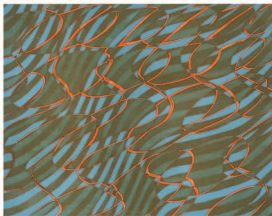# Wittgenstein:
## Comparisons
## & Context

### P. M. S. HACKER

# WITTGENSTEIN: COMPARISONS AND CONTEXT

# Wittgenstein: Comparisons and Context

P. M. S. HACKER

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*For*

*Hanoch and Vered Ben-Yami*

# CONTENTS

# PREFACE

Wittgenstein's contribution to twentieth-century analytic philosophy is second to none. His ideas changed the riverbed of twentieth-century thought. The *Tractatus* was the paramount influence upon the Vienna Circle and its associates and upon Cambridge analysis of the inter-war years. The *Investigations*' impact upon post-war linguistic philosophy was equally profound. Wittgenstein's place in the history of philosophy is assured. His investigations into philosophy of language, of logic and mathematics, metaphysics and epistemology, into philosophy of psychology, and into the nature of philosophy itself are original and revolutionary. In every philosophical subject he touched, he approached the problems from a new direction, revealed the hidden presuppositions of philosophical thought in ways that had never been done before, and questioned them.

Wittgenstein's ideas are not easy to understand. His writings are stylistically a contribution to German letters. What he says is perfectly clear. But, as he himself admitted, it is by no means clear why he says what he says. A great deal of patience and effort is needed to clarify his thoughts, and to follow his footsteps through the jungles of philosophy. But what he discloses to those who follow his pathway is a route to philosophical understanding. And the view, when one has finally broken through the jungle and reached the sunlit heights, is wondrous. I have spent many years of my life struggling with Wittgenstein's writings and thoughts. I cannot imagine a more rewarding intellectual journey. I have tried to do justice to his great ideas in the various books I have written about them.

In 2001, I published a volume of my essays on Wittgensteinian themes entitled *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies*. Since then, I have continued, in the interstices between my work on conceptual problems in cognitive neuroscience and on philosophical anthropology, to think and write about his ideas. In this volume, *Wittgenstein: Comparisons and Contrasts*, I have collected together some of my recent essays, and one older one.

The opening essay 'Philosophy: a Contribution not to Human Knowledge but to Human Understanding' is my final attempt to

draw together my reflections on the nature of the subject that has fascinated me since the days of my youth. The remarks on philosophy in the *Investigations* §§89–133 and in *The Big Typescript*, sections 86–93, explain why, conceived as a part of our quest for knowledge, philosophy, unlike the sciences, has so little to show for more than two thousand years of endeavour. It is not because philosophy is so much more difficult than natural science, but because it is so very different from it in its proper goals, methods, and achievements. Progress is the form of science, but not of philosophy (or art). Philosophy cannot achieve knowledge in the manner in which the sciences do, and advances in philosophy are not to be measured in the currency of scientific progress. It aims at *understanding*, and the form of understanding at which it aims is categorially distinct from the forms of understanding characteristic of the empirical sciences. Wittgenstein identified what the tasks of good philosophy are, how they are to be undertaken, and what one can hope for from the subject. He clarified why there is no room in philosophy for theories on the model of scientific theories, and no room for theses, opinions, or doctrines. He described the manifold roots of conceptual confusion in philosophy, in the sciences, and in the quotidian reflections of Everyman. And he explained how they can be extirpated. I tried, in *Insight and Illusion* (both in 1972 and in the extensively revised second edition in 1986) and again in *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning* (both in 1980 and in the extensively revised second edition in 2009), to explain Wittgenstein's later conception of the subject and to defend it against the manifold objections that had been advanced against it. To be sure, it involves a dramatic shift in perspective that runs against the grain of the whole of our philosophical tradition.

Once unravelled, Wittgenstein's ideas are powerful and illuminating. They delineate the scope of philosophy, clarify the rationale for its limits, and give philosophy a perennial role, not in policing usage, but as a tribunal of sense. Nevertheless, I had some hesitations about some of his remarks and some qualifications of substance. In Essay 1, I have tried to advance a conception of philosophy that is wholly inspired by Wittgenstein, but is not quite the same as his. For his account does not apply, without supplementation, to practical (i.e. moral, legal, and political) philosophy. Moreover, one should not, as Wittgenstein sometimes did, exaggerate its critical and therapeutic aspect at the expense of its constructive analytic aspect of providing a synoptic representation of segments of our conceptual scheme. The non-cognitive claim needs to be qualified in order to make room for knowledge, not of the 'metaphysical structure of the world', but of

hitherto unnoticed comparative features of grammar. Such knowledge does not take the form of discovery, but of realization. For, to be sure, 'nothing is hidden' (PI §559)—we have but to put together what we already know. But when we have arrayed familiar grammatical rules in a way appropriate to the question that confronts us, we learn something we had never realized before. Wittgenstein's suggestion that philosophical problems and conceptual confusions arise only when language 'is idling' (PI §132) seems to me to be incorrect and shown to be so in the sciences, in public affairs, and in the thoughts and reflections of Everyman.

The next two essays are concerned with comparing Kant and Wittgenstein. This is a theme that occupied me in my first foray into Wittgenstein studies, *Insight and Illusion*. There, much influenced by Peter Strawson's *The Bounds of Sense*, I drew parallels between these two great thinkers, who devoted more time to reflections on the nature of their subject than any other philosopher. When I came to write a second edition of *Insight and Illusion*, I modified my claims, for I realized that I had exaggerated the affinities between these two philosophers. I repudiated the idea, then quite common, that Wittgenstein was advancing a form of transcendental argument. As the years passed I became convinced that more needed to be said on this delicate issue. The second essay 'Kant and Wittgenstein: the Matter of Transcendental Arguments' confronts this question again.

I also became increasingly sceptical about Strawson's analytic reconstruction of Kant's transcendental deduction. It seemed to me not only that Strawson's conception of consciousness and self-consciousness was awry, but also that Kant, despite his profound criticisms of the rationalist doctrine of the soul, was never able to shake off the Cartesian, Lockean, and Leibnizian misconceptions of apperception and of self-consciousness. The investigations into the nature of consciousness that I had undertaken for my recent book *The Intellectual Powers: a Study of Human Nature* (2013) convinced me that the *philosophical* conceptions of consciousness, deployed by successive generations of philosophers ever since Descartes, were faulty, one and all. This encouraged me to examine afresh Kant's heroic efforts to handle the concept of consciousness in his Transcendental Deduction. Essay 3 'Kant's Transcendental Deduction: a Wittgensteinian Critique' presents the results of my investigations. My conclusion was that although Kant had indeed brought down the house that Descartes and Locke had built, he was himself trapped in the rubble. There are indeed affinities between Kant and Wittgenstein, but Wittgenstein's later philosophy is not Kantian, nor is it a

continuation of the Kantian project. Kant, Wittgenstein might have said, didn't put the question marks deep enough down. An 'I think' is not able to accompany all my representations (it cannot, for example, accompany my being in pain), but an 'I can say' must be able to accompany all my representations.

In the last two decades, my primary preoccupations have been in the domain of the philosophy of psychology. This was a subject Wittgenstein had transformed and reinvigorated in the 1940s, and his insights, although now neglected by many philosophers engaged in current philosophy of mind, by many cognitive scientists and members of the 'consciousness studies community', are second to none since Aristotle. When I contributed an essay for the Festschrift for my friend and mentor Anthony Kenny, I seized the opportunity to write 'The Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology'. This was, I hope, a fitting tribute to one who, in his own writings, had shed so much light on Wittgenstein's philosophy of psychology and showed us all how to make good use of it. Viewed from afar, Wittgenstein's major reorientation of philosophy of psychology can be described under five headings.

First, he shifted the method of enquiry in philosophy of psychology away from introspection (still dominant in James and Russell) towards scrutiny of the use of our psychological vocabulary, the circumstances of the use, and the point and purpose of the expressions. Moreover, he elaborated and exemplified a novel methodology for investigation of the conceptual structures of our psychological thought and language.

Secondly, he focused sharply on the manifold ways in which the first-person use of psychological verbs differs from their third-person use, and elucidated these differences in ways that contrast dramatically with the received psychological and epistemological ways of explaining them in terms of 'privileged access' and 'first-person authority'. He showed that the behavioural criteria for other-ascription of psychological predicates are logically, conceptually, bound up with their meaning. He showed that the groundless first-person use of many of these verbs presupposes, for its intelligibility, the recognition of the behavioural grounds for their other-ascription. He showed that the immunity to doubt enjoyed by some first-person psychological utterances is not due to the presence of indefeasible certainty, and that the absence of the possibility of ignorance is not due to the presence of infallible knowledge. And he showed that to *have* experiences is not to *own* anything, that having an experience is not a form of 'logically non-transferable ownership' (Strawson).

This removed the foundations from the Cartesian and empiricist constructions.

Thirdly, his discussion of the possibility of a private language constitutes the most important battery of philosophical arguments in the twentieth century, arguments whose impact ramifies widely throughout philosophy. In the domain of the philosophy of mind, they show that the conception of the 'inner' and the 'outer' that has dominated philosophical and psychological thought since Descartes is irremediably flawed. They show that the associated notion of epistemic privacy of subjective experience is incoherent. In philosophy of language, the same battery of arguments makes it clear that language can have no semantic foundations in subjective experience, for there is no such thing as assigning a meaning to a word by reference to a private analogue of public ostensive definition. This ramifies further, since it also implies that our vocabulary of perceptual qualities (of colours, sounds, smells, etc.) cannot be explained as names of subjective ideas (or 'mental representations'). So the doctrine of primary and secondary qualities must undergo radical revision. In epistemology, the arguments show that empirical knowledge cannot have foundations in subjective knowledge of how things sensibly appear to one to be. These consequences of the private language arguments ramify yet further outside philosophy: in theoretical linguistics, experimental psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. For their conceptions of linguistic meaning, of consciousness and self-consciousness, of knowledge of the mental attributes of others, of sensation and perception, of voluntariness and intention, are inextricably bound up with classical Cartesian and empiricist misconceptions.

Fourthly, he showed that the philosopher's 'self' is a fiction, that the mind is not an entity of any kind, and that the subject of psychological predicates is the human being as a whole, not some part of the human being, such as the mind, the brain, or the fictitious self. In this respect, Wittgenstein swept aside a long Platonic–Augustinian–Cartesian dualist tradition. His reflections are in the Aristotelian monist tradition of viewing human beings as an indissoluble organic unity, rather than as a provisional union of mind and body. This too has ramifying consequences for psychology, theoretical linguistics, and cognitive neuroscience.

Finally, he clarified the nature and limits of thought and the relation between thought and its linguistic expression. Contrary to what both he and Frege had once supposed, the sentence is not the perceptible clothing of a thought. What a creature *can* think depends upon its behavioural repertoire.

Given the depth and originality of Wittgenstein's revolution in philosophy of psychology, it seemed worth attempting to survey the long and twisting path he travelled to achieve his great insights, and to show how these achievements can be accommodated within the constraints set by his conception of philosophy and its methods. This is what I have tried to do in the fourth essay.

The fifth essay 'Wittgenstein's Anthropological and Ethnological Approach' pursues a complementary theme. In all his later philosophy, in stark contrast with the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein assigns primary *conceptual* significance to *practice*. He liked to quote Goethe's line in *Faust* 'Im Anfang war die Tat' ('In the beginning was the deed'). This is diametrically opposed both to the Gospel's assertion 'In the beginning was the Word', and to the dominant philosophical presupposition that 'In the beginning was the thought'. The primacy of practice is manifest in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, in his philosophy of mathematics, and in his philosophy of psychology. Wittgenstein's conception of language and speech is normative through and through. Speaking a language, no less than playing games, is a rule-governed activity. To be sure, the rules are not rules of a calculus (as he had thought when he wrote the *Tractatus*). Like the rules of field games, they leave a degree of free play, they do not attempt to lay down rules for circumstances that never arise, they do not try to regulate what does not need regulating, and they commonly leave room for indeterminacy. Moreover the rules must be conceived in a homely manner: they are what is given in response to requests for explanations of meaning in the practice of teaching and learning a language, or in answering questions about what an expression in use means, of correcting mistakes and infelicities, and of resolving misunderstandings. The rules of which Wittgenstein speaks are not akin to stipulative rules in an axiomatic calculus or in mathematics. Although they may sometimes be identical with rules for the uses of words in a dictionary (e.g. 'A vixen is a female fox'), they are not crafted for lexicographical purposes. And forms of explanation such as 'That ☞ ☐ is magenta' are not to be found in dictionaries, any more than 'That ☞ animal is a zebra' or '*This* is thumping'. Wittgenstein was, to be sure, not the first to conceive of speech as a rule-governed activity, but he was the first to raise the question of what welds a rule and the action that accords with it into an internal relation. And his answer was: the *practice* of going by the rule, the recognition of a uniformity, and the employment of the uniformity as a standard of correctness. Following a rule is a human practice, exhibited in human behaviour. A language is not the totality of possible

well-formed sentences that can be generated from a fund of 'axioms' (i.e. definitions), by means of formation and transformation rules, any more than a game is the set of all possible moves. Nor is a language the totality of sentences actually used. To learn a language is *to learn to do things*, to learn to participate in the 'language-games' of the society into which one is born. It is in this sense that Wittgenstein's approach, as he himself observed, is anthropological or ethnographical. It is also historicist through and through, although, paradoxically, it is historicism without history. It is these features of his philosophy that I explore in the fifth essay.

