CRITICAL NOTICE

Wittgenstein
Routledge Philosophers
William Child, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2011, pp. 288, £ 16.99
ISBN: 13: 978-0-415-31206 (paperback)

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Routledge's current *Wittgenstein* list is certainly comprehensive. Quite apart from its considerable number of collections of essays, recent additions include *Blind Obedience: The Structure and Content of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy* from Meredith Williams in 2009, and the two volumes in their *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook* series, one on the *Tractatus* by Michael Morris from 2008, and the eagerly awaited (*circa* 2011) revised verson of Marie McGinn's 1997 book on the *Philosophical Investigations*, not to mention a third from Andy Hamilton about *On Certainty* (due 2012). Now in yet another series comes William Child, adding his name to the extensive list of commentators who have been invited to have their say on what Wittgenstein's work is all about. In addition to its coverage of the *Tractatus,* the *Investigations*, and the transitional period, the book has three extra chapters, each of over twenty pages on Wittgenstein's *Life and Works* (Chapter 1), *Knowledge and Certainty* (Chapter 7) and *Religion and Anthropology* (Chapter 8.) The book ends with a slightly shorter chapter on *Legacy and Influence*. It is also attractively priced in a paperback version unusually published simultaneously with the hardback and e-book editions.

The book inevitably invites comparison with other recent offerings on the entire philosophy from Chon Tejedor (*Starting With Wittgenstein,* Continuum 2011), from Severin Schroeder (*Wittgenstein: The Way Out of The Flybottle*, Polity 2006), from Anthony Kenny (*Wittgenstein*, Blackwell, revised ed. 2006), and from Michael Hymers (*Wittgenstein and the Practice of Philosophy*, Broadview, 2010); although Child's book is distinguished by a particular strategy: to largely explain the various alternative issues of scholarly controversy when they arise without necessarily taking a stand on any particular side in the debate. This is an admirable method of approach, although with Wittgenstein in particular it is exceedingly difficult to provide an overview of his intentions without taking a stand on some questions of interpretation. Child provides us with a useful *Chronology* of the main events in Wittgenstein's life from 1889 - 1951, and in an interesting *Acknowledgements* section reveals his debt to David Pears, Peter Hacker and John McDowell,

with whom he studied at earlier stages of his career and who have collectively had an enduring influence on his work. The first major Chapter in the book on Wittgenstein's *Life and Works* is equally indebted to the well-known biographies of Brian McGuinness and Ray Monk. In common with the recent work by Chon Tejedor already mentioned, Child provides every chapter with a final *Summary* section offering an overview of the arguments and conclusions arrived at in that chapter. This is a useful accompaniment to any work intended to provide an 'ideal starting point for those new to philosophy' (*series blurb*), and Child in the final part of his biographical chapter on Wittgenstein's life, takes four pages to sum up the general plan of the book to follow.

The first Chapter on the language and logic of the *Tractatus* is in some respects the most difficult in the book, because it deals with problems for which those 'new to philosophy' are for the most part understandably going to lack the proper mindset, a mindset which it is difficult to retrieve in a post-*Investigations* atmosphere. Child introduces us to Wittgenstein's account of pictorial representation, and follows Tejedor in his explanation that this account is intended to capture what is essential not only to representation by two dimensional pictures but also by three dimensional models. Each element or word in a proposition corresponds to an object represented by the proposition, so that the way the words are arranged in the proposition corresponds to the configuration of the objects in reality. However, merely to present the picture theory without some explanation of the problems it is intended to address, and how it differs from other accounts of meaning on offer during this period of early analytic philosophy, as the secondary literature on the *Tractatus* is sometimes inclined to do, rather leaves the theory suspended in a vacuum, so that it is an important feature of Child's presentation that he should discuss the theory in relation to what these problems actually are.

This leads Child into an account of how names differ from propositions, for names have meaning by standing for objects so that in order to know the meaning of a name we must know which object it stands for; whereas a new proposition can be understood without needing to have its meaning explained. (*Cf.* Kenny in his book, p. 50). This already presupposes that a name

without a reference has no meaning, which is clearly not true of names in ordinary language as they are actually used, and Child invites us to suppose that a proposition functions like a name, by standing for an object in the world, with the consequence that should a proposition like 'Desdemona loves Cassio' be discovered not to represent reality it would have no meaning. But this is not ordinarily true, because a proposition can be false yet meaningful, so that the connection between a proposition and reality must be different from that between a name and reality. But how can this connection work ?

This leads Child into a discussion of Wittgenstein's objections to Russell's initial 'multiple relation theory of judgement' (1910 & 1912) and also to the amendments Russell made to that theory in 1913 together with the further objections made by Wittgenstein to Russell's way of treating a proposition as a 'complex object', a mere complex or 'set of words' (*Tractatus* 3.141 & 3.142) which does not say anything. According to Wittgenstein, it is *the fact that* the elements in a proposition are arranged in the way they are that represents how objects are related in reality, a point reflecting the fundamental difference between the function of a name and a proposition, a difference obscured by the ordinary way in which these matters are usually expressed (*Tractatus* 3.143):

> (How, in Wittgenstein's view, is the name 'Desdemona' related to
> the name 'Cassio' in the proposition 'Desdemona loves Cassio' ?
> Different commentators offer different answers to that question.
> But a plausible suggestion is this: it is the fact that 'Desdemona'
> stands to the left of the word 'loves' and 'Cassio' stands to the right
> of the word 'loves' that says that Desdemona loves Cassio.) (*Ibid.*, 30)

Whether or not this is going to be at all informative to a reader 'new to philosophy' is another matter. It is also closely connected, though this is a question admittedly beyond Child's remit, to Wittgenstein's paralysing objections to Russell in the Summer of 1913, resulting in Russell's decision to abandon work on his *Theory of Knowledge* manuscript. Child, however, expands his discussion here by asking how, if a proposition is genuinely a picture, it prevents the picturing of what is impossible, something it is argued that Russell's theory is unable to do. At this point we are introduced to the

famous Parisian lawsuit in which the elements forming the representation of the car accident, *viz.,* the model cars and pedestrians, are of the same *kind* as the physical objects they represent, which makes it impossible, for example, to represent two cars being in the same place at the same time. Yet we can *say* that Cars A & B were in exactly the same place at the same time, so that it may *seem* that we can picture in language an impossible state of affairs. Wittgenstein, however, argues that the combinatorial possibilities of objects are reflected in language in such a way that combining words in ways which are not possible for the objects to which they correspond is not to use them as names of these objects at all. Child argues plausibly that Wittgenstein favours what he refers to as a 'top-down' approach to the relation between names and objects in the *Tractatus*: we know objects by grasping a language that contains names for them. On the other hand, the alternative 'bottom-up' view that we identify objects first before determining their possibilities of combination with other objects works best, on Child's estimation, should we wish to see the objects of the *Tractatus* as objects of acquaintance encountered in perception. However, quoting *Tractatus* 5.524, Child argues that the reference in this passage to being given *all* objects points towards the idea of a prior mastery of a language which already provides information about different objects and so also about their combinatorial possibilities.

Wittgenstein believed, no doubt as part of the 'dogmatism' he later came to see in his early work, that it is *obvious* that the analysis of the propositions of ordinary language *must* arrive at elementary propositions in immediate combination (4.221), so that the analysis of any proposition must display it as a truth-function of elementary propositions. Child brings his first chapter to an end with a discussion of what this comes to in his treatment of the truth-tables. This Chapter has been very much a matter of throwing the reader 'new to philosophy' in at the deep end, although it is hard to see how, if these important scholarly questions concerning Wittgenstein's differences from Russell are to be discussed at all, he could have proceeded in any other way.

