophy.......inscribes the sole possibility of finding an
> agreement with the world within our agreements - our agreements
> on *what we say when* - and thus, it redefines *logic within ordinary*
> *language*, revealing the real sense of Wittgenstein's famous statement:
> '- It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree
> in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinion but in forms
> of life' (*Ibid*, 109).

The Conclusion, whilst a summing-up of many of the points already discussed, also emphasises an 'opposition I evoked at the beginning of this book between two kinds of philosophy of language....: the logical analysis of language on the one hand and the philosophy of ordinary language on the other' (*Ibid*.,110). These are said to share a certain 'radicalness', and led thinkers 'as different from one another as Austin and Carnap to reject the idea of "incorrigible" statements':

> In truth, Austin's work, like that of the second Wittgenstein, fits
> much better into the framework of the first kind of philosophy of
> language than is typically believed - even if attention to ordinary

language and the project of describing its uses obviously constitute

an important new element, the meaning of which I have tried to

establish here. One indication of this proximity between Austin and

logical empiricism is the double radicalness - antipsychological

and antimetaphysical - of both Vienna Circle and Oxford Circle

philosophy; another indication is their will to define a certain type

of philosophical *non-sense* and to denounce an illegitimate, twisted,

or 'wild' use of language by traditional philosophy (*Ibid*.).

This assimilation of the work of one group of philosophers to that of another is not at all

helpful, because it neglects the radically different motivations that lay behind their wholly different

perspectives, so that the resemblances to which Laugier points can at most be superficial. The

belief she espouses, 'against the tendency of many current presentations of the matter' (*Ibid*., 111),

that there is a *continuity* between the analytic philosophy of Frege - the *Tractatus* - Carnap and

that of Austin - Wittgenstein beginning in the 1930's, which in one respect can hardly be denied,

fails to justify the conclusion that they fit together into a single undifferentiated framework called

'analytic philosophy', when there is really so little justification, in the final analysis, for grouping

them together in this way. On this question, it is really beside the point that there are philosophers

who wish 'to overrate the first moment and deplore the descent or degeneration into ordinary

language, or to vaunt the merits of a Wittgensteinian turn that would destroy analytic philosophy

and its prejudices' (*Ibid*.).

But the same could be said of the tendency to assimilate the work of Wittgenstein and

Austin. Here the many resemblances are countered by the many differences. The assimilation of

Emerson and Thoreau into the philosophical fold, two figures from American literature, whilst no

doubt interesting as an adjunct to a certain cultural perspective, only serves to blur the distinction

between literature and philosophy proper, although it is evident that to blur that distinction is

precisely what Cavell has in mind. Nevertheless, Sandra Laugier's book will receive and will

repay close attention. In spite of the fact that it attempts to do an extraordinary number of things within a short compass, and for that reason will occasionally leave some readers with the impression that it is blurring over important distinctions which it would be better to recognise, it is one more example of the need many philosophers have at the present time to reflect on and to reassess that short period in which 'ordinary language philosophy' flourished (3), and to recover the important messages they believe that it has to offer. It cannot fail to be a very welcome addition to the current literature.

ENDNOTES

(1)   Peter Hacker's *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford, Blackwell Pub., 1996), with its 60 pages or so of detailed endnotes, offers an interesting review of the work of many of the wide range of philosophers in question. See Chapter 6. Chapter 7 on Quine and his influence offers a useful comparison to Laugier's own account here.

(2)   In Wittgenstein there is always a close connection between saying that a picture has no *application*, and saying that it has no *sense*. The traditional view of 'another mind' *is* that of a separate private consciousness into the recesses of which we must be able to peer if we are to be able to *justify* our belief in its existence. If this is what constitutes a *realist* perspective on what 'another mind' is, then to attach one's self to *this* pole in the realism *v* anti-realism debate about 'other minds' is a matter of accepting that we *really* can have a *justification* for a belief in 'other minds', where the 'validity' of this traditional picture is not in question. Insofar as Wittgenstein rejects this *misleading* picture of 'other minds', it can have no special *philosophical* application, so that he is neither a realist nor an anti-realist in this traditional sense. The view that behaviour is an *expression* of what is *inner* would not therefore on this analysis constitute a *better* picture than that of the traditional view of what 'another mind' is. It would instead be more appropriate to think of Wittgenstein's account as a more satisfactory reflection of how language is actually *used*. There has been a certain tendency in the recent literature to interpret the later work of Gordon Baker in terms which would see Wittgenstein introducing improved *pictures* which can replace traditional *misleading* pictures, but, generally speaking, it would be better, and more in keeping with Wittgenstein's method, to restrict the use of the term 'picture' to cases which tend to *mislead* the philosopher.

(3)   Compare, with this point in view, Avner Baz, *When Words Are Called For A Defense of Ordinary Language Philosophy,* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2012). It is also worth noting that in addition to a reappearance in 2011 in the *Routledge Revivals* series of the well-known volume, *Symposium on J.L. Austin* ed. by K.T. Fann - astonishingly without a new preface or introduction for the new millennium - there has recently appeared two new volumes on Austin: the first is *The Philosophy of J.L. Austin* (Oxford, O.U.P. 2011), ed. Martin Gustafsson & Richard Sorli, and the second *J.L. Austin on Language* (London, Palgreave Macmillan, April, 2014), ed. by Brian Garvey. These two new volumes are the first to be published for over 40 years following the original 1969 appearance of the K.T. Fann book.

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. A paper on Wittgenstein appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, another on Ebersole / Ayer in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010, a later paper on Wittgenstein in ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY, March 2013 and a further one on Ryle, PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, April 2014.