The sixth essay 'Two Conceptions of Language' is a further development of these ideas. In it I attempt to give an overview of the philosophical Gigantomachia in the philosophy of language of our age. The twentieth century in philosophy was, above all, the century of logic and language. It is hardly surprising that the great innovations in logic initiated by such giants as Frege, Russell, and the young Wittgenstein, and continued by such influential figures as Carnap and Tarski, transformed philosophical reflections on language. It was during the second half of the century that the conception of human languages as meaning-calculi came to dominate philosophy and theoretical linguistics alike (as is manifest, e.g. in the works of Noam Chomsky, Donald Davidson, and Michael Dummett). However, it did not lack philosophical critics, who viewed the calculus conception of language, inspired as it was by the methods of mathematical logic, as misguided. It was precisely the anthropological conception of language as a human practice that was the focus of Wittgenstein's reflections in the 1930s, in which he recognized the 'grave mistakes' in what he had set out in the *Tractatus* (Preface, PI). He ploughed up the ground yet again, and advanced a quite different conception of language, speech, and communication. Subsequently, others, such as J. L. Austin, Paul Grice, Peter Strawson, Alan White, and Bede Rundle similarly moved away from calculus conceptions, sometimes for different reasons. What I tried to do in Essay 6 was to give a synoptic comparative view of these two conceptions, to make clear the nature of the differences between them, and to show the exorbitant price that has to be paid for the calculus conception of language.

The seventh essay was motivated by the need to rectify misunderstandings of Wittgenstein that had become rife in the marketplace. It had become common to suggest that the notion of grammar that Wittgenstein introduced in the early 1930s changed by the time he wrote the *Investigations* later in the1930s and in 1944/5. Not only was it thought to have changed, but it also allegedly played a much

more limited role in his thought. What he had argued in *The Big Typescript* and *The Blue and Brown Books* to be grammatical propositions were held to be dogmatic substantive philosophical doctrines, theses, and opinions. By the time he wrote the *Investigations*, it was suggested, he had come to eschew all these doctrines, theses, and opinions, and to avoid all forms of dogmatism. So there is a massive difference between the 'middle Wittgenstein' and the 'third Wittgenstein'. This idea illustrates the perils of multiplying Wittgensteins. There is only one Wittgenstein, who wrote only two books and produced two distinct philosophies. The new interpretation of his work involves ramifying misunderstandings of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, ignorance of his writings (especially of the *Nachlass*), and egregious misrepresentation of what he meant by 'thesis', 'doctrine', and 'opinion', as well as misconstrual of what he was warning against in his renunciation of dogmatism. In 'Wittgenstein on Grammar, Theses, and Dogmatism' my purpose was to show that there is complete continuity between Wittgenstein's conception of grammar in *The Big Typescript* and in the *Investigations*, that there is no change in what he deemed to be a grammatical proposition, and to make clear what he meant by 'thesis', 'opinion', and 'dogmatism'.

The eighth essay 'Intentionality and the Harmony between Language and Reality' addresses some misunderstandings of Wittgenstein's dissolution of one of the salient problems of intentionality, and answers an objection. The misunderstandings turn on the resolution of the problem in the *Tractatus*. If what one thinks when one thinks truly is what is the case, then what does one think when one thinks falsely, i.e. when what one thinks is *not* what is the case? But what one thinks when one thinks truly is no different from what one thinks when one thinks falsely. How can this be? In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein resolved the problem by means of the picture theory of the proposition with the aid of the metaphysics of objects, states of affairs, and facts. This, to be sure, needs clarification, lest one suppose that Wittgenstein claimed that when one thinks truly what one thinks is *identical* with what is the case, as opposed to being *isomorphic* with what is the case. To be sure, the representing fact is distinct from the represented fact, even though it has something in common with it, namely, logical form. His resolution of the problem in the *Investigations* was quite different. There is indeed *an internal relation* between what one thinks and what is and what is not the case. But the relation is forged in grammar, not by means of metalogical relations between thought, language, and reality. One objection to this account is that it does not explain

how the expectation that *e* can be satisfied by *d*, or how the order to *V* can be fulfilled by *W* (as the order to leave the room may be fulfilled by jumping out of the window). The essay proposes an answer to this objection.

So much for the eight essays that bear directly on Wittgenstein and his philosophy.

Many philosophical commentators on the philosophical scene have observed that Wittgenstein's influence declined in the 1980s and 1990s. In the last decade interest in Wittgenstein has not significantly revived. Diseases of the intellect that many of us thought had been permanently extirpated underwent mutation and broke out afresh in somewhat different forms (sense-data, for example, became qualia). Despite the encouraging fact that Wittgenstein societies have sprung up in various countries, his ideas are on the whole neglected by leading figures in contemporary philosophy. Few attempt to apply his methods to new domains in philosophy or in conceptual criticism of the natural sciences, the sciences of the mind and brain, and the social sciences for which criticisms he gave both a rationale and a warrant. There are, no doubt, many reasons for this. I shall select a few.

First of all, Wittgenstein scholarship, with some notable exceptions, allowed itself to become distracted from the serious task of trying to interpret his philosophy of language, his philosophy of logic and mathematics, and his philosophy of psychology. The scholarly task of clarifying the numerous difficult passages in Wittgenstein's writings was, for the most part, cast aside. This occurred primarily because of the publications of the New Wittgensteinians, led by Cora Diamond and James Conant, on the paradox of the *Tractatus*—writings that disregard everything that Wittgenstein ever wrote or said about his first book.[1] The penultimate remark of the book, and the question of what sort of nonsense the book consists in, has occupied numerous philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic for the last three decades. The questions raised are perfectly legitimate. They can readily be answered. What is illegitimate is that they should dominate debate on Wittgenstein and his philosophy in so futile a manner for three decades. For even assuming counterfactually that the New Wittgensteinians

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[1] As I showed in 'Was he Trying to Whistle it?', repr. in *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2001), pp. 98–140. Everything that Wittgenstein ever wrote about the *Tractatus* conflicts with the interpretations of the New Wittgensteinians, but they have assiduously avoided confronting this obvious fact—a fact that proves beyond reasonable doubt the incorrectness of their interpretations.

illuminate *Tractatus* 6.54 and thereby the point and purpose of the book, they have shed no light whatsoever on any of the salient themes of the *Tractatus* (e.g. the picture theory of meaning, the account of intentionality, the explanation of generality, the explanation of logical necessity, the idea of what can be shown by language but cannot be said in language, the account of arithmetic and natural science). Nor have they laboured to clarify Wittgenstein's profound criticisms of Frege and Russell in the book. The excuse that all of these remarks are nonsense anyway is, to say the least, feeble—not least because the reasons they are said to be nonsense are couched in the very same formal concepts that allegedly render the sentences of the *Tractatus* nonsense. Nor have the New Wittgensteinians shed any light on other remarks in Wittgenstein's voluminous writings, least of all on his numerous later remarks on the *Tractatus*. This debate, on what Geach called 'Ludwig's self-mate', has not fertilized other philosophical investigations, as did previous debates on family-resemblance, language-games, rule-following, criteria, and private languages. Philosophers with little direct interest in Wittgensteinian exegesis can happily disregard a three-decade debate that turns on what sort of nonsense Wittgenstein was talking. All this has contributed to a decline of interest in Wittgenstein, to a pointless diversion of Wittgenstein scholarship, and has impeded the transmission of his philosophy to the next generation.

Secondly, Wittgenstein's ideas, as he well knew, are at odds with the spirit of the times. We live in a culture dominated by science and technology. We are prone to think that all serious questions can be answered by the natural sciences. The very idea that there are conceptual questions that are not amenable to scientific methods has become difficult to grasp. The further suggestion that they are to be handled by careful examination of the use and misuse of words seems demeaning: 'What is the mind?', 'How is thought related to language?', 'Do we have a free will?' are serious questions, not linguistic trivialities. Philosophy has struggled with them futilely for more than two thousand years—it is time to let science answer them! In such a cultural context, Wittgenstein's ideas are even more difficult to understand than they were fifty years ago.

Thirdly, the last few decades have seen the rise of an ambitious new cooperative endeavour of artificial intelligence theorists, computer engineers, cognitive (computational) psychologists, neuroscientists, and philosophers. This new field of study goes under the name of 'cognitive science'. It aims to resolve the mystery of consciousness (which was held to be the last great barrier to a

scientific understanding of the universe), to make clear the nature of the mind and its relation to the brain, to explain the nature of language and linguistic competence, to resolve the problem of the freedom of the will, and so on. Whether this was new science or merely bad philosophy was debatable, and was debated. What was not debatable was that this heady mix that purported to be able to solve philosophical problems by empirical speculations was inimical to Wittgenstein's philosophy in general and his philosophy of psychology in particular. Speculative cognitive science, and especially cognitive neuroscience, captured the imagination of the educated elites, undermined their critical faculties, and befuddled their intellectuals.

Fourthly, Wittgenstein's ideas were equally at odds with the currently dominant forms of philosophy: with the contemporary heirs of philosophy of mind, with post-Quinean American naturalism, and with the revival of metaphysics.

Cognitive science invaded and largely displaced the philosophy of mind that had flourished in the decades after Wittgenstein's death. The remarkable work produced by Ryle, Hampshire, Malcolm, von Wright, Anscombe, White, Kenny, Rundle, and others, was progressively sidelined. What took its place was, first, *theory*: central state materialism, anomalous monism, functionalism; then the philosophical offshoots of *cognitive science*; and finally *consciousness studies*. Each satisfied the philosophical marketplace for a decade or two, before yielding its place to another novelty. The net achievement in understanding was minimal.

The most influential philosopher in the USA in the second half of the twentieth century was Quine. He was, as he himself wrote, an 'apostate' from the doctrines of the Vienna Circle. For he rejected their distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, and the mistaken claim that all necessary truth is true by convention. His influence in the USA was great, and it encouraged the idea of the unity of philosophy and science in the quest for knowledge, and the complementary idea that philosophy, like science, is concerned with constructing theories concerning what exists, and with postulating the existence of things in order to explain features of our thought and language. Quine's conception of language was behaviourist, rather than normative, and he advocated the replacement of traditional epistemology with a new science of naturalized epistemology that would be a neuroscientific form of learning theory. Quine's ideas chimed with American pragmatism, and fitted well a culture mesmerized by the power of science. Although Wittgenstein did not make use

of the analytic/synthetic distinction,[2] his philosophy was, despite numerous surface similarities, diametrically opposed to Quine's.[3] He insisted on the autonomy of philosophy and its radical discontinuity from science, on the categorial differentiation of necessary propositions from empirical ones, and on the normativity of language. He advanced analytic hermeneutics and defended methodological pluralism with respect to explanation. Quine's dominance in the USA ensured that Wittgenstein's influence on American philosophy would fade away once his American pupils and followers had disappeared from the scene.

In Britain, Quine's influence was minimal. But Davidson's, a decade later, was very great indeed, and it gave a powerful impetus to theory building in philosophy. This was supported by Dummett's parallel homespun endeavours, which did much to destroy the Oxford post-war tradition in linguistic philosophy that had been so receptive to Wittgensteinian ideas. The preoccupation with theories of meaning for natural languages ran its course. But it prepared the way for the revival of metaphysics, the impetus for which was provided by Lewis and Kripke. To be sure, there was and is much unclarity and disagreement about what exactly metaphysics is ('the study of the fundamental structure of reality as a whole', 'the study of the ultimate categories of being', 'the study of *de re* necessities', 'the most general attempt to make sense of things'). The idea that philosophy, despite the 'wilderness years' of the logical positivists, linguistic philosophers, and Wittgensteinian philosophers, had a subject matter of its own came as a great relief. It meant that philosophy was engaged, like other sciences, in the pursuit of knowledge of the world, and that it could achieve solid knowledge in a subject matter of which it could not be robbed (as it had been robbed in the past by physics and psychology). In this milieu, it is hardly surprising that Wittgenstein's animadversions to metaphysics were brushed aside. To most of those who succumbed to the ancient siren-song of metaphysics, the philosophy of Wittgenstein was simply irrelevant.

So, the times are out of joint. But the rejection of Wittgenstein's philosophy and methodology has not been the result of the refutation of his ideas and the proven inadequacy of his methods. Indeed, it has not even rested on comprehension of his ideas. This makes it all the

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[2] Save to note that there is a similarity between his conception of mathematics and Kant's view that the propositions of mathematics are synthetic a priori (PG 404; cf. RFM 246).

[3] I have examined the relationship between their philosophies in detail in *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996), chap. 7.

more important for those who do understand Wittgenstein's philosophy to keep Wittgensteinian scholarship alive (for there is much, especially in his philosophy of mathematics, that is not yet understood), to transmit his great ideas to the next generation, and to further Wittgensteinian philosophy by putting his methods to good use both in philosophy and in the analytical criticism of conceptually problematic science (e.g. in psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary sociobiology, economics, fundamental physics, and cosmology).

The final two essays are concerned with such background historical and comparative matters. 'Passing by the Naturalistic Turn: on Quine's cul-de-sac' was stimulated by reading a remark that Quinean-inspired naturalism is the most laudable and distinctive development in philosophy over the last thirty years. This striking claim seemed to me worth investigating. Quine advanced three different forms of naturalism: ontological, philosophical, and epistemological. I briefly commented on the first two, and then focused upon his conception of naturalized epistemology. This bizarre programme is neither coherent nor a substitute for epistemology. I followed this up with an examination of Quine's forays into epistemology. His observations are wanting in both depth and acumen.