The questions occupying Child in his third Chapter on reality and the limits of language

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in the *Tractatus*, relate first of all to the nature and status of Tractarian *objects*, whether the division of reality into simple objects is an intrinsic feature of the world as it is in itself, whether it depends instead in some way on our system of representation, and whether indeed in even asking these questions one is making any kind of sense. Within the limits imposed by his kind of treatment, he gives a fairly comprehensive outline of objects, states of affairs and the world, and raises the inevitable question what objects can possible *be*, given that Wittgenstein provides no examples of them. Sifting the evidence for and against the view that they are intended along Russellian lines to be identified with sense-data, Child understandably argues that objects could 'turn out' to be sense-data just as easily as they could turn out to be physical particles. Reflecting a fairly prevalent view, Child surmises here that because Wittgenstein's primary concerns in the *Tractatus* are with logic and representation, he did not share Russell's concern with its objects as they might be represented in theories of knowledge and perception.

Child provides an interesting and detailed explanation of Wittgenstein's argument for the conclusion that there must be simple objects, and why in their absence the sense of one proposition would depend on the truth of another proposition, something which would make language impossible. The argument turns on the premise that sense be completely determinate, and that names must refer to simple things that are indestructible, from which one may be entitled to draw the conclusion that whether a proposition *has* sense cannot ultimately depend on the obtaining of any matter of contingent fact. From this it follows that if the sense of the proposition that some complex object *a* exists had to depend on a matter of contingent fact, then it would lack sense in a world in which *a* failed to exist; and on the assumption that names refer to simple indestructible simples, this cannot be true. Child points out how the assumptions that underlie these overtly metaphysical proposals are questioned later on in, for example, § 40 - 44 of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Elaborating on his initial question whether the division of reality into simple objects is an intrinsic feature of the world as it is in itself, or whether it depends instead in some way on

our system of representation, and whether indeed in even asking these questions one is making any kind of sense, Child distinguishes between three ways of looking at the status of the primary objects of the *Tractatus:* the *realist*, the *idealist* and the *quietist* or *deflationary* interpretation. Echoing Kant, we might put the distinction between the first and second interpretations in terms of a distinction between his *noumenal reality* (reality as it is in itself), and his *empirical reality* (reality as it appears to us), and Child sees Wittgenstein using exactly that kind of terminology in 5.5561. However, in the final analysis, he prefers to adopt the kind of expository, and non-committal view which rather invites the reader to make up his own mind according to the evidence at hand:

> Is Wittgenstein best seen as belonging to the realist tradition
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> of Moore and Russell, of William James, and or Ernest Mach ?
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> Should we locate him, rather, in the idealist tradition of Kant and
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> Schopenhauer ? Or had he, in the *Tractatus*, already developed the
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> kind of deflationary approach to metaphysical questions that is
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> prominent in his later philosophy ? These are intensely debated
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> issues in the interpretation of the *Tractatus*, and I shall not attempt
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> to resolve them here (*Ibid.*, 59).

As it turns out, Child shows himself not to be entirely non-committal on the question of how he should react to the 'new' or 'resolute' reading of the *Tractatus* proposed by Cora Diamond and James Conant, on the grounds that the conventional reading at least has the advantage of taking the nonsensicality of *Tractatus* propositions to follow from a positive theory of language and logic. But if we are to think of their nonsensicality as, *ab initio*, a matter of their being literally nothing more than gibberish, then the entire *point* of thinking of them as 'nonsensical' would appear to be lost. Child backs this conventional reaction with the usual claim that the historical evidence is very much in favour of the view that Wittgenstein in subsequent years was quite serious in having distinguished between what can be *expressed* by propositions and what can only be *shown*. However, he does take the condition that a meaningful proposition must be either true

or false to be something that Wittgenstein simply assumes without argument, and from which indeed it does follow that the logical form of reality cannot be described (*Ibid*., 65).

Child extends his discussion of what can be *said* as distinct from *shown* into the realms of value, ethics, the mystical and the meaning of life, and in regard to the latter he takes the not unreasonable view that being unable to *say* what the meaning of life is, for example, rests on treating the *meaning* of life as a matter of seeing the world from a particular point of view, *e.g.*, *sub specie aeternitatis*. In general, he is prepared to accept that there are no good reasons for agreeing with Wittgenstein that the facts of natural science are the only facts that there are, so that the propositions of ethics function in a different way from factual propositions. Ethical propositions are genuine, and we can say either that they do not state facts; or we may just say that there are ethical 'facts' after all. Child's treatment of the *mystical* is equally perfunctory, and on his view Wittgenstein leaves the questions he raises about the mystical and how it *shows* itself 'hanging'. He does not actually engage with the idea (6.44) that this turns on an encounter with a kind of puzzlement arising from the notion, which we have come to associate with Heidegger, that anything should exist at all, an idea which we might of course see Wittgenstein in another, and perhaps later, mood coming to regard as something which has no genuine application.

Matters are clearer with Child's treatment of *saying* and *showing* in relation to philosophy itself. The relevant passages are 6.53 and 6.54. Whilst he dismisses the Diamond-Conant conception of nonsense as gibberish, he is not alone in perceiving an evident tension between Wittgenstein's claim in his Preface that the *Tractatus* communicates propositions the truth of which is 'unassailable and definitive', yet which remain on the most favourable interpretation 'nonsensical'. He concludes by remarking that different commentators attempt to resolve this tension in different ways.

Chapter 4 describing the move from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations* covers a lot of ground, and one of the first points that William Child emphasises is that in 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' Wittgenstein can be seen to retain the Tractarian form of analysis whilst he abandons the doctrine that elementary propositions are logically independent of one another: if 'a is blue'

entails the falsehood of 'a is red', then the *Tractatus* must assume that the incompatibility of these ascriptions of colour should be analysable in terms of more basic propositions which are logically independent. He came to see, however, that any attempt at such an analysis merely reproduces the incompatibility at another level, with the consequence that the principle of the fundamental logical independence of elementary propositions must be abandoned.

This is followed later in 1929 by the abandonment of the very idea that the primary task of philosophy is to analyse the propositions of ordinary language into elementary propositions: in a well-known passage, Wittgenstein says that he used to believe that there was our everyday language and a primary language that captured the 'phenomena' that we really knew (as quoted *Ibid.,* 78), an idea that he has now given up in favour of the view that there is only one language, the language of everyday. Child glosses this as the rejection of the 'primary language' of the *Tractatus* into which the propositions of ordinary language are to be analysed, in favour of the attempt to see what is essential and inessential in *our* language, so that we can discover where 'wheels run idly' (*Ibid*., 79). This interpretation is no doubt acceptable as far as it goes in an elementary introduction, even if it appears to neglect the flirtation earlier in 1929 with the phenomenalism to which this 'primary language of phenomena' almost certainly refers, for Child's main aim is to move swiftly towards the more fundamental changes that characterise Wittgenstein's later thinking in the *Investigations*.

Child importantly emphasises, however, that there is a continuity of approach in his recognition that philosophical problems arise from misunderstanding the 'logic' of ordinary language, with the consequence that 'there is a significant parallel between Wittgenstein's early and later views about the source of philosophical problems' (*Ibid*., 81). Comparing the early view in 4.003 that philosophical questions cannot be given an answer and are 'nonsensical', with the later claim (*Investigations* § 119) that the results of philosophy are the discovery of some piece of plain nonsense, Child directs our attention (§ 122) to the need to achieve an overview or 'perspicuous representation' of our use of words, one which does not follow simply from mastering a language. Taking Augustine's perplexity over the possibility of measuring time as an example, which arises

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because we can mistakenly think of time as a queer kind of *thing*, we appreciate that the problem swiftly disappears when we study how in practical contexts the concept of *measuring time* is actually used. Child discusses at this point the notion of a language-game as a reflection of the abandonment of the idea that propositions or language itself has an essence, so that even if we do have a concept of what a *proposition* is, its application is not captured in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Child in an interesting aside then explains that most contemporary philosophers are very much in agreement with Wittgenstein's anti-essentialism in relation to concepts like *truth*, *goodness*, *causation* and *knowledge*, although they would in the main differ with him over the claim that they ought to abandon the aim of giving a philosophical account of language. Such an account they generally believe can be based on some paradigmatic cases of what can be classed as propositions.