The last essay, 'Analytic Philosophy: What, Whence, and Whither?' investigates seven different ways in which analytic philosophy has been characterized, and finds them all inadequate. The suggestion that 'analytic philosophy' is simply a family-resemblance concept is also rejected. Rather, I suggested that, like 'romanticism', it is essentially a *historical* category with a distinctive family-resemblance character. This is demonstrated by sketching the development of analytic philosophy from early Moore and Russell, through the logical positivism of Russell and the early Wittgenstein, to Cambridge analysis in the inter-war years and the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle and its affiliates, and thence to the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein, and to Oxford analytic philosophy and its offshoots after the Second World War. After the 1970s analytic philosophy lost its sense of direction. The revolutionary fervour that had characterized its previous phases was gone. The methodological self-consciousness diminished. The critical function of its heyday disappeared.

Contemporary philosophy that purports to be in the analytic tradition is increasingly heterogeneous. Like a mighty river approaching its delta, it has split into numerous rivulets meandering aimlessly through the marshlands. It has, for various extraneous reasons, become over-specialized. It is imbued with the spirit of scholasticism,

conflating pedantry with precision, and confusing technicality with clarity. In many ways, it has actually broken with the analytic tradition. For the most part, linguistic and connective analysis have been repudiated—consulting 'intuitions' has become an easy alternative to the careful selection and weighing of linguistic facts. Metaphysics has been embraced with enthusiasm, although there is little clarity or consensus on what current metaphysics is supposed to be. The insistence on the autonomy of philosophy, on its differentiation from the sciences in both goals and methods, has been widely abandoned. Whether all this represents the dying embers of a once great movement of thought, or whether this phase is merely a pause before the further development of something that can be deemed a continuation of the analytic tradition, only time can tell.

# ORIGINAL PLACES OF PUBLICATION

I have imposed uniformity of reference style upon the different papers in this collection. Many of the papers have been amended in order to correct errors, to add qualifications or further clarifications. Chapter 4 was originally published in the Festschrift in honour of Anthony Kenny *Mind, Method, and Morality*. In order to make it suitable for the present collection the opening paragraph which paid tribute to the honorand has been omitted. Chapter 8 was written as a reply to an article by Professor Timothy Craig. To make it suitable for this collection its responsive character has been removed.

The original publication locations are as follows:

Chapter 1, 'Philosophy: a Contribution not to Human Knowledge but to Human Understanding', in Anthony O'Hear (ed.), *The Nature of Philosophy,* in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 65 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009), 129–53.

Chapter 2, 'Kant and Wittgenstein: the Matter of Transcendental Arguments', in French as 'Kant et Wittgenstein, le problème des arguments transcendentaux', in Arley R. Moreno and Antonia Soulez (eds.), *Grammatical ou Transcendental? Cahiers de Philosophie de Langage*, vol. 8 (L'Harmattan, Paris, 2012), pp. 17–44; in English in Nuño Venturinha (ed.), *The Textual Genesis of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* (Routledge, London, 2013).

Chapter 3, 'Kant's Transcendental Deduction: a Wittgensteinian Critique', in A. Marques and N. Venturinha (eds.), *Knowledge, Language and Mind* (De Gruyter, Berlin, 2012), pp. 11–35.

Chapter 4, 'The Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology', in P. M. S. Hacker and J. Cottingham (eds.), *Mind, Method and Morality: Essays in Honour of Anthony Kenny* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2010), 275–305.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

## 1. WITTGENSTEIN'S PUBLISHED WORKS

The following abbreviations are used to refer to Wittgenstein's published works. The list includes derivative primary sources and lecture notes taken by others.

AWL    *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932–35, from the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald*, ed. Alice Ambrose (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979).

BB    *The Blue and Brown Books* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1958).

BT    *The Big Typescript, TS 213*, edited and translated by C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Blackwell, Oxford, 2005).

CL    *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Cambridge Letters—correspondence with Russell, Keynes, Moore, Ramsey and Sraffa*, ed. B. F. McGuinness and G. H. von Wright (Blackwell, Oxford, 1995).

CV    *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. von Wright in collaboration with H. Nyman, tr. P. Winch (Blackwell, Oxford, 1980).

LFM    *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939*, ed. C. Diamond (Harvester, Hassocks, Sussex, 1976).

LRKM    *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore*, ed. G. H. von Wright (Blackwell, Oxford, 1974).

LW I    *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology,* Volume I, ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, tr. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Blackwell, Oxford, 1982).

LWL    *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1930–32, from the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee*, ed. Desmond Lee (Blackwell, Oxford, 1980).

M    'Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930–33', in G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1959).

NB    *Notebooks 1914–16*, ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1961).

PG	*Philosophical Grammar*, ed. R. Rhees, tr. A. J. P. Kenny (Blackwell, Oxford, 1974).

PI	*Philosophical Investigations*, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009).

PLP	*The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy*, by F. Waismann, ed. R. Harré (Macmillan, London, and St Martin's Press, New York, 1965).

PPF	*Philosophy of Psychology: a Fragment,* published in PI, 4th edition (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009).

PTLP	*Proto-Tractatus: An Early Version of Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, ed. B. F. McGuinness, T. Nyberg, and G. H. von Wright, tr. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1971).

RFM	*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe, rev. edn. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1978).

RPP I	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology,* Volume I, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1980).

RPP II	*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Volume II, ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman, tr. C. G. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (Blackwell, Oxford, 1980).

TLP	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961).

WWK	*Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis*, shorthand notes recorded by F. Waismann, ed. B. F. McGuinness (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967). The English translation, *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979), matches the pagination of the original edition.

Z	*Zettel*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967).


## 2. NACHLASS


All references to unpublished material in the Wittgenstein *Nachlass* are by MS or TS number followed by page number.

## 3. WORKS BY QUINE

AM     'On Austin's Method', repr. in *Theories and Things*.

EC     'Empirical Content', repr. in *Theories and Things*.

EN     'Epistemology Naturalized', in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1969).

FME     'Five Milestones of Empiricism', repr. in *Theories and Things*.

FSS     *From Stimulus to Science* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

MVD     'Mind and Verbal Dispositions', in S. Guttenplan, ed., *Mind and Language* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975).

NLWM     'Naturalism; or, Living Within One's Means', *Dialectica* 49 (1995).

NNK     'The Nature of Natural Knowledge', in S. Guttenplan, ed., *Mind and Language* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975).

PL     *Philosophy of Logic* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970).

Q     *Quiddities: An Intermittently Philosophical Dictionary* (Penguin Books, London, 1990).

RR     *Roots of Reference* (Open Court, La Salle, Illinois, 1974).

SLS     'Mr Strawson on Logical Theory', repr. in Quine's *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays* (Random House, New York, 1966).

TT     *Theories and Things* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

TTPT     'Things and their Place in Theories', repr. in *Theories and Things*.

WO     *Word and Object* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1960).

# Part I

## On Method

# 1

## Philosophy: Contribution not to Human Knowledge but to Human Understanding

### 1. THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY AS A SCIENCE

Throughout its history philosophy has been thought to be a member of a community of intellectual disciplines united by their common pursuit of knowledge. It has sometimes been thought to be the queen of the sciences, at other times merely their under-labourer. But irrespective of its social status, it was held to be a participant in the quest for knowledge—a cognitive discipline.

Cognitive disciplines may be a priori or empirical. The distinction between what is a priori and what is empirical is epistemological. It turns, as Frege noted, on the ultimate justification for holding something to be true.[1] If the truths which a cognitive discipline attains are warranted neither by observation nor by experiment (nor by inference therefrom), then they are a priori. Otherwise they are empirical. The natural and moral sciences (the *Geisteswissenschaften*) strive for and attain empirical knowledge.[2] The mathematical sciences are a priori.

Cognitive disciplines have a distinctive subject matter, concerning which they aim to add to human knowledge. Physics deals with matter, motion, and energy, chemistry with the constitution of stuffs out of elements, biology with the nature of living beings, history with 'the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind' (Gibbon), and so forth.

The empirical sciences aim not only to discover truths but also to *explain* the phenomena they study. The natural sciences produce

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[1]  G. Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1959), §3.
[2]  Of course, that does not mean that they contain no a priori propositions. But these belong to the method of representation and do not describe what is represented.

theories (typically with predictive powers) to explain the facts and laws they discover. The moral sciences too aim to explain the phenomena they study—although not to the same extent by way of theory and general laws; and their predictive powers, if any, are more limited. Mathematics and logic strive to produce theorems by means of proofs, and are not subject to confirmation or falsification by experience.

If philosophy is a cognitive discipline, then the truths it attains need to be characterized. Are they a priori or empirical? To answer this question, we should cast around for established philosophical truths—examine the fund of philosophical knowledge achieved over two and a half thousand years. But two disturbing features immediately spring to the eye:

First, if one asks a physicist or biologist, a historian or a mathematician what knowledge has been achieved in his subject, he can take one to a large library, and point out myriad books which detail the cognitive achievements of his subject. But if one asks a philosopher for even a *single* book that will summarize the elements of philosophical knowledge—as one might ask a chemist for a handbook of chemistry—he will have nothing to present. There *is* no general, agreed body of philosophical knowledge—although there are libraries full of philosophical writings from antiquity to the present day, which are in constant use.

Secondly, each cognitive discipline has its own object of study. But if we examine the history of modern philosophy, it appears to be *a subject in search of a subject matter*. In the modern era, great philosophers recurrently attempted to isolate a distinctive subject matter for philosophy, and a proper method for achieving the knowledge, which, they held, had evaded their predecessors. Descartes thought that the task of 'first philosophy' was to disclose the foundations of all human knowledge, and to erect a certain and secure structure of knowledge on indubitable truths. The key to achieving this was his new *method*. Only thus could philosophy participate in the quest for knowledge. Hume supposed that the subject matter of philosophy was the human mind, and the task of philosophy to explain how it functions. Philosophy must do for psychology what Newton had done for physics, and must introduce *the experimental method of reasoning* into the study of the mind. Kant held that philosophy must determine the a priori categories of thought and the a priori principles of conceptualized experience. It must, above all, explain how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible. Only

then will metaphysics be set upon the true path of a science. Russell thought that the subject matter of philosophy consists of the most general truths about the universe, and its task to discover them and catalogue their logical forms. Only by adopting *the scientific method in philosophy* can genuine progress be achieved. And so on.

The striking feature of these programmatic objectives is that none survived for long. Each collapsed, for one or another of four reasons:

(i) A vital assumption proved unsustainable. So, for example, it was a Cartesian error to suppose that genuine knowledge must be indubitable; or resistant to hyperbolic doubt. It was erroneous to suppose, as Russell did, that propositions of logic are all generalizations that describe the most general features of the universe. On the contrary, propositions of logic need not be general (e.g. 'Either it is raining or it is not raining' is, *contra* Russell, a proposition of logic), and they describe nothing at all (e.g. the latter tautology tells one nothing about the weather).

(ii) The subject matter, correctly understood, was taken over by an empirical science. So, for example, the experimental study of the exercise of human cognitive faculties that Hume allocated to philosophy was taken over by experimental psychology.

(iii) The goal proved to be chimerical: the conception of knowledge as resting on indubitable foundations is wrong. Hence the goal of displaying the structure of human knowledge as a hierarchy based on subjective experience is illusory. The Kantian goal of explaining how synthetic a priori truths are possible foundered over the misconception of such truths as propositions to which nature *must* conform, rather than as expressions of norms of representation.

(iv) The method proved broken-backed: Cartesian method is not a reliable way of discovering truths, Kant's Copernican revolution is misconceived, and Russell's scientific method in philosophy is a chimera.

This should give us pause. How can it be that after two and a half thousand years of endeavour philosophy has still not reached the status of a science, has no agreed subject matter, and has no fund of philosophical knowledge? How is the poverty of philosophy, construed as a cognitive discipline, to be explained?

## 2. PHILOSOPHY AS THE MIDWIFE OF THE SCIENCES

Many questions that were opened by philosophers were subsequently handed over to scientists, for example questions concerning the constitution of things, the infinity or finitude of the universe, the nature of the stars, the origin of life, the innateness of ideas. Physics, although it continued to be known as natural philosophy down to the nineteenth century, became independent of philosophy in the seventeenth. Psychology broke free of philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century, and mathematical logic is doing so today. This midwifery has been invoked (by Russell and Austin, for example) to explain the poverty of the results of philosophy—namely, that once questions are sufficiently sharply formulated to be answerable, they are handed over to an independent science, which then contributes to the extension of human knowledge.[3]

This is misleading, for four reasons:

First, although independence was achieved by such sciences, new areas of philosophical investigation were thereby generated, e.g. philosophy of physics or philosophy of the psychological sciences. But it would be misguided to suppose that questions in the philosophies of the special sciences remain philosophical only because they are insufficiently clearly understood to be handled by a new meta-science.

Secondly, although these sciences achieved independence, it would be mistaken to suppose that they achieved freedom from conceptual confusion. The conceptual confusions in the sciences (not always recognized as such by scientists) are grist for *philosophical* mills—not philosophical problems for experimental investigation. (Of course, scientists may grind the grist too—we are not concerned with trade union disputes, but with distinguishing different forms of intellectual enquiry.)

Thirdly, the birth of an independent science does *not* free philosophy from a host of questions which have always been on the philosophical agenda associated with the subject matter of that special science. Despite the fact that investigations of matter in motion had achieved a degree of clarity that made it possible for them to be handled by an independent science of physics, such questions as: What

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[3] B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967), 90; for a similar view, see J. L. Austin, 'Ifs and Cans', *Philosophical Papers* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961), 180.

distinguishes substances from properties? How are substances related to events and which is ontologically prior? Such  problems were *not* allocated to physics. Similarly, even when questions about what material things are made of, what the ultimate chemical elements are, and what kinds of chemical combinations they enter into, were sufficiently clearly understood to be handed over to chemistry, other questions, such as how things (substances) are related to the stuff of which they consist, remained exactly where they had always been—on the agenda of philosophy. And the autonomy of psychology has not removed from the domain of philosophy the fundamental questions in philosophical psychology, such as 'What is the mind?' or 'How is the mind related to the body?'

Fourthly, the suggested explanation is implausible when we turn to practical philosophy (in Kant's sense of the term)—to ethics, political and legal philosophy. Moral philosophy has not and will not give birth to a science of morality, and so-called ethicists are not moral scientists. The emergence of political science in the nineteenth century was not a result of philosophical midwifery, and legal philosophy is not going to be displaced by a science of law. Moral, legal, and political philosophy do not give birth to new sciences, but contribute to the emergence of new moral, legal, and political distinctions, principles and constitutional arrangements.

So, the poverty of philosophy qua cognitive discipline cannot be explained as a consequence of the fact that once knowledge is achievable the subject becomes a science.

### 3. 'PHILOSOPHY HAS ONLY JUST COME OF AGE'

There is another move here that might, in honour of its recent advocates, be called the Wykeham Chair gambit. Thirty years ago, Professor Michael Dummett, Wykeham Professor of Logic at the University of Oxford, declared that 'philosophy has only just very recently struggled out of its early stage into maturity: the turning point was the work of Frege, but the widespread realization of the significance of that work has had to wait for half a century after his death…'[4]

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[4]  M. A. E. Dummett, 'Can analytic philosophy be systematic and ought it to be?', repr. in *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Duckworth, London, 1978), 457. Frege died in 1925. Half a century later is 1975, two years after the publication of Dummett's *Frege's Philosophy of Language* (Duckworth, London, 1973).

Recently, Professor Timothy Williamson, Dummett's successor but one in the Wykeham Chair of Logic at the University of Oxford, declared that we have only now (in 2005) arrived at 'the end of the beginning' of philosophy.[5] Well, one can blow the Last Trumpet once, but not once a generation.

Less parochially—the suggestion that philosophy has not achieved the results of a science because the subject is so difficult that only NOW has it been discovered how it may do so, has been advanced by numerous great philosophers who were not holders of the Wykeham Chair of Logic at the University of Oxford. They all enjoyed the brief illusion that they had, at long last, found the real key to unlock the riches promised by philosophy, to achieve real philosophical knowledge and to set philosophy at last upon the true path of a science. Descartes thought that his new method of analysis and systematic doubt would enable anyone to establish *the indubitable foundations of knowledge*, and to derive *all possible knowledge* in absolutely sure and certain steps. Locke thought that with his new Way of Ideas, he would be able to determine for the first time the *scope and limits of human knowledge*. Hume proposed 'a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security'. Kant, comparing the method of his critical philosophy to the Copernican revolution, supposed that by following the principle that 'objects must conform to our [a priori] knowledge', rather than our a priori knowledge conforming to objects, he would at last be able explain how synthetic a priori knowledge is possible, and to place metaphysics 'upon the true path of a science'. Russell too recognized the scandal that 'Philosophy, from the earliest times, has made greater claims, and achieved fewer results, than any other branch of learning.' He boldly declared 'that the time has now arrived when this unsatisfactory state of affairs can be brought to an end'.

The promise that after two thousand years of irresponsible adolescence, philosophy will at last produce a flood of truths and well-founded theories—tomorrow—has been made, and proven empty, far too often to carry conviction. Moreover, such declarations of the incompetence of one's predecessors do scant justice to the endeavours of some of the greatest geniuses of mankind. And it renders it well-nigh unintelligible that we still read, and *should* still read, the

works of Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas and Scotus, Descartes and Kant. (Scientists do not need to read the works of Galen or Paracelsus, Tycho Brahe or Kepler.) Finally, it is implausible to suppose that twenty-five centuries of endeavour by some of the greatest minds of our culture should have failed to come up with some solid philosophical knowledge *because the problems of philosophy are so much more difficult than problems in the sciences*. Is the philosophical problem of what a substance is, and how substances are related to the stuffs of which they are made *so much more difficult* than the question of what are the elements of which all things are made? Is the philosophical problem of what knowledge is so much more difficult than the question of the descent of man? Is the relation of mind to body so much more complex than the Krebs cycle? Is *that* why we can discern so little achievement in this 'sector in the quest for knowledge' (as Dummett once put it)? Surely the difficulty of philosophical questions is not to be compared to that of scientific questions *in degree*, but *in kind*.

When bombarded throughout the ages with incompatible claims about the subject and unfulfilled promises of how this is going to be set right, the correct move is to challenge the fundamental assumption that is taken for granted by all participants in the debate, namely, the assumption that philosophy is a cognitive discipline.[6]

## 4. PHILOSOPHY AS A QUEST FOR UNDERSTANDING RATHER THAN KNOWLEDGE

Philosophy is not a contribution to human *knowledge*, but to human *understanding*. It is neither an empirical science nor an a priori one, since it is no science. The difficulty of philosophy does not consist in the difficulty of discovering new, let alone arcane, truths about the world; nor yet in producing proofs concerning its existence,[7] the existence of recherché 'entities' like universals,[8] or of common or

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[6] This radical move was made by the later Wittgenstein and, following him, by many of his distinguished pupils; in a somewhat different form, by the Vienna Circle; and subsequently by many members of the Oxford group of philosophers between 1945 and 1970.

[7] As G. E. Moore attempted to do in his famous proof of the existence of the external world.

[8] Williamson recently declared (*The Philosophy of Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2007), 19) that the task of metaphysics is to discover 'what fundamental kinds of things there are', for example 'substances and essences, universals and particulars'.

garden 'entities' like events.[9] *It is a quest for understanding, not for knowledge.*

As a slogan, this is correct. Like all slogans, it needs clarification and qualification. First, some clarification:

If one claims that philosophy is a contribution to human understanding, one must explain what the object of understanding is, and how achieving understanding in philosophy differs from adding to one's fund of knowledge.

It has been suggested that philosophy seeks not knowledge of new facts but an understanding of old facts; or that its role is that of organizing the knowledge we already possess. These suggestions are partly right and partly wrong.

Scientists seek to understand why the phenomena they investigate are as they are and behave as they behave. They do so by way of empirical explanation, which may take various forms, e.g. hypothetico-deductive, inference to the best explanation, or explanation by reference to intervening mechanisms. All these are subject to empirical confirmation or refutation. To that extent it is misleading to suggest that philosophy seeks not for knowledge of new facts but for an understanding of familiar facts—as if science did not satisfy that need. Philosophy cannot explain phenomena *in that sense* at all. So whatever its quest for understanding is, it is not akin to the understanding achieved by the empirical sciences.

Nevertheless, philosophy *can* contribute in a unique and distinctive way to understanding in the natural sciences and mathematics. It can clarify their conceptual features, and restrain their tendency to transgress the bounds of sense. It is a Tribunal of Reason, before which scientists and mathematicians may be arraigned for their transgressions. Indeed, the sciences (and to a lesser degree mathematics), in our times, are the primary source of misguided metaphysics— which it is the task of philosophy to curb, not to encourage. Disabusing a Hilbert of the character of Cantor's paradise contributes to the deeper understanding of arithmetic in general and of the calculus of

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Physicists, it seems, discover the existence of fundamental particles such as neutrinos or mesons, meta-physicists discover the existence (or non-existence) of fundamental things such as universals or essences.

[9] Donald Davidson, in 'Causal Relations', *Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1967), offered a proof that events exist. As Waismann remarked apropos Moore's attempt to prove the existence of the external world: 'What can one say to this—save perhaps that he is a great prover before the Lord' ('How I see Philosophy', in *How I See Philosophy and Other Essays* (Macmillan, London, 1968), 1).

transfinite arithmetic in particular.[10] Explaining that alternative geometries are not alternative theories of space but alternative grammars for the description of spatial relationships contributes to a better understanding of the enterprise of geometry. Making it clear that parts of the brain are not possible subjects of cognitive predicates contributes to a better understanding of the manner in which neuroscience *can* explain the neural foundations of our cognitive powers. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to suggest in general that the understanding that philosophy seeks is parasitical on the sciences in this way. For the illumination philosophy can thus contribute characterizes primarily the philosophies of the special sciences.

Similarly, there is some truth to the claim that philosophy does not add to the sum of our knowledge of the world (or of mathematics), but rather *organizes* what we already know. Certainly distinctions that philosophers have progressively drawn since the days of Aristotle have contributed to clarity regarding the sciences. It is thanks to philosophy that we distinguish the empirical sciences from logic and mathematics, the natural from the moral sciences, deductive from inductive reasoning, a priori from empirical probability, nomothetic from idiographic explanation, causal from hermeneutic explanation, and so on. These distinctions are crucial for a proper understanding of the manifold scientific (as well as non-scientific) enterprises of trying to gain knowledge and understanding of the world we live in, of ourselves within it, and of the mathematical apparatus we have invented to quantify it. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to characterize the task of philosophy as being to organize, or to put order into *the knowledge we already possess*. Insofar as philosophy has to organize material, what it has, *above all*, to organize are *forms of description* (or *norms of representation*) by means of which we present what we know and what we strive to know. I shall elaborate this below.

The kind of understanding philosophy pursues is distinctive. It can be described in various more or less misleading ways:

*In the metaphysical mode*: philosophy strives for an understanding of the a priori natures of things and of internal relations between things (but there are no 'metaphysical facts' to be discovered, and internal relations are creatures of reason, not of nature).

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[10] Wittgenstein was told of Hilbert's remark that no one would drive him out of Cantor's paradise, to which he replied that he would not dream of driving anyone out of paradise, he would just get them to open their eyes and look around—then they would leave of their own accord.

*In the conceptual mode*: philosophy strives for an overview of the structure of (parts of) our conceptual scheme and of logico-grammatical relations between its elements (but that does not make concepts the special subject matter of philosophy).

*In the linguistic mode*: philosophy strives for an overview of segments of our language that, in one way or another, give rise to conceptual problems (but philosophy is not in general *about* language).

*Correctly understood*, these are descriptions of one and the same enterprise. Of course, investigating the use of a word *need not* be a logico-grammatical investigation into the concept it expresses. It may be a non-philosophical, purely linguistic, investigation into etymology, phonetics, syntax, morphology, and so forth. But a *philosophical* investigation into the use of a word *is* an investigation into the concept expressed, for it is an investigation, geared to philosophical purposes, into the presuppositions, implications, compatibilities, and incompatibilities linked with the use of the word in sentences. For the most part, philosophers will abstract from irrelevant local differences between languages. A philosophical investigation into the use of 'know', for purposes of epistemology for example, will yield much the same results as a philosophical investigation into the uses of 'wissen' and 'kennen', the manifest differences often being irrelevant to the investigation.[11] For the investigation, whether conducted in English or in German, is an investigation into those features of usage that determine the common concept of knowledge.[12]

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[11] Note that even where a philosophically relevant feature is picked out by reference to an aspect of a given language not shared by some other language, it does not follow that the distinction thus marked is not capable of being drawn in the second language and demonstrated by features of its use. Whether a verb has a progressive form or not is often an important clue to the character of the concept expressed, e.g. that 'to know' lacks a progressive form shows that it does not signify an activity or process. But German does not have a progressive tense! Nevertheless, that knowledge is no process can be made clear in German too, for there is no such thing as interrupting someone in the middle of knowing, and it makes no sense to ask someone whether he has finished knowing something.

[12] But it would be mistaken to suppose that there are not sometimes philosophically important differences between different languages and cultures. An investigation into the use of 'mind', for example, will differ interestingly from investigations into the use of 'Geist' and 'Seele', or 'anima', or 'psuche', or 'nephesh' and 'ruach'—which betokens differences in the way different languages and different cultures articulate characteristic human powers. It is important to note too that a philosophical enquiry into a categorial concept need not be an investigation of the use of the category-word in question. An investigation of the nature of substances (i.e. persistent things of a kind) is not an investigation of the use of the word 'substance' ('substantia' or 'ousia')—which is a term of art in philosophy—but rather an investigation into common features of usage of a large subclass of concrete count nouns, the common form of which is signified by the formal concept of substance.

The a priori nature of things is fixed by the sense-determining rules for the use of expressions signifying things.[13] To suppose that things, their properties, and relations have an a priori nature in any *other* sense is to fall victim to illusion. For it is to take for 'objective (language-independent) necessities' what are actually no more than the shadows cast on the world by grammar. To describe the nature of substance, for example, *is* to characterize the categorial concept of substance, just as describing the nature of events is to characterize the concept of an event and to describe the nature of the mind is to characterize the concept of mind. But there is no way to characterize a concept other than by describing the relevant features of the uses of expressions that express that concept or belong to the category of concepts it subsumes. So to describe the nature of substance just is to spell out, *and order*, the salient sense-determining rules for the use of that subclass of concrete count nouns that signify substances, and their similarities to and differences from other kinds of nouns. This may be done in the formal mode or (more commonly) in the material mode. To state the nature of events just is to describe (directly or indirectly) the constitutive features of event-designating expressions, and to compare and contrast them with the use of other general types of expression, such as material object names. And to describe the nature of the mind is to describe and order the relevant features of the use of the expression 'the mind' and its cognates, and of psychological predicates ascribable only to creatures that can be said to have minds.