Child extends this comparison between Wittgenstein's later outlook and that of contemporary philosophical orthodoxy within the analytic tradition, when he emphasises that Wittgenstein's critique of what Child refers to as the *referentialism* of the *Tractatus* is far from being wholeheartedly accepted by most philosophers today. They feel on Child's view that the emphasis in the *Investigations* on the sheer variety of uses of language (§ 23) as a means of drawing our attention away from referential, truth conditional accounts of meaning, rather neglects the importance they attribute to providing a theoretical account of language:

> On the orthodox view, recognising the diversity of kinds of word and kinds of use of language is quite compatible with giving a general, systematic account of meaning: an account in which the basic feature of words is their reference, the basic use of words is their use in saying something true or false, and other features and uses of words are treated as being secondary to, or derivative from these (*Ibid*., 94).

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, favours the opposite view that the very diversity of

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linguistic use captured, for example in § 23 with its long list of activities like giving orders, reporting events, acting in plays and requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, and praying, points to the fact that 'there is no one feature of words, and no one use of words, that can be taken as basic; and there is no systematic or uniform account to be given of what determines the meaning of a proposition' (*Ibid*.)

Child sees this confrontation as part of a live debate which has certainly not been resolved in Wittgenstein's favour, and further explores the idea of 'meaning as use' as a means of clarifying Wittgenstein's ultimate methodology, one reflecting an attitute which is in the final analysis 'anti-essentialist, 'anti-reductionist' and 'anti-systematic' (*Ibid*., 104). Child in the course of arriving at this conclusion provides a fairly comprehensive overview of the gradual change in Wittgenstein's thinking in his section on *Meaning and Use* (95 *et seqq*.) : the gradual move away from the truth-conditional thinking of the *Tractatus* to the verificationist leanings of 1930 and finally to the idea that the sense of a proposition lies in its use, which came to dominate the later philosophy, is assessed by Child given that it has come to be the 'conventional wisdom' in describing the important changes in Wittgenstein's thinking.

One consequence of Child's decision to compare Wittgenstein's approach with that of current orthodoxy is that he does not deal in any detail with some of the famous passages in the early sections of the *Investigations* which have gained importance in the secondary literature. There is barely enough space available to mention the builders in § 2 onwards (*Ibid*., 88), let alone discuss them, and nothing is said about the significance of § 32 and its relation to learning a first language. Proper names have already been mentioned if only briefly in Child's earlier discussion in Chapter 3 where passages § 39, §§ 40 - 44 and § 55 (*Ibid*., 54) relate to the names of simples in the *Tractatus*. There is no mention either of the standard metre in § 50, and its relation to the *Tractatus*, although §§ 65 - 67 have already been quoted given their importance in relation to Wittgenstein's evolved view of the diversity of linguistic usage. Augustine in § 1 is treated solely as the proponent of the *Tractatus'* referentialist picture of language, and it will

come as little surprise that the shopkeeper of § 1, far from enjoying the exotic role of a refugee from the theatre of the absurd that we find in David Stern amongst others (1) - a treatment pointing in a quite different direction - serves only to illustrate that the words 'five', 'red' and 'apples' do not all function in the same way. In an introductory volume, especially one which covers the number of aspects of Wittgenstein's philosophy that Child has decided to investigate, decisions must be made about what is and is not important; and this inevitably affects the slant of the entire volume, and therefore if indirectly the general philosophical predilections of its author.

The two main aspects of Wittgestein's later philosophy covered in Chapter 5 are intentionality and rule-following, and Child treats these together because he believes that Wittgenstein regarded the possibility of doubts about thought about things, or about rule-following itself as kinds of confusions to be dispelled by uprooting the philosophical misunderstandings that generate them. Child's first objective is to outline Wittgenstein's objections to traditional 'imagist' accounts of intentionality. Making use of passages from the *Blue Book* (3,12), *Investigations* § 139, § 451 and in particular § 389 with its reference to the (mistaken) idea that it is an *intrinsic* feature of a mental image that it should be the image of *this* and of nothing else, Child illustrates Wittgenstein's view that there can be no 'special' images or pictures that are unable to be interpreted in different ways. A mental image, like a picture, can be interpreted or used for different purposes, although there is an almost inevitable tendency to take *resemblance* as a feature of an image which is self-interpreting insofar as it can foster the illusion that *this* picture of *x* simply *cannot* be a picture of anything else. Wittgenstein often stresses what has now become this very familiar point that the significance of a mental image or of a physical picture depends entirely on how it is *used*. Child also quotes Wittgenstein's famous response to Russell's causal theory - see also Ogden & Richards in their *The Meaning of Meaning* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1923) - which claims that wanting an apple is to wish for the removal of a feeling of dissatisfaction: a punch in the stomach should it have this effect would then be what one 'really' wanted all along. Here Child almost cannot avoid presenting Wittgenstein's positive picture of

intentionality in a certain 'deflationary' light to those who are looking for a philosophical account of this quite extraordinary phenomenon (*Cf. Investigations* § 428), yet one which appears so only when doing philosophy. Child does a good job of presenting what has by now become this almost excessively familiar material.

Child takes two pre-existing features of Wittgenstein's thinking in the *Investigations* to play a central role in the passages dealing with the following of a rule: the idea of a picture that is capable of being interpreted in many different ways, so that what it represents is a matter not intrinsic to itself but is rather something dependent on how it is applied; and secondly the idea that having grasped a concept like that of a *game*, we all find it natural to go on to apply it to new cases in the same way. There is actually a third important feature involved here, because Wittgenstein's insistence that an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case (§ 30), refers back to the child who is being trained into the practice of speaking a language: there are *no* guarantees that the training will work. The possibilities for *misinterpretation* as he gradually finds his feet by grasping, say, what is being pointed to in *this* case, are endless, so that there can be no certainty that he will 'catch on'. This is reflected in Child's discussion of the aberrant pupil in § 185, leading to his question *what* makes it the case that the correct continuation of the series '2, 4, 6, 8.....' is '1000, 1002, 1004.....' and not '1000, 1004, 1008....' ?

Child's analysis provides three possible answers to this question, the reply of the *Platonist* who claims that there are absolute, objective standards for the application of a word determined by the nature of reality. The *constructivist* or *anti-realist*, on the other hand, argues that there are indefinitely many different ways of continuing a series, so that what counts as the 'correct' way of continuing *this* series is constructed from the steps we take when we actually do continue it. Finally, there is the *deflationist*, or *quietist* view of rule-following, one which rejects the terms of the debate as it exists for the first two protagonists on the grounds that it is misguided. It is Child's aim to try to ascertain just where Wittgenstein's position lies. Claiming that 'a significant number of contemporary philosophers accept a broadly Platonist view of rules and standards of

correctness', he argues that these philosophers whilst familiar with Wittgenstein's approach do not find his 'arguments' compelling (*Ibid*., 126). Whilst Dummet, Wright and Kripke are seen by Child to advocate some form of constructivism, McDowell illustrates a deflationary approach.

On Child's view, whilst the constructivist attempts to 'create' standards of correctness from the non-normative, *the fact* that human beings have been trained to go on in a certain way, the deflationist on the other hand agrees that 'we really do grasp a standard of correctness that extends to future cases independent of any judgement we make when we consider these cases; and the standard of correctness we grasp is an infinite standard - a standard that is not limited by the finiteness of our actual capacity to apply the rule' (*Ibid*. 130). Wittgenstein has no intention of offering a positive theory of rule-following. All he wishes to do is target and destroy a rather mythological, Platonic picture of what it is to follow a rule:

> Wittgenstein rejects that notion of absolute correctness: there are
> indefinitely many possible ways of continuing the series, he thinks,
> no one of which is absolutely correct, or simplest, or most natural.
> ....The correct continuation is just the continuation that we find
> simplest or most natural. But, on the deflationist interpretation,
> Wittgenstein makes that anti-Platonist point without embracing
> constructivism (*Ibid*., 131).