Philosophy has no subject matter *in the sense in which the empirical sciences do*. It deals with philosophical questions, which are different in kind from questions in the empirical sciences and in mathematics. What philosophical questions are is best displayed by an array of uncontroversial and incontrovertible examples. These will be very various: 'What is . . . '-questions (e.g. 'What is the mind, knowledge, truth?'); 'What is the difference'-questions (e.g. 'What is the difference between knowledge and belief? or between a reason and a motive?'); 'How possible'-questions (such as 'How is it possible to measure time, given that the present has no extent, the past no longer exists, and the future does not yet exist?', 'How is it possible

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[13] To avert misunderstanding, I am *not* suggesting that such rules for the use of words typically or even commonly take the form of analytic definitions that specify necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of their definienda. Things may have a nature, even though they have no essence—as in the case of propositions, numbers, or games (the concepts of which are family-resemblance concepts).

for Achilles to overtake the tortoise, given that he has to traverse an infinite number of spaces in a finite time?'); 'Why necessary'-questions (such as 'Why *must* 2 and 2 make 4?' or 'Why can't something be both red all over and green all over?'); and 'Do so and so's exist'-questions (such as 'Do universals exist?', 'Do objective values exist?'). But the form of questions is little guide as to whether they are philosophical. 'What is matter?' can be a philosophical question in an appropriate context, but it can be a scientific one in another context. 'What is a dodo?' is no philosophical question, but 'What is belief?' is. 'Do dragons exist?' is not a philosophical question, but 'Do universals exist?' is. 'Why can't I go back to Africa?' is not a philosophical question, but 'Why can't I go back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I?' is. Philosophical questions cannot be circumscribed by their form. Nor can they be circumscribed by their content, since they can, in principle, be concerned with any subject matter at all—*any subject matter that gives rise to conceptual confusions and unclarities*. These questions cannot be resolved by the empirical sciences, since they are not empirical questions. *They are all questions that are, directly or indirectly, solved, resolved, or dissolved by conceptual investigation.* One might therefore say, as above, that, in one sense, philosophy has no subject matter; but one might also say that, in another sense, philosophy has everything as its subject matter.

### 5. PHILOSOPHY AND CONCEPTUAL INVESTIGATION

Philosophy is a conceptual investigation. This assertion can easily be misunderstood. Does it mean that philosophy has a subject matter after all—namely, concepts? That would be misleading. Being a conceptual investigation does not mean being solely *about* concepts. The traditional questions of whether an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God who created the universe exists, whether we have an immortal soul, whether we are free, are philosophical. They are *about* whether God (thus conceived) exists, whether human beings have immortal souls, and whether we are free agents. But they are answered by conceptual investigations, not by observation and experiment.[14]

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[14] Of course, philosophers sometimes engage in what they misleadingly call 'thought-experiments'. But a thought-experiment is no more an experiment than Monopoly money is money.

These investigations involve scrutiny of the concepts of God,[15] the soul, and voluntariness. Similarly, the questions of whether machines can think or whether the brain can think are philosophical. Neither can be answered by experimental science. To deny that they are about machines, brains, and what it is to think, would be misleading. But to suggest that they are not, *in a very distinctive sense*, about the concept of thinking and its intelligible applicability or inapplicability to machines and brains would be grossly to misrepresent the investigation. For such questions are concerned with *what does or does not make sense*. And the way to examine whether something does or does not make sense, for example whether it makes sense to say that computers think or that the prefrontal cortices think, requires methodical investigation of the use of the verb 'to think' and its ramifying logico-grammatical connections and presuppositions. It would be mistaken to suppose that if a question is about a concept it is not *also* about what falls under the concept—as if Hart's *Concept of Law* were not also about the law, or Ryle's *Concept of Mind* were not also about the mind. In truth, 'about' is no jack with which to lift the vehicle of philosophy.

The conceptual investigations that characterize philosophy are a priori. It is the characterization of our current concepts and the description of their relations within the conceptual field to which they belong that can contribute to the resolution of philosophical problems. The features of our concepts that are marshalled for philosophical purposes are specified by conceptual truths. Conceptual truths—for example: that events occur at a time, but do not exist at a time; that they may need space but do not occupy space; that they lack spatial dimensions; that they may have phases; that they can move, not as objects move, but in the sense that their successive phases occur at different places; and so on and so forth—are not empirical, but a priori. They describe aspects of the nature of their subject; they characterize the concept at hand; and they are manifest in the use of words.

That philosophy is an a priori investigation does not mean that it is an a priori *science*. Mathematics is a priori. But it is not a science after the manner of the natural sciences. It does not discover new facts about the realm of numbers and spatial relations as physics or

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[15]  To be sure, *if* the concept of God as an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent creator of the universe (the god of the philosophers) is coherent, and if the ontological argument for the existence of such a god is invalid, then whether there is such a god is an empirical question, not a conceptual one.

chemistry discover new facts about the realm of nature. The mathematician is an inventor, not a discoverer.[16] What he invents are new forms of mathematical description. For mathematics is the *grammar* of number and space. Its business is *concept-formation by means of proof*. A proof grafts a new conceptual articulation onto the body of mathematics. The concepts thus formed have their *ultimate* (though not necessarily their proximate) rationale in providing rules for the transformation of empirical statements involving magnitudes, quantities, and so forth. Philosophy, by contrast, does not consist of a body of theorems at all. Nor is it the task of philosophy to form novel concepts by means of deductive proofs. It does not produce new rules for the transformation of descriptions of empirical phenomena. Its task is *concept-elucidation* for the purpose of resolving philosophical problems. That philosophy can be done in an armchair does not show that it is an a priori science, any more than the fact that it can be done peripatetically shows that it is an a posteriori one. It is not a *science* of any kind, not even in the Pickwickian sense in which mathematics might be said to be. But the fact that philosophy is not an a priori science does not mean that it is not an a priori investigation. The distinction between a priori investigations and empirical ones is categorial. Hence it is as deep as any categorial gulf. No philosophical question can be answered by scientific enquiry, and no scientific discovery can be made by philosophical investigation. Philosophy can reveal the incoherence, not the falsity, of a scientific claim.

## 6. PHILOSOPHY AND LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION

Philosophy is a conceptual investigation by means of which philosophical questions are answered, or shown to be confused or incoherent. In order to answer or dissolve philosophical questions, the relevant concepts have to be examined, the presuppositions of their employment brought into view, their logico-grammatical relationships spelled out, the conceptual field within which they are embedded characterized, the human needs they fulfil specified, and the behavioural and cultural contexts in which they are at home described.

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[16] See L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 3rd edn. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1978), 99. For elaboration, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, 'Grammar and Necessity', in *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, extensively revised edition, 2009), 241–370.

But concepts are no more than abstractions from the uses of symbols, and concept-possession is no more than mastery of the use of concept-expressing symbols. So a conceptual investigation is inevitably and unsurprisingly also an investigation into the uses of words, phrases, and sentences.

Linguistic investigations pertinent to philosophical enterprises are, however, very different from those of linguists. Language is the subject matter of linguistics. It is not the subject matter of philosophy. Of course, philosophy of language concerns itself with the conceptual network formed by such concepts as *word*, *sentence*, *meaning*, *understanding*, *truth*, *reference*, *predication*, *description*, *quantification*, and so forth. Philosophy of language is indeed about the nature of language—also about the concept of language and about aspects of the use of the word 'language'; and so forth. But philosophy in general is not. Philosophy's general concern with language is twofold. First, confusions and unclarities of one kind or another about the uses of words, phrases, and sentences are *one* source, a *major* source, of philosophical puzzlement and confusion. Secondly, describing the uses of words is *one* method, a *major* method, for answering or dissolving philosophical questions, for removing philosophical puzzlement and eradicating conceptual incoherence. Moreover, the aspects of the uses of words, and indeed the very words and phrases, that interest philosophers are, by and large, very different from those that interest linguists. It is of little interest to a linguist to investigate whether, and in what sense, one can say that events move, or whether it makes any sense to speak of visual sensations, or whether the term 'person' is a substance-noun. The linguistic investigations that are pertinent to philosophy in general are precisely those that shed light on philosophical problems, which are not usually of concern to linguists. Furthermore, by contrast with linguistics, no theories are involved in, and no *new* linguistic information is relevant to, the philosophical description of the uses of words—merely reminders of the familiar, and realization of the obvious. How can this be?

Philosophy is concerned with questions that require, for their resolution or dissolution, the clarification of concepts and conceptual networks. But, apart from the philosophies of the special sciences, most of the concepts that need to be thus clarified are ordinary ones, familiar to any mature speaker of the language, expressed by such words as 'know', 'believe', 'doubt', 'certainty', 'mind', 'body', 'thought', 'understanding', 'true' and 'false', 'good' and 'evil', 'beautiful' and 'ugly'. These concepts are constituted by the sense-determining rules for the use of the words that express them. These are rules that we

follow in our daily discourse. They determine the meanings of the words we use. So we are perfectly familiar with them—otherwise we would not understand what we say or know what we mean.

It is important not to conceive of such rules in too formal a manner—we are not dealing with the rules of a calculus, nor yet with regimented grammar or lexicography, let alone with rules inaccessible to consciousness 'buried deep within the mind/brain' (as Chomsky and his followers put it). Rather, we are concerned with the familiar rules of a human practice which all normal human beings master. Their mastery of the practice is exhibited in their uses of words in sentences, in the contextualized explanations which they give, or would accept, of what they mean and of what the words thus used mean. Sense-determining rules for the use of words can be given in various forms. They are not necessarily expressed by a meta-linguistic assertion. They may be expressed by such utterances as 'Vixens are female foxes', which is used as a definition. The meaning-determining rules that are the business of philosophy are commonly expressed by a priori propositions that look like descriptions but are normative in function.[17] So, for example, 'Understanding is an ability, not a mental state or process' is tantamount to the grammatical explanation that to say that someone understands something is not to say what mental state he is in or what process is taking place in his mind, but to indicate something he can do. Similarly, the statement that red is a colour, employed as an explanation of meaning, amounts to specifying the rule that anything that can be said to be red can be said to have a colour, just as the explanation 'That ☞ is white' supplies a rule for the use of the word 'white', namely, that anything that is *that* ☞ colour can be said to be white. They may be articulated by explicative utterances such as 'A proposition is true if things are as the proposition describes them as being'—which is an explanation of a salient aspect of the use of the truth predicate. Exclusionary rules may be expressed by modal propositions about what cannot be the case. Despite looking like descriptions of *de re* necessities, these are tantamount to asserting that there is no such thing as … For example, 'Nothing can be both red all over and green all over' is tantamount to 'There is no such thing as being both red all over and green all over.' And that in turn is equivalent to saying that it is senseless to predicate these two predicates of the same object at the same time, i.e. that this

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[17] I use the term 'normative' to signify what pertains to a rule (a norm), expresses a rule, or is rule-governed.

conjunction is a form of words that is excluded from the language. These, and many other forms of sentence, even though they may not appear to be expressions of rules, are in fact employed normatively. Their typical (although not uniform) role is to provide standards of correctness for the use of an expression and licences for specific inferences.

The rules for the use of words that are of philosophical relevance cannot be unknown to speakers. For one cannot guide oneself by reference to unknown rules, and one cannot use unknown rules as standards of correctness. It would be absurd to suppose that we must wait upon future discoveries by linguists, logicians, or philosophers in order to find out what we mean by the words we use and by the sentences we utter. We are not parrots, which emit words without understanding. We speak and know what we thereby say. To learn to speak is to learn to act, and our acts of speech are, for the most part, done knowingly and for a purpose. We can say what we mean and, other things being equal, what we mean and what the words we utter mean in the context of utterance coincide. So the logico-grammatical observations that are to be mustered in order to resolve philosophical problems must be news from nowhere. Indeed, one might say, with only a little exaggeration, that in philosophy, 'If it's news, it's wrong.' It is no news that events occur, happen and take place, but do not *exist*; that they have no coloured surfaces but may emit a smell or make a noise; that there are colourful events, but no coloured ones; that they have phases, but no spatial parts; and so on.

If a salient method of philosophical clarification consists in no more than reminding people of the way in which they use words, then it may seem mysterious that the problems of philosophy are not solved with the greatest of ease. If every intelligent speaker of the language is perfectly familiar with the sense-determining rules for the use of the words he uses, and if these rules are *a* key to resolving philosophical problems, then it may seem that any intelligent speaker ought to be able to resolve such problems *ad libitum*. But it is not so. Why not?