Wittgenstein manages to do this, on Child's view, because the 'natural continuation' of the deflationist is just the mathematical series *add 2*, a basic mathematical fact that cannot be reduced to, or constructed from other non-normative facts about how people actually do go on. With the matter presented in this way, however, the reader might be forgiven for thinking that Child's Wittgenstein is someone who wants to have the best of both worlds, a philosopher who aspires to have his cake and eat it too by enjoying the *sui generis* features of Platonism whilst rejecting the anti-realism of the constructivist. The problem, of course, is that Child innocently refers to the deflationist's grasp of a standard which has an 'infinite' application, and this makes

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it difficult to see how his so-called deflationist is supposed to differ from his Platonist. Whilst Child's interpretation is clearly on the right lines by agreeing that Wittgenstein can in no way be taken to be denying that we 'really' follow rules, and that he is attempting to show that a certain mythology has no application, Child's presentation makes it look as if his deflationist and Platonist are both party to the same misleading picture of rails stretching to infinity. Yet the point of § 197 with its familiar expression 'It's as if we could grasp the whole use of a word in a flash' is to show in what way that kind of talk can be alright, yet how it can also be misleading in appearing to point in the direction of the entire unlimited future development of a series which is *already* present to the follower of the rule, when in fact the meaning of the word actually lies in its *use*.

In the same passage, Wittgenstein refers to the mythology of a 'super-strong connection' that appears to bind the act of intending and the thing intended, when in fact the proper connection between the intention expressed in 'Let's play a game of chess' and the actual rules of the game of chess lies in a wholly down-to-earth description of those rules, how the game itself is taught, and of course in the day-to-day *practice* of playing it. This is not the end of the matter, because having just 'deflated' a certain Platonist tendency, Wittgenstein in § 198 begins by taking us to the *opposite* extreme, as if in rejecting this tendency we have to endure the inevitable consequence that the rule cannot show what he is to do at *this* point, *as if* he is limited to making a stab in the dark.

The emphasis on '*this* point' is important, because it is Wittgenstein's way of saying that to even ask what one has to do here *because* whatever one then does will on some interpretation be in accord with the rule, is *already* to view the rule outwith the context of the *practice* in which following it is not a question of *interpreting* the rule at all. Grasping the rule is instead exhibited in what we ordinarily call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in the actual cases we come across every day (§ 201); and Child is correct to emphasise that these are the kinds of cases we can use to illustrate the normativity of following a rule. There is a sense in which that normativity does not yet exist for the child who is in the course of being *taught* how to follow a rule, a child who has to *interpret* what is being pointed at, for example, and who can in the eyes of his mentors get it *wrong*. Like the person

who has to *ask* in § 198 how a rule can show him what to do at *this* point, the child has not yet become fully acclimatized into the practice because he is still learning and interpreting what his masters are in the process of teaching him. Of course, if the child is, say, a mathematical genius, we allow for the possibility that he may show that the teachers are *wrong*, an indication that the criteria we apply here do not rest ultimately in what the 'community' *per se* claims to be *right*.

Child ends his chapter, in fact, with a section on *Rules and Communities* (*Ibid*., 142), in which he raises fairly standard questions concerning Wittgenstein's possible commitment to the claim that rule-following is *essentially* a social phenomenon (*Ibid*., Child's emphasis). Wright, Kripke and Malcolm, together with McDowell and Bloor are introduced as expositors, if in varying ways, of some form of 'Communal' thesis, whilst Colin McGinn and Baker and Hacker are taken to be exponents of the opposing 'Individualist' standpoint. Quoting Canfield, however (*Ibid*., 144), Child is content to conclude that on Wittgenstein's understanding of what 'essentially social' means, a so-called life-long solitary rule follower is allowable as a limiting case.

This neglects the simple fact that Wittgenstein is just not in the business of presenting any kind of 'philosophical' thesis concerning the 'essentially social' nature of following a rule. Beyond his stressing that as a *matter of fact* people do learn languages in a communal setting, so that the *circumstances* in which we do learn a public language have an important role to play in what we might wish to say concerning philosophical proposals about solitary-from-birth individuals who can *invent* languages for themselves (*e.g.*, that they involve an infinite regress of explanation), he is generally quite happy to accept because harmless the implications of the Humean principle that whatever is conceivable is possible, or capable of being *imagined*. This principle underlies Baker & Hacker's distinction between the genesis and the exercise of an ability. Beyond that, the only question that remains is whether as a matter of empirical fact, a social context is required if human beings are to learn a language, and that is not a philosophical question but a scientific one. Once again, Child has in the main done a good job of summing up the alternatives here whilst providing some encouragement to those 'new to philosophy' to make up their own minds.

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Readers who have so far found Child's exposition of Wittgenstein's thinking fairly illuminating will inevitably be looking forward to seeing what he has to say on the vexed questions surrounding sensation language which, like those discussed in connection with Kripke's famous account of what it is to follow a rule, have been historically the most discussed aspects of the entire *Philosophical Investigations*. Child interestingly begins with the treatment of sensation language that Wittgenstein provided in 1929-30 on his immediate return to philosophy, which in effect involves the rather awkward combination of a 'Cartesian' account of an individual's (LW's own) *private* sensations with a behaviourist account of sensations belonging to anyone else. This in effect is the kind of proposal that A.J. Ayer famously introduced in his *Language, Truth and Logic* (Gollancz 1936) only to drop it in later years. According to Child, the ordinary, and in one respect correct view on Wittgenstein's later thinking, that the only difference between 'I have a toothache' and 'He has a toothache' rests on the identity of the bearer of the pain, was earlier on believed by Wittgenstein to conceal a fundamental assymetry between first and third person sensation language. Child Quotes from *Philosophical Remarks*: Wittgenstein famously states that if he LW has a toothache, that is equivalent to 'there is toothache', whereas if A has toothache, that is equivalent to 'A is behaving as LW does when there is toothache'. So in LW's case, the word 'toothache' acquires its meaning by direct association with his immediate subjective and *private* experience; yet it also has a separate *public* meaning governed by its association with those distinctive patterns of human behaviour that are associated with pain.

Strange as it may at first seem, Child takes this early account to embody two insights that Wittgenstein never abandoned: *a)* that first person private sensation reports are not based on observation of one's own behaviour; and *b)* that the meaning of third person sensation reports are linked by certain *criteria* to public expressive behaviour. Whilst this is not exactly how Child himself expresses these insights, the important point is that it is by seeing them *as* insights, that we can come to realise how and why Wittgenstein came to develop them later in quite a different way. Though as always with Wittgenstein we have to be very careful about how we describe what that way is:

In the first place, the account of the first-person use of sensation

words....took it for granted that a word can be given a meaning

by pure introspective attachment to a sensation, without relying

on any links to external circumstances or behaviour. And that, he

came to think, was impossible. In the second place.....the account

of the public meanings of sensation words made the character of

sensations irrelevant to communication. And that consequence, he

later realized, is unacceptable (*Ibid.*, 151).

Whilst Child's expression of his second point about Wittgenstein's early account is perfectly sound, doubts can be raised about his expression of the first just because there is an obvious sense in which by using a *public* language we do regularly grant a word for a new sensation 'a meaning by pure introspective attachment' to that sensation. Certainly, the point Child is making here may seem obvious enough just because his reference to the lack of any reliance on 'external circumstances or behaviour' is intended to be making a reference to a spurious use within a *private* language. But just how Wittgenstein goes about distinguishing between a *public* and a *private* language is something which requires a great deal more spelling out than has been given at this stage of his account. Child proceeds to develop this account in three stages, firstly by finding out why Wittgenstein 'came to think that there could be no private, purely introspective sensation language' - the burden of the 'private language argument' - secondly how Wittgenstein criticises the private linguist's attempt to explain how we can attribute sensations to others, and what he has to say about our *knowledge* of them; and lastly by developing Wittgenstein's positive account of sensation language. This all sounds very business-like, so the reader will be eager to see how Child intends to carry this business to a successful conclusion.