Every competent speaker of the language has, by definition, mastered the use of the ordinary (non-technical) expressions of his language. Every English speaker knows, for example, how to use the words 'nearly' and 'almost'. But few are able, off the cuff, to identify the differences in their use, namely, that they behave differently under negation. Nevertheless, every speaker will notice that the sentence 'Although there were a hundred students already seated, the lecture room wasn't almost full' is ungrammatical. The criteria for knowing

what an expression means consist of correct use (and recognition of incorrect use), intelligent responses to use, and giving correct explanations of the meaning of the expression in utterances in given contexts. But mastery of use does not imply mastery of *comparative use*. To have mastered the uses of 'nearly' and 'almost' one does not have to have reflected on their similarities and differences. Nor does mastery of the technique of use of an expression mean that one can readily describe the complex relationships between it and the uses of related expressions in the web of words that one takes for granted in one's normal linguistic activities. *A fortiori*, it does not imply that one can order the expressions and types of expression whose use one has mastered so that light will be shed upon conceptual problems. But it is precisely these skills that are necessary for resolving philosophical problems.

The differences between 'nearly' and 'almost' are of no philosophical interest. The differences and relationships between the uses of the expressions 'the mind' and 'the body', and 'my mind' and 'my body', are of the greatest philosophical moment. Everyone knows how to use phrases in which the word 'mind' occurs—for example, to make up one's mind, to be in two minds whether to do something, to have a mind of one's own, to call something to mind, to have a thought at the back of one's mind, to have an enquiring mind, and so forth. But when confronted with the question of what the mind is, of what it is to have a mind, we are typically at a loss. For mastery of use does not require mastery of a synopsis of use. We all speak of our own and of other people's bodies. We are proud of our graceful body, complain about our aching body, are pleased with our healthy body, dislike having a sweaty and dirty body—and so forth. But when confronted with the question of what it is to *have* a body, how the body one *has* is related to the body one *is*, what it is that *has* both a body and a mind, we stumble and lose our grip on these familiar expressions. For mastery of their use does not require an overview of use. But that is precisely what is needed for the solution and dissolution of philosophical problems.

Philosophical understanding consists in possessing an *overview* of a conceptual network that one can bring to bear upon philosophical problems in such a manner that they dissolve, or are answered by a description of the relationships between parts of the network. To put the same point slightly differently, as both Wittgenstein and Ryle did, it consists in the mastery of the logical geography of concepts in a given domain. If one can describe the conceptual landscape, then one can (a) select from, and (b) order, the familiar grammatical rules for

the uses of expressions, and (c) present a comparative morphology of uses, in a surveyable representation that will shed light upon the philosophical question, puzzlement, or confusion at hand. The ordering of what we know is an ordering of the rules for the uses of expressions with which we are perfectly familiar. The comparative morphology consists, for example, in comparing the familiar use of the problematic expression with that of expressions with which it is commonly wrongly conflated, in order to highlight differences. It is noteworthy that in philosophy we already have *all* the information we need to solve our problems. No new information is required—only reminders of the familiar. If we do not solve our problems, it is not due to lack of information, but to lack of insight. The difficulty, the *immense* difficulty, is to bring into view the right aspects of usage—right for the purposes at hand; and to make the right comparisons that will bring out overlooked differences and unexpected similarities; and then to order all these in the right way—the way that will illuminate the problem, and resolve or dissolve it.

It is as if we were confronted by a pointillist painting from close up. We can see all the coloured dots, but cannot stand back to see the pattern. With the greatest effort, we can move our heads a little, and discern (and often only think we discern) a small fragment of the picture. Only the greatest geniuses, such as Plato and Aristotle, or Kant and Wittgenstein, have the ability to stand back and to see—unclearly—a significant part of the pattern, which they then describe. That is one reason why we need to study the history of philosophy.

## 7. PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING: ELABORATION AND QUALIFICATION

That philosophy is a quest for understanding, rather than for knowledge, needs elaboration and qualification. It is correct to say that philosophy cannot discover new empirical truths about the world around us and can offer no theories about it on the model of the theories of the sciences. It is also correct to say that philosophy cannot discover metaphysical truths about the world—for there are none to discover (as we have seen, what masquerade as metaphysical truths are *at best* no more than norms of representation in deceptive guise). However, is it really true to say that in doing philosophy we never come to know things we did not already know? After all, it is not true that everyone who has mastered the use of event-designators knows how the

movement of objects differs from the movement of events. Nor is it true that everyone knows that to have a body or to have a mind is not to *possess* anything—even though one can sell one's body and lose one's mind.

Nevertheless, insofar as philosophy provides knowledge *in this sense*, the form of knowledge, unlike that achieved by the natural sciences, is not that of observation, detection, or experimental discovery, but of *realization*. And the object of knowledge is not an empirical truth, but a normative feature of our linguistic practices—of our form of representation (and hence too, an aspect of our concepts, and an internal property or relation of things). But philosophy does not teach us any new logico-grammatical nexus; we learn no new rules of inference; by contrast with the enlargement of mathematical knowledge by means of new proofs, the conceptual structure we operate remains exactly the same as before. That is why the achievement is best characterized as a contribution to understanding rather than to knowledge. For we achieve a deeper understanding of our conceptual scheme, a better grasp of its reticulations and of the comparative morphology of its elements, that enables us to avoid the confusions to which we are prone. We realize that, *of course*, this is the way we use these words, that, *of course*, this is how the uses of these apparently similar forms of words (e.g. 'to have a bodkin' and 'to have a body') differ, and the uses of those apparently different forms of words (e.g. 'to sell one's body' and 'to sell sexual services') are similar. The consequences of such realization can be dramatic—light dawns over the conceptual landscape. One sees the road through the woods. And one sees why one took the wrong turning and ended in a morass. That is why the characteristic reaction to an advance in scientific knowledge is 'Goodness me, who would have thought of that!', whereas the characteristic response to a philosophical insight is '*Of course*, I should have thought of that!'

It is true to say that philosophy does not explain phenomena as the sciences do. By contrast with theories in the empirical sciences, there is nothing hypothetical about the conceptual clarifications and elucidations of philosophy. The empirical sciences may postulate entities in order to explain observed phenomena, and go on to validate such conjectures. Philosophy, by contrast, cannot legitimately postulate entities, such as simple natures, noumena, or universals, in order to explain the a priori natures of things, or the structure of our conceptual scheme, or our uses of language. Nor is there room in philosophy for deducing the existence of such entities, on the model of inferences

to the best explanation in the sciences.[18] Nevertheless, there is much that philosophy can and does explain. It explains, *by description*, how the various elements in the web of concepts are woven together. It explains why forms of words that at first blush appear to make sense do not, or why forms of words that appear to fulfil a given role actually fulfil an utterly different one. It explains the sources of conceptual puzzlement and confusion. And it explains how to eradicate such confusions. These explanations are *logico-grammatical* or *conceptual*.

Does philosophy not result in conceptual truths—and is that not a cognitive achievement? That would be misleading. Many of the conceptual truths in question—for example, that we know of the existence of objects in the world around us by the use of our eyes and ears—are news from nowhere. No one would have the effrontery to claim that among the cognitive achievements of philosophy is the discovery that our knowledge of other people's states of mind is warranted by what they do and say. Philosophical achievement does not consist in presenting such logico-grammatical trivialities, but in showing that the apparently powerful reasons for denying that we can know such things on the basis of such grounds are spurious. Other conceptual truths have less of an air of triviality, for example that memory is knowledge retained, and need not be *of* the past; or that the beneficial for artefacts is preventive but for animals also augmentive; or that the imagination is an ability to think up possibilities. Such truths pinpoint adjacent nodes in the web of concepts. We realize that they are true when our attention is drawn to these normative connections between concepts, but they would not otherwise have occurred to most of us. Yet others are even further removed from the obvious—for example, that the limits of thought are the limits of the possible expression of thought, so that the limits of intelligible (true *or* false) ascription of thinking to a non-language using animal are fixed by the animal's behavioural repertoire; or that arithmetic is not a science of the relationships between numbers, but a

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[18] That, I believe, is what Wittgenstein meant by his obscure remark in *Investigations* §599 'In philosophy no inferences are drawn [*werden kein Schlüsse gezogen*]. "But it must be like this!" is not a philosophical proposition.' He did not mean that there are no inferences in philosophical discussion and argument, but that in philosophy one cannot infer the existence of entities on the model of inferences to the best explanation in the empirical sciences. Hence it is illegitimate in philosophy to infer that simple objects, or noumena, or universals, *must exist* on the grounds that if they did not exist then we wouldn't be able to…

system of interwoven rules for the transformation of empirical propositions about magnitudes, quantities, etc.; or that the conception of God as an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent creator is incoherent. Here too we are dealing with realization—but what we have in view is not merely adjacent nodes in the web of our concepts, but a large and ramifying network. To take it in, to grasp the complex conceptual relationships that are thus articulated requires one to discern a pattern that cannot readily be detected, but rather comes into view only when the right logico-grammatical features are deployed in an appropriate manner, when the right analogies are arrayed and the illuminating disanalogies marshalled. Of course, these conceptual truths are not statements of fact. They are descriptions of normative connections within the web of concepts that constitute our form of representation. They are said to be true. Indeed, they are often said to be necessary truths. That, of course, is correct—but misleading. Their truth is akin to that of the proposition that the king in chess moves one square at a time. What we realize when a philosophical insight dawns on us is *a feature of our form of representation*. We attain an understanding of the way in which our familiar modes of description of things hang together.

A final important qualification and elaboration: the picture that I have presented is tailored to theoretical philosophy, i.e. to general analytic philosophy ('descriptive metaphysics' as Strawson misleadingly called it), to epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, and philosophical psychology. But although the same kind of intellectual activity is appropriate in practical philosophy (moral, political, and legal philosophy), other factors come into play. It is not the business of theoretical philosophy to introduce a better, logically or conceptually more perfect, language—if indeed there is any such thing. Its business is to describe our existing conceptual scheme, not to improve it, to disentangle the knots we tie in it, not to weave a new web. For the problems that plague us are rooted in the language we have, and they can be solved or resolved only by its systematic logico-grammatical description. The only concepts it can fruitfully introduce are new, technical, classificatory concepts within philosophy itself, such as concepts of inductive and deductive reasoning, of a priori and a posteriori judgements, of species and genus, of determinates and determinables—the purpose of which is to facilitate logical geography. But in practical philosophy there *is* room for the introduction of novel first-order concepts and for the remoulding of existing concepts. Concepts of rights (both moral and legal), of sovereignty, of the nation state, of international law, etc., have been introduced by

philosophers and then moulded by fruitful dialogue over centuries between lawyers and legal and political philosophers. Similarly, concepts of liberty, justice, and democracy that were refined and elaborated by philosophical argument have informed political debate and stimulated political and constitutional reform. Here, in the domain of the rules under which we live, and the rule-governed organization of societies in which we live, the development of the most illuminating, useful, and practical concepts to describe and *prescribe* normative relationships has been an integral part of philosophical reflection.

One might wonder what explains this difference between theoretical and practical philosophy. It is, I think, a corollary of the fact that at the heart of practical philosophy lie our evolving conceptions of the values which we should pursue, the norms to which we should conform, and the virtues to which we should aspire. The concepts of concern to theoretical philosophy are employed *inter alia* in the description and explanation of what is (or is not) actually the case. But the central concepts that engage our attention in practical philosophy articulate our conception of the ideal—of what we ought to be and what we ought to do.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising that practical philosophy has a further task that has no parallel in theoretical philosophy. Since the time of Socrates, philosophers have undertaken the task of rational reflection upon the ways in which human beings should live their lives and organize their societies, of distinguishing the different values in human life and relationships, and of clarifying forms of justification and evaluation. Although conceptual clarification plays a role in such reflections, it is only part of the task. What remains is reasoned debate about the variety of values, their role in human lives, the ways of ordering them, of the incommensurability of values, of what is right and what is obligatory, of the nature of conflicts of duty, and of the place of the virtues in human life. Similarly, it falls to political and legal philosophy not only to clarify (and sometimes refashion) salient concepts in political and legal discourse, but also to reflect on the justifications of various forms of legal and political institutions and to recommend legal and constitutional arrangements suitable for rational beings living under the rule of law.

## 8. CAN THERE BE PROGRESS IN PHILOSOPHY?

If, in the sense explained, philosophy is not a cognitive discipline, can there be said to be progress in philosophy? Progress characterizes the

sciences. But how can there be progress in a subject that has no subject matter in the manner of the sciences, and that adds nothing to human knowledge save for the realization of the ways in which various elements in our conceptual scheme hang together? Is lack of progress in philosophy not borne out by the fact that problems that were discussed by Plato and Aristotle are still being discussed today?

There is no progress *on the model of the sciences*. In the sciences, knowledge is cumulative, and hierarchies of theories are constructed. In the natural sciences, advances in instrumentation make possible new factual discoveries, which lead to new questions, and that in turn leads to new theories that explain the phenomena. Advances in scientific theory and in instrumentation in turn generate advances in technology. Philosophy, however, is not hierarchical. It has no foundations. It erects no theoretical structures on the insights and conceptual clarifications it achieves. There is no instrumentation to aid observation and empirical discovery—but, of course, there is neither observation nor discovery. There is no technological spin-off from theories, since there are no theories that are validated in experience. Nor are there theorems that are proven and then applied to experience. No men are sent to the moon on the back of philosophical elucidations nor is anyone guided through the seas by the charts of logical geographers.

Nevertheless, there are three senses in which there can be progress in philosophy: discriminatory, analytic, and therapeutic.