Child begins by drawing our attention to the familiar point that we find it quite natural to think that sensations are individuated by their own subjective introspectible

characters, characters independent of external circumstances and behaviour: 'So, we think, it is perfectly possible for two people to be subject to all the same external stimuli, and to be exactly alike in every behavioural respect, but for the subjective character of their sensations to be entirely different..' (*Ibid*., 152), a view that Wittgenstein implicitly criticizes in § 272. But, of course, within the context of the use of a *public* language, sensations can innocently be said to be individuated by their own introspectible characters even if the question whether the 'subjective character' of one person's *kind* of sensation might *differ* from that of someone else's does not so much as arise; and it does not arise in this context because it is an *idle* speculation that in Wittgenstein's later thinking has no genuine content: there could be no way of finding out *by definition* whether it had any application. Like 'the logical possibility of zombies', it depends on staring at a *picture* that in this case has no genuine *use*, and therefore no real *sense* within the contexts in which people employ a *public* sensation language.

This means for Child's Wittgenstein that a view which has been dominant in the history of philosophy, and which he says is still very popular even today, rests as he puts it on misunderstanding the 'grammar' of sensation language. The very idea of a *private* language, a language in which sensation words gain their meanings directly from their association with introspectible *private* sensations, has the unacceptable consequence for Child that no two people could know the real character of anyone else's sensations so that *only* the speaker could *understand* this private sensation language. Wittgenstein on Child's account begins the dislodgement of all the components of this misleading *picture* in § 243, by pointing out that there is an ordinary sense in which we can of course talk about our inner experiences for our own use, but this is done within the context of the use of a public language in which ordinary sensation words are publicly used and publicly understood.

But if we already believe for the reasons given that the private introspectible sensations of different people as reported in a *public* language cannot be *private* in the radical sense that Child discovers in the most discussed passage in Wittgenstein's later work, then it is going to

prove difficult to make out just what Wittgenstein is attempting to do in § 258, a passage which in common with most commentators Child quotes in full. Agreeing with the general view that § 258 is concerned with how the 'private linguist' might *set up* his sensation language in the first place, he is led to propose that this private linguist 'thinks that he can establish a standard of correctness for uses of the word "S" by concentrating his attention on a particular sensation and undertaking to use the word "S" for all sensations of the same type' (*Ibid*., 154). Child therefore sees the difficulty facing the private linguist as one which revolves around supposed doubts about whether a *later* sensation is of the same *type* as the one *earlier* called 'S'. On Child's estimation, Wittgenstein is claiming 'that we cannot just take it for granted what it is for something to belong to the same type as an extended sample', because Wittgenstein's has already shown that this depends on a humanly created public standard of similarity (*Ibid.*): the 'private linguist' restricted to only his own resources must fail to establish a genuine standard of similarity by reference to which future applications of the term 'S' can be judged correct or incorrect.

At this point Child almost anticipates his final answer to this argument, one already provided earlier on by his 'deflationist' who is master of the mathematical series 'add 2'. Why should what is good for the deflationist with Platonist leanings, not be good for the private linguist too ? In the course of arriving at this conclusion, Child provide various alternative glosses on the reasons why the private linguist fails to establish genuine standards of correctness for the use of 'S'. His next contender is the view, which he associates with Kripke, that if we adopt a community view of rules, from which it follows that an individual cannot follow rules of his own without reference to the standards of a community, the impossibility of a private language of sensations will simply be a special case of this general principle (*Ibid*., 155). But this familiar interpretation is controversial because it is open to question whether it reflects Wittgenstein's, let alone Kripke's actual views. This leads Child to consider a number of other proposals which have also been offered in the literature as ways of helping to make sense of the enigma presented by § 258.

The next possibility he considers is that the private linguist uses words like 'sensation' when introducing his private language, but in doing so he is making use of terms which already have an application within a public language (§ 261). Everything that he needs to create his truly private language, understood only by *himself*, must therefore be developed from his own introspective resources if it is to meet this criterion; and that for Wittgenstein is an idle fantasy. On its own, this argument may seem a little weak, and Child develops it by considering a linguist who attempts to provide a 'standard of correctness' for the application of a private sensation term in a *public* setting by 'defining' colour terms in relation to samples of colours to which reference might be made in judging that some colour newly encountered is identifable as a colour of an existing *kind*. But things are quite different in a wholly *private* context, according to Child's Wittgenstein, because in coming to make the proper comparison in *this* case, all that the linguist has to go on is the 'memory image' of the sensation already designated as sensation of kind 'S', and that cannot provide a genuine standard of comparison. Child sees this argument reflected in § 265.

He argues, however, surely correctly, that if Wittgenstein's point is merely that the transience of sensations makes it difficult for the private linguist to tell whether he has applied his word 'S' correctly to something *previously* ostensively defined as 'S', it hardly follows that there can be no such thing as a correct or incorrect identification of some sensation as 'S'. Child decides to meet this objection by arguing instead that Wittgenstein's proper claim is rather that 'the private linguist does not succeed in establishing standards of correctness for uses of the word "S" at all' (*Ibid.*, 158). In the course of so doing he reiterates his earlier suggestion, following David Pears, *viz.*, that in segregating himself from a *public* setting of relatively enduring samples of colours, for example, the private linguist lives in a world of fleeting and insubstantial sensations which he is quite unable to properly grasp and classify in the course of establishing proper standards of correctness.

In the course of bringing this rather inconclusive reading of § 258 to an end, Child asks

how successful Wittgenstein's argument against a private language actually is, and concludes that a crucial premise of the argument is the anti-Platonist claim that in making his initial private ostensive definition of 'S', Wittgenstein merely assumes that 'the nature of the sensation does not itself determine what it is for something else to be the same kind of private sensation as the original sample' (*Ibid*., 159). If, on the other hand, we assume that Platonism so understood is correct, then of course the private linguist will be in a position to 'mimic' in his inner private world whatever we manage to do in our public world that allows us to give *meanings* to our sensation terms. As a proponent of this kind of view, he quotes Simon Blackburn in *Spreading The Word: Groundings in the Philosophy of Language* (OUP 1984). He could as easily have added many other names to this list, including A. J. Ayer, the originator of this kind of viewpoint, P.F. Strawson in his original *Investigations* review, Scott Soames, early Saul Kripke and, more recently, Arif Ahmed (2).

If Child's otherwise interesting discussion is ultimately unsatisfactory as an interpretation of Wittgenstein, it is simply because Wittgenstein would have been the last person to deny that we can readily imagine inventing languages for ourselves in the kinds of 'private' circumstances of the kind that Child envisages. Indeed, it is precisely the ease with which we can make these proposals which leads us to believe, on his assessment, that they can have any *philosophical* relevance. His point is rather that our capacity to think in this way is parasitic upon our prior acquaintance with a public language. This standpoint is central to Wittgenstein's methodology. Our dependence on this prior understanding of a public language underlies our temptation to think that we could in some sense 'invent' languages to talk about sensations which are *already* intrinsically meaningful, which have Soames's 'representational content'. This explains why the *real* private linguist of § 258 is an elusive phantom who has no genuine characteristics: he is described as having sensations which are *objects* of identification each requiring individual criteria of identity (§ 288), when in practice first-person sensation ascription is criterionless; and that it is criterionless is something that Wittgenstein allies to its expression in a *public* language. That is why he stresses that he knows this colour to be red *because* he has 'learnt English' (§ 381), just

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as he states that acquiring the concept of pain is consequent upon acquiring a language (§ 384). These are not *reductio* type arguments, but reminders of what philosophers are so easily inclined to forget when they promote fantasies about *inventing* languages that in the final analysis owe their apparent cogency to the philosopher's *prior* possession of a public language.

The following section on 'Other minds' actually serves to recognise precisely these points, for the greater part of Child's discussion here relates to the Wittgensteinian principle that to understand what it is to be in pain is *already* to have a proper grasp of both first and third person pain-ascription. This point is central to Wittgenstein's 'new' anthropocentric methodology. But if that is so, then 'the problem of other minds' *can* only be dependent on a futile attempt to apply a misleading picture of 'other minds' as ghostly entities hidden 'behind' the outward behaviour of persons other than one's self; and that picture incorporates the central idea that 'it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain" means' (§ 293). The burden of the infamous 'Beetle in the Box' passage is therefore that a sensation language which allows for *both* first and third person pain ascription cannot regard sensations as *entities* in the way envisaged, firstly because first person *private* sensation-ascription in a public language is criterionless, and secondly because third-person sensation ascription is dependent on a *public* context in which there can be behavioural criteria for the expression of pain.

Child backs his discussion with a treatment of § 302, which questions the incoherent idea of imagining someone *else's* pain on the *model* of one's own, and of § 350, which questions the supposition that someone else's being in pain is a matter of his being in the *same state* as I am when I am in pain. Although in *one* sense that proposal is innocent enough. But in the absence of the required third-person *criteria* for the ascription of pain, it lacks sense, a point illustrated by the example of the stove that we may claim to be in pain. It is unfortunate that Child does not integrate his account of private language with that of 'Other minds', for in Wittgenstein's presentation they are not two separate issues. The burden of querying whether people other than myself *really* have conscious thoughts and feelings as I have, is that this question in its *philosophical* guise has no

proper context in which it might be applied. The only context in which it makes sense, *viz.*, as a factual question about whether on some specific occasion certain other people are not, for example, unconscious, already presupposes an existing framework in which there are criteria which can be applied in the process of providing it with an *ordinary* answer. The *philosophical* problem in Wittgenstein's eyes then becomes redundant.

Child's next section concerns our knowledge of sensations, where he raises what some readers regard as Wittgenstein's puzzling proposal that it makes no sense to say that he *knows* he is in pain. Explaining that this proposal turns on the point that knowledge can be defined in the most general terms as justified true belief, then of course it is not true that one discovers or finds out *via* the appropriate evidence that one is in pain, or confirms that this is so *via* the application of criteria. This is quite unlike third-person *knowledge* about another's pain, so that in the first-person, claims to knowledge are inappropriate. Child nevertheless argues that there are grounds for concluding, based on how *knowledge* is understood within contemporary philosophy, that someone in pain can be said to believe that he is in pain, and therefore to *know* that he is, even if he does not do so on the basis of evidence. But this has at least the appearance of being disingenuous. Child is more successful in his treatment of § 303 and the claim that I can only *believe* that someone else is in pain whilst *knowing* that I am, for if this is intended to be a *philosophical* thesis of some kind based on one's immediate acquaintance with a sensation of a kind which by definition would be 'hidden' behind the outward behaviour of others, then it turns on the kind of misleading *picture* already discussed in relation to 'the problem of other minds'.

The final section relating to sensations and privacy deals with Wittgenstein's 'positive view of sensations and sensation language' (*Ibid*., 166), in which Child mentions § 244 and *Zettel* §§ 540 - 41 and § 545. Whilst there are indeed questions to be asked here, many people will doubt whether the very idea that Wittgenstein has such a 'positive view' is appropriate, since his main aim is to uproot the confusions surrounding the problems regarding privacy and other minds that have already been discussed. In the course of doing so he certainly draws our

attention to certain *facts* about how languages are learned, for example, and how certain natural human reactions have a role to play in reminding us of things we are inclined to forget when indulging in philosophical fantasy. But to claim, as Child does, that Wittgenstein's descriptions are 'only a first step towards a full account of sensation language' (*Ibid.*, 168) will to many commentators appear only to misrepresent his intentions. Child nevertheless raises a number of pertinent questions concerning a person's claim to be in pain as either a description or as an expression of pain, and in the course of reflecting on Wittgenstein's observations concerning pre-linguistic expressive and sympathetic behaviour, asks what he has to say about sensations other than pain, and about other mental phenomena. He also mentions the interesting point that having an *experience* may in some cases be conditional on having a *language* in which to express it. Once again, however, the philosopher has to be very careful here in making his own assessment of what it is that he believes he is managing to say:

> One consequence of Wittgenstein's view is that our acquisition of a
> language for describing and expressing our experiences extends the
> range of experiences we are capable of having. And that is a plausible
> idea. It is very plausible, for example, that the budding wine connoisseur's
> acquisition of a sophisticated vocabulary for describing the tastes of wines
> goes hand in hand with her coming to experience wines in richer, more
> complex ways. It is not that she learns to describe more accurately the
> experiences that she already had; rather she comes to have different
> experiences (*Ibid.*, 173).

The problem here is that what is presented as a 'plausible idea' of philosophical relevance is little more than a 'sophisticated' rendering of the old adage that 'practice makes perfect': the good advice to study, reflect, and become familiar with appropriate practices in different fields, is almost certain to result in a refinement of one's sensibilities. But then the distinction drawn here between having *experiences* and having a *language* in which to express them is, in this case at

least, left with no genuine role to play. The reason for this is that Child is already speaking within the context of a distinctively human world where the idea of having experiences *without* having a language in which to express them simply does not arise. What one may or may not wish to say, on the other hand, about the experiences of animals who do not have a sophisticated language or the sophisticated concepts that go along with it is another matter altogether with its own set of problems.

William Child is quite correct to say that Wittgenstein's discussion of sensation language has received more attention in the secondary literature than any other aspect of his explorations of mental phenomena, and in partly redressing the balance he draws our attention to the wide-ranging discussions covering a host of associated material in Part II of the *Investigations*, lately re-titled *Philosophy of Psychology - A Fragment.* Child devotes five pages to his first main subject, Wittgenstein's well-known reactions to William James whom he regarded as a psychologist who was inclined to treat as features of his 'conscious experience' phenomena which were not actually experiential, like the 'feeling' of having a word 'on the tip of one's tongue'. Child ends his long Chapter on mind and psychology by devoting seven pages to the phenomenon of *seeing an aspect*, a section amply accompanied by familar figures including the duck-rabbit and cube, and here Child's main aim is to show where Wittgenstein stands *vis-a-vis* Wundt's Introspectionism and Kohler's Gestalt Psychology. On Child's view, Wittgenstein adopts a 'middle way' which rejects the assumption common to both parties that there is a proper answer to the question whether seeing a difference of aspect relates to a difference in the viewer's *visual experience*. Whilst Child is not exactly breaking new ground by discussing these issues in the philosophy of psychology, many commentators, particularly in introductions to Wittgenstein's philosophy, have tended to provide them with only a minor role in his work.

The Chapter on *Knowledge and Certainty* deals with matters which have recently received extensive discussion in the secondary literature and, as one would expect, William Child provides a concise overview of the issues raised by Moore's attempt to provide a Proof that there

is *really* an External World. Moore evidently believed that there is a genuine *metaphysical* question whether there *really* are physical objects, a belief placed in doubt by the global arguments of both scepticism and idealism. This question he attempts to answer by listing the 'truisms' provided in his paper 'A Defence of Common Sense'. Yet we are immediately drawn to ask what Moore could later have been thinking when he held up his hands as 'proof' that two physical objects actually exist. For in doing so it surely must have been obvious to him that he was merely taking for granted the existence of the very framework which traditional sceptical arguments are putting in question. The only redeeming feature of his approach could then be seen to lie in his subjective psychological *conviction* that his 'Common Sense' proposals are so obviously *correct* that no sceptical arguments formulated in the study could conceivably overturn what is evidently borne out to be true by his day-to-day experiences of the world around him.

A second major point worth making here, even if it is not of immediate relevance to Child's account, is that to the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* the very idea that there could *be* a problem about the existence of an 'external world', any more than there could be a problem about the existence of 'other minds', rests on a misleading *picture* of something that exists 'behind' or 'on the other side of' in the first case 'sense-data', and in the second 'external behaviour'. But the formulation of the problem of an 'external world' by philosophers like Ayer in terms, say, of the 'Argument from Illusion' usually proceeds by presenting a distinction between perception which is *veridical* and perception which is *delusive,* through the introduction of an item which is commonly 'seen' in both cases, the *sense-datum* that we are invited to consider as the *object* of visual experience whether or not backed, for example, by further evidence from the senses of touch, smell and taste.