First, clearer distinctions are drawn between forms of reasoning, types of proposition, and kinds of concepts (*discriminatory progress*). We distinguish between deductive, inductive, and other forms of reasoning, and thereby are able better to handle conceptual problems that arise out of different kinds of argument. We distinguish between the question of how a truth is learnt and what are its grounds, and so are able to separate questions that were once conflated. We distinguish between determinates and determinables, and between determinate–determinable relations and species–genus relationships. And so on. Progress, in this sense, often appears to be less than it really is. For such distinctions are rapidly taken for granted, and we forget that the articulate differentiation of inference patterns, proposition types, and kinds of concepts are hard-won insights obtained from philosophical reflection. So the progress that has been made is sometimes not recognized for what it is.

Secondly, there is progress in the characterization and clarification of problem-generating concepts (*analytic progress*). There has been

advance in the *philosophical* understanding of such concepts as truth, existence, probability, mind, person, goodness, rights, obligations, i.e. improvements in the descriptions of the conceptual network surrounding these pivotal, but problematic, concepts. And there has been advance in seeing what was awry with a variety of characterizations advanced by past thinkers.

Thirdly, there have been advances in dissolving certain kinds of conceptual confusion (*therapeutic progress*). No longer *need* we puzzle ourselves over the question of whether our knowledge of necessary truths is innate or acquired, or whether the nature of substances is knowable or not, or whether the self is given in experience, presupposed by experience, or is transcendent. No longer *need* we strive to justify inductive reasoning, to prove the existence of the world, of universals, or of events. Here too progress is often not discerned, since *sometimes* the refuted arguments and the futile endeavours vanish from sight, and tempting pathways to illusion and confusion are permanently closed off and forgotten.[19]

Nevertheless, precisely because philosophy is a contribution to understanding and not to knowledge, these forms of progress may be *less* than they appear. For they are distinctly precarious, for two reasons.

First, a conceptual field may be partially illuminated for a generation or two, only to be cast into shadow again. For cultural innovations, technical or theoretical, occur (e.g. the invention of the computer, or of function-theoretic logic) and novel scientific theories are introduced (e.g. quantum mechanics, relativity theory), which cast long shadows over conceptual articulations previously clarified. That may require old ground to be traversed afresh from a new angle, as when the concept of mind needed to be clarified yet again in response to the temptation to conceive of the mind on a computational model, or the concept of natural language reconsidered in the light of the invention of the predicate calculus.

Secondly, if there can be progress of a kind that is not akin to progress in the sciences, so too there can be regress of a kind that does not occur in the sciences. Precisely because philosophy has no foundations, because it is not hierarchical, because it produces neither theories validated in experience nor theorems proven and then applied to experience, because it is not the basis for technology of

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[19] I should like to be able to add a fourth form of progress, namely, in moral, political, and legal philosophy. But that is a question that requires separate detailed treatment.

any kind, distinctions may be lost from sight, methods of clarification may fall into disuse, and the skills they require may vanish. Distinctions that were clearly drawn may become muddied through a novel conundrum that is mishandled—as the insight that all a priori knowledge is of necessary truth became muddied by the confused idea that knowledge that the standard metre is a metre long is both a priori and contingent.[20] Old confusions may prove irresistible to a new generation (e.g. the attraction of talk concerning the self, mystification about consciousness, the allure of metaphysics, conceived as a science of objective necessities). For conceptual confusions are comparable to diseases—diseases of the intellect. They may be cured for one generation, but the virus may undergo mutation and reappear in even more virulent forms.

Precisely because philosophy is not a quest for knowledge but for understanding, what it achieves can no more be transmitted from generation to generation than virtue. Philosophical education can show the way to philosophical clarity, just as parents can endeavour to inculcate virtue in their children. But the temptations, both old and new, of illusion, mystification, arid scholasticism, scientism, and bogus precision fostered by logical technology may prove too great, and philosophical insight and overview may wane. Each generation has to achieve philosophical understanding for itself, and the insights and clarifications of previous generations have to be gained afresh.[21]

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[20] For the confusion, see S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 54–6. For its eradication, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, Part 1—Essays (Blackwell, Oxford, 2005), 'The standard metre', 189–99.

[21] I am grateful to Hanoch Ben-Yami, Jonathan Dancy, Anthony Kenny, Hans Oberdiek, Herman Philipse, and David Wiggins for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

# Part II

## Comparisons and Clarifications

# Kant and Wittgenstein: the Matter of Transcendental Arguments

## 1. WITTGENSTEIN AND KANT

It has sometimes been suggested that both in the *Tractatus* and in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein advances what amount to forms of transcendental arguments in a broadly Kantian spirit. After all, does he not argue in the *Tractatus* that there must be simple objects if representation by means of language is to be possible? Or that there must be facts—the obtaining or non-obtaining of states of affairs—if propositions are to be possible? These are a priori conditions of the possibility of logic and language—of thinking (reasoning) and representing. And is that not a transcendental argument? Similarly, in the *Investigations*, does he not argue that a community of speakers must exist as a condition of the possibility of a language? Or that there must be other subjects of experience as a condition of the possibility of self-ascription of experience? And are these not transcendental arguments? It depends on what is to be called a transcendental argument; and on what *exactly* Wittgenstein was arguing. We shall see.

In this chapter, I shall give a schematic overview of similarities and differences between Kant and Wittgenstein. There *are* important similarities. Nevertheless, I shall argue, if we are to take the term 'transcendental argument' seriously, then there are no transcendental arguments in Wittgenstein. If we take the term loosely, in a manner that would have been objectionable to Kant, then one can make out a case for characterizing the *Tractatus* as employing transcendental arguments. But no such case can be made out for the *Investigations*.

First, let me briefly detail what we know of Wittgenstein's acquaintance with Kant's work and his attitude towards Kant's thought. In the pre-*Tractatus* notebooks, Kant is mentioned once (NB 19.10.14): the theory of tautologies, Wittgenstein remarks, will shed light on

Kant's question 'How is pure mathematics possible?' In *Tractatus* 6.36111, Kant's problem of right- and left-hand incongruence is discussed. Wittgenstein read the *Critique of Pure Reason* with his friend Ludwig Hänsel in a prisoner-of-war camp at Cassino in 1919. As far as I know, there is no information about how much of the book they read together, or what Wittgenstein made of it. In Wittgenstein's post-*Tractatus Nachlass*, Kant is mentioned in but two remarks. In one, he writes that the limits of language show themselves in that the only way to specify the fact that agrees with a true proposition is to repeat the proposition. Here, he notes, 'we're concerned with the Kantian solution to the problems of philosophy' (TS 211, 173). In MS 107, 183 (= BT 672) he remarked, 'Isn't what I'm saying here what Kant meant by saying that $5 + 7 = 12$ is not analytic but synthetic a priori?' In TS 209, 45 he elaborated: that an equation cannot be reduced to a tautology explains what Kant meant by claiming that propositions of arithmetic are not analytic but synthetic a priori. In his students' notes and memoirs, I have found few comments on Kant. The most important one was made to Desmond Lee apropos Broad's classification of methods in philosophy. The Transcendental Critical Method, Broad had said, is Kant's, but without the peculiar applications Kant made of it. To this Wittgenstein responded with some enthusiasm: 'This is the right sort of approach. Hume, Descartes and the others had tried to start with one proposition such as "Cogito ergo sum" and work from it to others. Kant disagreed and started with what we know to be so, and went on to examine the validity of what we suppose we know' (LWL 73).[1]

The catch from this trawl is meagre. It does not suggest any significant Kantian influence on Wittgenstein nor even any evident Kantian inspiration. In 1931, he made a careful list of influences upon him

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[1]  Some comments were made to Drury. In 1930 Wittgenstein replied to Drury's suggestion that in fact he was discussing Kant's problem of how synthetic a priori propositions are possible. 'You could say that', Wittgenstein replied. 'When you have thought for some time about a problem of your own, you may come to see that it is closely related to what has been discussed before, only you will want to present the problem in a different way.' On another occasion (1948), he remarked that Kant and Berkeley seemed to him to be very deep thinkers, in a sense in which Schopenhauer was not (M. O'C. Drury, 'Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein', in *The Danger of Words* (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1996), pp. 118, 157f.). To von Wright, Wittgenstein said that from Kant he could get only occasional glimpses of understanding ('A Biographical Sketch', in *Wittgenstein* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1982), p. 33).

(MS 154, 16r). Although Schopenhauer was mentioned (obviously with *Tractatus* 5.6-s and 6.4-s in mind), Kant was not (although, of course, there may be a 'Kantian influence' via Schopenhauer). Nevertheless, there are striking affinities between certain aspects of Kant's philosophy and Wittgenstein's, both early and late. These do not necessarily betoken influence—perhaps merely a partial convergence of route through the jungles of philosophy. But the convergence is certainly of interest, and worth spelling out.

i. *Metaphilosophy*: No other philosophers in the history of the subject have been so preoccupied, and so fruitfully preoccupied, with the nature and status of philosophy itself. Both agreed that philosophy (or, as Kant put it, 'pure philosophy') is not continuous with the natural or mathematical sciences. Both argued that it is a second-order, reflective discipline.

ii. *Dialectic*: No other philosophers in the history of the subject were so preoccupied with the Dialectic of Reason—the logic of conceptual illusion. Both agreed that there are more or less systematic patterns to philosophical error, and that clarification of the sources of conceptual confusion is of capital importance. Moreover, both concurred that the most important way of so doing is to identify the unquestioned assumptions underlying philosophical controversies and challenging them.

iii. *The bounds of sense*: Both were concerned with characterizing the bounds of sense. Kant endeavoured to do so by a 'deduction' (a justification of a right by reference to its sources) of a priori concepts, which investigates the a priori conditions of their use in judgements and limits their intelligible application to possible experience. Wittgenstein took a different route, namely, by investigating the conditions for the meaningful use of language.

iv. *Rationalism and empiricism*: Both philosophers had a highly critical attitude towards the rationalist and empiricist traditions. Both repudiated foundationalist epistemology of the Cartesian or Lockean kind—our knowledge of how things are in the world around us is not *inferred* from how things sensibly seem to us to be. Both rejected Cartesian as well as Humean conceptions of the mind—the mind is neither an immaterial substance nor a bundle of perceptions.

v. *The nature of necessity*: Both were preoccupied with clarifying the nature of necessity. Both denied that there are any *de re* a posteriori necessities to be discovered from experience. Kant held that the necessary truths of logic are 'entirely without content'; Wittgenstein argued that the tautologies of logic are 'senseless' (i.e. have 'zero sense'). They

both denied that the necessary propositions of arithmetic and geometry are analytic, and agreed that pure arithmetic is concept-construction. More generally, both located the roots of non-logical necessity *in us*—albeit for different reasons and in a very different sense.

   vi. *Rational theology*: Both philosophers repudiated rational theology.

   Doubtless other points of convergence can be found. Nevertheless, these suffice for our purposes. They are striking and important. But when examined proximately, the sense of convergence changes—for two reasons. First, the negative, critical consensus is not matched by constructive agreement. Secondly, the world-view, the philosophical *Weltanschauung*, that informs their thought is utterly different.

   The most fundamental source of disagreement turns on the deepest roots of Kant's inspiration. The master-problem of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is: How are synthetic a priori judgements possible (B 19)? And this, putting aside the investigation of the possibility of the synthetic a priori truths of mathematics, is glossed as 'How is metaphysics as a science possible?' (B 22). His critical first step towards resolving this question was his so-called 'Copernican revolution' (cf. B xvi; xxii*a*). All previous systems of metaphysics, he thought, had assumed that *all* our knowledge must conform to objects. But they proved impotent to explain the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge of nature, e.g. that substance must persist over time, that objects must stand in reciprocal causal relations, or that every event must have a cause. Consequently, Kant proposed that the investigation be turned around. We should suppose that nature, insofar as it can be known a priori, must conform to the conditions of our sensible and cognitive constitution—to the a priori forms of intuition and the a priori categories of understanding. His radical conclusion was that knowledge cannot transcend the limits of possible experience.[2] We *can* know synthetic a priori truths about nature (the world as we experience it), but we *cannot* attain knowledge of the existence of God, of the immortality of the soul, or of things as they are in themselves. Synthetic a priori knowledge of nature is possible, Kant thought, because *the mind imposes structural principles on nature as a condition of possible experience.* 'Nothing in a priori knowledge can be ascribed to objects save what the thinking subject derives from itself' (B xxiii), for 'we can know a priori of

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   [2] One must constantly keep in mind the fact that the concept of experience, as Kant deploys it, is a weighty one. It is 'a cognition that determines an object through perceptions' (A 176/B 218).

things only what we ourselves put into them' (B xviii). Synthetic a priori judgements can be shown to be possible

> if we relate the formal conditions of a priori intuition, the synthesis of the imagination, and its necessary unity in a transcendental apperception to a possible cognition of experience in general, and say: The conditions of the possibility of experience are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgement a priori.    (A 158/B 197)

The mind makes the scaffolding of nature. It is *on* this scaffolding that appearances are perceived. The scaffolding is described by the synthetic a priori propositions of metaphysics. And it is in virtue of this scaffolding that empirical knowledge of nature is possible.