Yet the conclusion that these sense-data are all that we are *really* 'acquainted' with can be objected to on the grounds that when Macbeth, for example, sees only an *illusory* dagger he is not actually 'seeing' anything in any sense at all. We are not duty bound to introduce any intermediary in cases of sight, a point which would have been familiar to philosophers of 'Ordinary Language' like Austin (3). The related *Investigations* passages §§ 275 - 278 express a similar view. So the entire

'Problem of Perception', at least as conceived by a philosopher like Ayer, is rather dependent in the first place on presenting a distinction between cases where the proper *criteria* for deciding whether there *really* are (in an ordinary rather than in a metaphysical sense) two hands, *are* actually satisfied, and cases where they are not. Yet this is used to reach the conclusion that all we ever *really* 'see' are what may *seem* be two hands, and not *real* physical objects at all. This sceptical conclusion can be allied to the principle that no *finite* set of 'observation statements' can render 'conclusively verifiable' the claim that some physical object exists. Moore in fact was rather more preoccupied with questions about sense-data than philosophers who are inclined to extoll his virtues as a proponent of 'Common Sense Ordinary Language' philosophy, are usually prepared to admit. It would, however, be beside the point to enter into these historical questions here. The significant point is that for the Wittgenstein of the *Investigations*, Moore's real *metaphysical* problem would have rested on a confusion.

The important question is how far we may take Wittgenstein if at all to be in any way deviating from this kind of thinking in *On Certainty*. According to Child, Wittgenstein agrees that Moore does not in fact address genuine *external* sceptical doubt about physical objects at all, because his claim to have two hands could only be effective in cases of *internal* doubt where there existed some *practical* question about their existence (*Ibid*., 194). On the other hand, *OC §§ 18 -19* suggests to Child that *external* sceptical doubt has to be shown to be an illusion by a different kind of method, and that method is shown partly *via* Wittgenstein's recognition that Moore, perhaps even unknowingly, is actually drawing our attention to claims which have a *special* status in our thinking. Consequently, if we can come to understand exactly what that status is, we may be enabled to appreciate how Wittgenstein's thinking, whilst continuous with that of the *Investigations* in rooting out confusion, nevertheless expands upon it in important ways.

According to Child's Wittgenstein, it would be quite wrong to say that we *know* the truth of Moore's propositions, because we can give no genuine *grounds* for believing in them. It is also true that to claim to *know* their truth would in normal circumstances be pointless or uninformative (*Ibid*., 198). Child toys with the idea that the so-called Moorean statements which in the literature, at

least as understood by Wittgenstein himself, have gained the title of 'hinge-propositions', are 'rules of enquiry'. These we are to understand as propositions that 'stand fast' no matter what, and that for this reason we would not be willing in any ordinary circumstances to relinquish. Drawing a comparison with the statements of mathematics, Child sees this aspect as 'a *logical* feature of the role of the Moorean propositions in our system of belief and enquiry' (*Ibid*., 205). In that sense, we have simply decided that there is nothing that could *count* as falsifying them. This sounds very much like the way we *do* treat the statements of some established scientific theory of the appropriate sort. Wittgenstein can be understood to be suggesting, for example, that something like the Periodic Table of elements is so well-established that we simply could not allow anything to *count* against it without entirely revising our *whole* way of looking at things. This Quinean way of thinking is clearly reflected in *OC* § 292.

William Child nevertheless proposes that we are free to adopt an alternative to this *logical* feature of the role that he identifies in Moore's down-to-earth claims, *viz*., that they *are* ordinary empirical claims which owe their status, insofar as they have any special status at all, to 'the fact that they are very well established and extremely unlikely to turn out to be false' (*Ibid*., 207). This view would certainly be in accordance with *OC* §§ 96 - 97, with its famous reference to those propositions of the form of empirical propositions which were hardened so that they functioned as channels for those ordinary empirical propositions which we take to be true or false according to ordinary empirical criteria. Yet this relationship changes with time, and Child finds a classic example (*OC* § 111) in the thought that prior to the advent of space flight, it would have been regarded as a Moorean certainty that no one had ever been on the Moon.

This has by now become very familiar territory, and Child spells out the alternatives precisely, drawing attention, for example to *OC* 110, with its reference to an ungrounded *way of acting*, and this reflects very well the grounds supplied by Daniele Moyal-Sharrock for adopting the view that hinges are actually *non-propositional* and *non-epistemic* (4), a point again reflected in *OC* 359 with its reference to what lies beyond justification as 'something animal'. On the other

hand, even where *this* kind of certainty seems definitely established, the idea that what are being expressed are after all ordinary empirical propositions can sometimes break through, especially towards the end of the book. Take, for example, *OC* § 659, with its apparent expression of a *hinge* in the claim that Wittgenstein cannot be wrong about just having had lunch; only to abandon the hinge when he realises that he could have gotten it wrong after all *because* he might have dropped off for an hour only to waken with the thought that he had only just eaten. Child also takes the opportunity to discuss certain 'relativistic' tendencies based on opposing 'world pictures' which *On Certainty* might be thought to display, only to conclude that the evidence for this view is equivocal. This Chapter expresses Child's determination to provide a balanced account of the range of alternative outlooks about *On Certainty* that have surfaced more especially in the most recent secondary literature, a literature which is already being added to. This will certainly make it clear to readers who are 'new to philosophy' how highly unlikely it is that the last word has been said on any of these matters. It may even encourage them to say something of their own.

The same can be said of the final major treatment that Child provides on *Religion and Anthropology*. He begins by pointing out that apart from two passages in the *Tractatus* where God is mentioned, 6.372 & 6.432, and one very brief reference to theology in *Investigations* § 373, the influence that Wittgenstein's thinking has exerted on certain theologians and philosophers of religion has depended entirely on students' notes of three lectures on religious belief, remarks in *Culture and Value*, and reports of his sayings by various former pupils and friends. Child provides a good overview of the role of religion in Wittgenstein's own personal life, and concentrates on the later view that religious belief as Wittgenstein understands it *ought* to be regarded not as a form of commitment to certain theoretical proposals about the existence of a deity, but instead as a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Indeed, the very idea that *evidence* of any sort might have a role to play in a person's decision to accept religious belief would to Wittgenstein have been anathema. Child raises common complaints about the relativistic consequences which accrue from regarding religious belief-systems as self-contained, each having its own internal

criteria of acceptance, and argues that in any event it would be historically inaccurate to claim, as Wittgenstein appears to do, that factual evidence has never played any role in the reasons that individual believers have given for accepting or rejecting religious belief. The 19th Century dispute between Science and Religion is an obvious case in point.

This gives us every reason to conclude, though Child does not actually put it in this way, that the interpretation which an individual actually places on the nature of religious belief, what he actually *understands* this kind of belief to *be*, plays an important role in determining whether or not the existence of God, for example, is something in which he ought to *believe*. Though this may seem rather platitudinous, it nevertheless supports the conclusion towards which Child would appear to find himself drawn that the remarks Wittgenstein actually makes about religious belief form a *recommendation* of what this kind of belief *ought* to be. They just do not provide us with the kind of unbiassed assessment of the role(s) of religious belief in human life that a familiar understanding of his anthropocentric outlook might lead us to expect.

The remainder of the Chapter is devoted to what has by now become equally familiar material, Wittgenstein's treatment of the outlook expressed by Sir James George Frazer in his monumental study of religion and magic, *The Golden Bough*. The most significant feature of Child's analysis is that he relates Wittgenstein's rejection of Frazer's tendency to look for the *causal origins* of the Fire Festivals, for example, to his alternative strategy of 'explaining' a human practice by looking for connections between it and other practices. This is with the aim of achieving that 'perspicuous' or 'surveyable' representation (*Investigations* § 122) allowing us to look at things as phenomena in their own right, and to study their 'inner nature' and the *effect* that these festivals have on us. This has clear connections with Wittgenstein's admiration for Goethe's 'morphological' approach to the phenomena, although it ought to be stressed that Frazer's search for the historical origins of these festivals is a perfectly valid enterprise in its own right. What is not so obviously valid is what from our current perspective must seem the naive and oversimplistic account that Frazer provides of the development of human society from

primitive magic and religion to scientific thought, an account as naive as Spengler's suppositions about the cyclical rise and decline of civilisations. Yet it is arguable that this naivete in both cases results from *misusing* Goethe's method in order to arrive at *historical* proposals concerning the development of human society. Just as Schiller takes Goethe's idea of the *Urpflantze* as an *historical* ancestor to all plants, to be a *misunderstanding* of its proper use as an *idea* or prototype providing an interesting connection which allows us to set the phenomena in some kind of order, the 'law' that Wittgenstein discovers in Frazer's thought can be wrongly interpreted as the provision of a wide ranging historical *hypothesis* when all it can at best supply is a form of 'perspicuous representation' of the kind that Wittgenstein discovers in Goethe's work (5).

Whilst these rather speculative remarks go some distance beyond the important features of Wittgenstein's method that Child detects in his reading of Frazer, he importantly sees this reading of *The Golden Bough* as a further application of the method that achieves clarity not by penetrating to the hidden *essence* of phenomena, but by obtaining a clear perspective on what is open to view (*Ibid.*, 239). As Child explains one aspect of this method : 'We explain the alien or unfamiliar practice by seeing it in the light of a natural instinct that we have ourselves' (*Ibid.*). Consequently, what we may similarly wish to see in the act of condemning it as alien, unfamiliar and even *wrongful* behaviour, we may sometimes if with some discomfort come to see as the product of a propensity that we can actually recognise in ourselves, one which we may have been only too keen to overlook. This can be a short step to regarding this kind of propensity as a more widespread feature of human nature.

The final, and slightly shorter Chapter on *Legacy and Influence* provides the reader with Child's assessment of Wittgenstein's status in contemporary philosophy, and in general he would argue that Wittgenstein is more highly regarded than would normally be claimed by those of his supporters who lament his relative lack of influence on current thinking. The *Tractatus* is easily taken account of with the recognition that whilst an understanding of meaning in terms of truth conditions remains a central element in current thought, many of the fundamental features of the metaphysics of the *Tractatus* together with its relation to the work of Frege and Russell, are now only of historical

relevance. Wittgenstein's 'anti-reductionism' in relation to concepts like *knowledge, truth* and *meaning* finds an echo in some contemporary thinking, just as his 'anti-scientism' reflects a permanent feature of the breach between those who do, and those who do not see philosophy as continuous with science.

Taking the findings of neuroscience as an example, Child goes on to mention those who would argue that if our ordinary understanding of ourselves in terms of our beliefs and intentions is not capable of being accounted for in the terms of neuroscience in any recognisable way, then it follows that we *really* do not have these beliefs and intentions even if it is naturally 'convenient' to use this terminology in everyday life. The reason for reaching this conclusion is that for certain philosophers *only* science reveals what is truly *real*. This is a *metaphysical* point of view in a very traditional sense. On the other hand, there are others who would argue that in exactly the same circumstances we would be duty bound to conclude merely that the aims and purposes of our ordinary psychological discourse to describe and explain the behaviour of *agents* who *act* in the world, shows that these differ radically from those of neuroscience. The purpose of neuroscience is instead to uncover those physical factors upon which in the most general terms the existence of human psychology may be claimed to be causally dependent. As always, a great deal depends on where the emphasis falls, and Child presents the dispute in a way which is bound to arouse interest in this 'live issue in contemporary philosophy', one which may even raise doubts in those new to the subject whether the debate as he describes it is expressed in entirely acceptable terms (*Ibid*., 251).

On Wittgenstein's 'Anti-intellectualism', Child sees contemporary philosophy in total sympathy with Wittgenstein's emphasis on the development of thought and language from primitive pre-linguistic behaviour. On his assessment, however, contemporary thinkers in this field are rather less sensitive than Wittgenstein was to worry about incorporating the results of empirical research into their philosophical discussions. On Wittgenstein's 'anti-mentalism', Child argues that whilst few philosophers today can take seriously the idea that the meanings of words could be explained in term of mental images, many would argue that the 'intentionality of thought' is more

basic than the 'intentionality of language', and can be used to explain it. Others, amongst whom he includes Davidson, McDowell and Brandom, he would claim to believe in the interdependence of having beliefs and intentions, and of having a language in which to express them. By contrast, he sees many participants in debates about consciousness as believers in the complete independence of the intrinsic character of a sensation from external circumstances and behaviour, whilst others tend to echo a Wittgensteinian viewpoint, one which is therefore still highly relevant to current debate.

On Wittgenstein's 'therapeutic' conception of philosophy, Child asks whether his procedures are really as a-theoretical as he makes out, and lists a number of current debates where it seems clear to him that Wittgenstein adopts a specific and often controversial standpoint: his evident rejection of what Child calls 'Platonism' on the private language question, his claim that intentional states are dependent on their subject's participation in social practices, and the links he draws between the meaning of a statement, how it is verified, and the point or purpose of using it.

William Child has succeeded in producing a consistently clear and exceptionally clearly written account of a wide range of subjects which aroused Wittgenstein's interest, and in the main he manages to sustain an equally clear intention to explain as succinctly as possible just where points of controversy arise, without nailing his colours to any particular interpretative masts. As has been shown, however, the line between description and interpretation in Wittgenstein is very finely drawn, so that there are occasions where his sympathies come very much to the fore. The obvious example of this lies in his apparent agreement with the Ayer-Blackburn-Soames-Ahmed response to the private linguist, which insinuates that Wittgenstein is apparently denying our right to imagine inventing 'private' languages for ourselves, when what he is *really* doing is question the relevance of a temptation we have to imagine cases of this kind when doing philosophy. On the other hand, in a field which some critics inevitably regard as already saturated, that of the 'elementary introduction' to Wittgenstein's early and later work, it is probably better to take the line that you just cannot get too much of a good thing, especially when a new book manages to raise important questions and stimulate thinking about the philosophy of Wittgenstein. On that score, William Child has produced a very good book indeed.

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ENDNOTES

(1) David G. Stern: *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2004), 85-86, referring to Stephen Mulhall: *Inheritance and Originality: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Keirkegaard* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2001), 44.

(2) See, for example: A.J.Ayer: 'Can There be a Private Language' in *Wittgenstein The Philosophical Investigations* edited by George Pitcher (New York: Doubleday Anchor 1966), 256. Also in Ayer's *The Concept of a Person* (London: Macmillan 1963).
See also A.J.Ayer: *Wittgenstein* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 74.
P.F. Strawson, Review of *Philosophical Investigations*, in Pitcher, ed. as above, 45 *et seq.*
Scott Soames: *Philosophical Analysis in The Twentieth Century*, Volume 2, *The Age of Meaning* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 37 *et seq.*
Saul Kripke: *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 60 and 80.
Arif Ahmed: *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum, 2010).

(3) J.L.Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, ed. G.J. Warnock: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), referring to Ayer's famous treatment in *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (London: Macmillan,1940). Ayer's interesting reply to Austin can be found in his 'Has Austin Refuted the Sense-Datum Theory ?' originally in *Synthese*, 17, 1967, but more readily available in *Metaphysics and Common Sense* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

(4) In, for example: Daniele Moyal-Sharrock: Introduction to The Third Wittgenstein Conference, Uni. of Herts 2008, printed in *Philosophia*, 2009, 557-562.

(5) See Sabine Plaud: 'Synoptic Views vs. Primal Phenomena: Wittgenstein on Goethe's Morphology' in *Wittgenstein: Issues and Debates*, Eds. Eric Lemaire, Jesus Padilla Galvez (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag), 2010.

As do most philosophers, Derek McDougall fondly remembers the publication of his very first paper. This was in MIND in 1972. He has, however, continued to worry whether Gilbert Ryle's comment that "the matter is stated well and almost interestingly" referred more to the quality of its treatment rather than to Ryle's aversion to the nature of its subject (religious belief). Other papers have appeared in organs including PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH and PHILOSOPHIA. His latest, on Wittgenstein, appears in the 2008 edition of JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH, with a further in PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS January 2010.