   Although he did not hesitate to use the term 'a priori', Wittgenstein, after his return to philosophy in 1929, held that its employment in the philosophical tradition was riven with the deepest of misconceptions. He wrote (in 1931):

> It was characteristic of theorists of the past cultural period to want to find the a priori where it isn't. Or should I say a characteristic of the past cultural era was to form //to create// the concept, ~~or non-concept,~~ of the a priori. For it would never have created the concept if from the start it had seen things //the situation// as we do. (Then the world would have lost a great—I mean, significant—error.) But actually one cannot argue like this, for this concept was rooted in the very culture itself.    (MS 183, 81)

This is an important observation with ramifying implications. Wittgenstein did indeed use the term 'a priori' in his later philosophical writings, but there is a gulf separating his use of the expression from the Kantian conception of a priori knowledge. To be sure, he thought that the propositions of mathematics and logic are a priori. Like Kant, he thought the propositions of logic are vacuous. Like Kant, he denied that the propositions of arithmetic are analytic. He thought that apparently synthetic a priori propositions such as 'nothing can be red and green all over' or 'time-travel is impossible' are a priori. But he did not think that to know one of these (non-analytic) a priori propositions was correctly characterized as *knowing the truth of a description* of how things necessarily are in nature. Such propositions are not a priori *descriptions* of the scaffolding of the world. Rather, they are *norms of description*. The world has no scaffolding—neither original (traditional metaphysics), nor constructed and imposed (Kantian metaphysics of experience). Such (apparently synthetic a priori) propositions *constitute* the scaffolding FROM *which we describe the world*.

So, such knowledge is *knowledge of rules of representation*. To know that red is darker than pink, for example, is precisely to know that if anything is red, then, without looking to see, one may infer that it is darker than anything pink. This 'synthetic a priori proposition', this apparent necessary truth about nature, is no more than an inference rule in the guise of a description. It is an inference rule that is partly constitutive of the meaning of the colour predicates involved. Consequently Kant's question: 'How is synthetic a priori knowledge of nature possible?' crumbles in Wittgenstein's hands. Kant, he would surely have argued, was mistaken to think that synthetic a priori propositions *correctly describe how things necessarily are*. For, in Wittgenstein's view, what appear to be necessities of nature, and what Kant argued to be a priori principles that the understanding imposes upon intuitions to *constitute* nature, are no more than shadows cast upon nature by the grammar of our language. I shall elaborate below.

Nevertheless, Wittgenstein undertook his own Copernican revolution. In reaction to his early philosophy of the *Tractatus*, he declared that 'the inquiry must be turned around, but on the pivot of our real need' (PI §108).[3] We must turn from the sublime to the mundane, from *Wesensschau* to grammar, from the essence of the world to the 'quiet weighing of linguistic facts' (Z §447). The calculus of logic is not a mirror image of the a priori order of the world,[4] nor is it the depth-grammar of any possible language. It does not lie hidden beneath the surface grammars of human languages; it is a grid to be placed upon them for checking the deductive validity of certain kinds of inference. It is a form of *re*-presentation. Wittgenstein's Copernican revolution involved repudiating the very idea of *a priori knowledge of the world* as understood effably in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and as conceived ineffably

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[3] For detailed examination of this transformation, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, 2nd extensively revised edn., Part I—Essays, Essay XIII: 'The Recantation of a Metaphysician', pub. edn. (Blackwell, Oxford, 2009).

[4] Did he think there was such an order when he was writing the *Tractatus*? After all, in 5.634 he wrote: 'There is no a priori order of things'. That remark is misleading when taken out of context. In its context it embroiders on 5.63, 'I am my world'. The fact that one encounters no subject in one's experience (as Hume had insisted) is connected with the fact that 'no part of our experience is at the same time *a priori*', since everything we *experience*, and what we *can describe in words*, could be other than it is. For 'There are no pictures that are true *a priori*' (TLP 2.225). But *the logical form of reality*, which cannot be described in words, but is shown by true *and* false descriptions of the empirical world (TLP 4.121), is, of course, a priori.

in the *Tractatus*. The young Wittgenstein had thought that the ineffable truths of the *Tractatus* concerning the essential nature of things that are shown by the well-formed sentences of a language were conditions of the possibility of *symbolic* representation and *thought* (reasoning). The later Wittgenstein, by contrast, held that what appears to be the metaphysical order of things—effable or ineffable—is an illusion. There is no metaphysical order of things. The a priori, he said, must have its nimbus removed (MS 157b, 3v). It seems to describe adamantine necessities informing the world we experience. But although such a priori propositions look like descriptions, they are actually expressions of norms of representation. The a priori also seems to exclude possibilities—for example, disembodied minds, time-travel. But logico-metaphysical impossibilities *are not possibilities that are impossible*. What these a priori propositions exclude are not possibilities; what they exclude are not intelligible impossibilities either. They exclude *forms of words and forms of inference*. Forms of words are excluded as nonsense. Forms of inference (e.g. from '*x* is white' and '*y* is black', infer '*x* is darker than *y*') are excluded as incoherent.

## 2. KANT'S PRESUPPOSITIONS SEEN FROM WITTGENSTEIN'S VIEWPOINT

Despite his profound criticisms of the Cartesian and empiricist tradition, Kant was still working within its framework. I select four salient respects in which that tradition informs his thought:

(i) The philosophical enterprise of explaining how *synthetic a priori knowledge* is possible consists in describing the a priori conditions of the possibility of *empirical knowledge* as achieved in perceptual experience. So the undertaking has a twofold epistemological orientation. In this respect, Kant does not deviate from the methodological primacy of epistemology initiated by Descartes. As long as such synthetic a priori propositions are conceived to be statements of a priori laws of nature ('the necessary conformity to law *of things* as objects of experience' (*Prolegomena* 295)) as opposed to being norms of description, the epistemic orientation cannot but seem unchallengeable. Within the framework of this tradition, Kant's originality consisted in trying to explain the possibility of the former (metaphysical) knowledge by reference to the a priori conditions of the possibility of the latter (empirical) knowledge.

(ii) Kant's methodology in his execution of his enterprise is steadfastly, although abstractly and *impersonally*, egocentric. The explanation of the possibility of knowledge of synthetic a priori propositions finally rests upon the requirement of the transcendental unity of apperception (transcendental self-consciousness)—the 'I think' that must be able to accompany all my representations.[5] For only under this condition can the manifold given in intuition be synthesized and brought under concepts to constitute experience and its objects. Likewise the approach to the analysis of empirical self-consciousness (as Kant understood the term) is egocentric. We are not to investigate the circumstances under which *we* are warranted in saying *of another* that he is 'conscious of his experience'—that it sensibly seems to him that things are thus-and-so. Nor should we concern ourselves with investigating the conditions under which we are warranted in asserting *of another* that he experiences things to be thus-and-so. Rather, we are to lay bare the conditions that must be satisfied by a *possible experience* in order that the *subject of experience* may be able to be conscious of it *as his own experience*.

(iii) The conception of consciousness that lies at the heart of the 'Transcendental Deduction', and is pivotal for Kant's transcendental arguments, is a *descendant* of the Cartesian and Lockean notions of consciousness, transmitted and transmuted through Leibniz's and Wolff's conceptions of apperception. To be sure, it does not suffer from some of the ancestral flaws: transcendental apperception is not a matter of *perceiving* one's perceptions (as Locke had suggested we do), but of being able to *conceive* of them as one's own, of being able to be *conscious* of them as belonging to a single persistent (abstract) subject of experience. In the Jäsche *Logic* (student notes of Kant's lectures, published in 1800), Kant characterized consciousness as 'the universal condition of all cognition in general'. It is, he continued, 'really a representation that another representation is in me' (JL p. 33). There is a persistent *equivocation* in Kant's employment of the concept and *unclarity* in his thought. The equivocation is this: On the one hand, consciousness is said to be the *general form* ('universal

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[5]  It is important to keep in mind the fact that the 'I' of the 'I think', the 'transcendental self', is not the Cartesian ego. It is merely a 'logical subject', not a psychological one. It is a formal condition of every thought—the mere idea of a subject of experience. It 'serves only to introduce all thinking as belonging to consciousness' (A 341/B 400). It is 'the form of apperception, on which every experience depends and which precedes it' (A 354).

condition') of experience. On the other, consciousness is said to be a possible *accompaniment* of experience—it is 'the "I think" that must be capable of accompanying all my representations'. This ambiguity, or one akin to it, was present at the very birth of the philosophical concept of consciousness in the writings of Descartes.[6] This equivocation dragged in its wake two systematic unclarities. First, there is an unresolved unclarity concerning the relationship between transcendental self-consciousness and empirical self-consciousness (conceived as knowledge of what passes in my mind). Secondly, there is an unclarity concerning the relationship between empirical self-consciousness and consciousness.

Here, in the accounts of empirical and transcendental self-consciousness, is the Achilles' heel of Kant's argument. Kant, one might say, confused a fictitious 'I think' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations with the 'I can say' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations. What is distinctive of mature language-using creatures such as ourselves is not that we have or can have a 'representation of our representations' (as Kant supposed), but that we can say how things are with us, can give verbal expression to our perceptions, feelings, and desires. Kant conflated empirical consciousness with empirical self-consciousness (conceived as being conscious of how things are with one's self), with a consequent distortion of both. And he confused the 'I have' with a fictitious 'I know', i.e. the self-ascribability of experience with knowledge or consciousness of subjective experience. The investigation of these confusions is a task for another occasion.[7]

(iv) Kant, in harmony with Cartesian and empiricist thought, held that knowledge of other subjects of consciousness presupposes self-conscious knowledge of our own subjective experience. Our

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[6] According to Descartes, on the one hand, consciousness *accompanies* thought, since thought is 'everything that takes place in us so that we are conscious of it' (AT VIII, 7). So the *object* of consciousness is a thought. On the other, consciousness is a *form* of thought, since 'thinking is to be identified . . . also with sensory consciousness . . . if I take "seeing" or "walking" to apply to the actual sense or consciousness of seeing or walking, then the conclusion [that I exist] is quite certain, since it relates to the mind, which alone has the sensation or thought that it is seeing or walking' (AT VIII, 7). If being conscious of seeing (*conscientia videndi*) is a thought, and thoughts are also objects of consciousness, then we are 'conscious of our consciousness'—which seems meaningless. If a perceptual thought is consciousness of perceiving, then since 'to be conscious of' is factive, this does not cancel the factivity of perceptual verbs but reinforces it. So consciousness cannot be a form of thought. If 'seeming to oneself to perceive' is a thought, it cannot be an object of consciousness because it is not a possible object of cognition, since it is not, according to Descartes, a logically possible object of doubt, error or ignorance. For illuminating commentary, see Anthony Kenny, *Descartes* (Random House, New York, 1968), pp. 70–8.
[7] 'Kant's Transcendental Deduction—a Wittgensteinian Critique' (below).

knowledge of the consciousness and modes of consciousness of others, he held, rests upon analogical arguments from our own case.

> I cannot have the least representation of a thinking being through an external experience, but only through self-consciousness. Thus such objects [other thinking beings] are nothing further than the transference of this consciousness of mine to other things, which can be represented as thinking beings only in this way.   (A 347/B 405)

Kant is driven to this position because he supposes that concepts of experience can and must be mastered independently of any connection with behaviour. I must be able to *think* of *sensible experiences* as *mine* independently of and antecedently to thinking of sensible experiences that are not mine as experiences of others.

   How can one bring the later Wittgenstein's insights and arguments to bear upon all this? Let us begin with a comparative overview related to these four Kantian commitments.
   (i) Clearly, Wittgenstein repudiated the Cartesian methodological primacy of epistemology from the very beginning of his career as a philosopher. His explanations of the nature of necessity and of our putative knowledge of necessary truths were never given by reference to conditions of knowledge acquisition. In the *Tractatus*, he explained the nature of logical necessity by reference to the essential nature of the significant *sentence* and its truth-functional combinatorial possibilities. Since all logical truths are senseless, they all say the same thing, to wit: nothing. So knowledge of logical truths is not a matter of knowing how things necessarily are. (With this, of course, Kant would have no quarrel.) He denied that mathematical equations are propositions with a sense. Indeed, unlike the propositions of logic, they are not even well-formed propositions. They are, he then held, pseudo-propositions (TLP 6.2). He explained the nature of metaphysical necessities in terms of the formal features of categories of *expressions* (manifest by variables). But such necessities cannot be *described* by any sentence with a sense. Rather they are *shown* by well-formed empirical sentences incorporating designations of the values of those categorial variables. So to know the truths advanced in the *Tractatus* ('the *truth* of the thoughts that are here set forth' (TLP, Preface)) is not a matter of possessing propositional knowledge that can be put into words. It is a matter of attaining the 'correct logical point of view', of 'seeing the world aright' (TLP 4.1213, 6.54), of understanding what is shown but cannot be said.

In the 1930s, Wittgenstein embarked upon *his* Copernican revolution. He developed and modified his earlier claims about mathematics. He continued to argue that the necessary propositions of arithmetic are not descriptions of the domain of number. Rather, arithmetic is the grammar of number. Propositions of arithmetic are, for the most part, prescriptions (rules) for the transformation of quantitative descriptions of how things are.[8] Propositions of geometry are not descriptions of the necessary structure of space or of phenomenal space within which we perceive appearances, but *grammars* for the description of spatial relations. Alternative geometries are alternative grammars. Propositions of logic, Wittgenstein thought, are senseless correlates of rules of inference and partly constitutive of the meanings of the logical operators. To know that a proposition of logic is true is to know nothing about how things are. But to know that a proposition *is* a proposition of logic is to know a rule of inference (LFM 277). He repudiated the very idea of *de re* metaphysical necessities, effable or ineffable, arguing instead that what appear to be synthetic a priori truths concerning the world we experience are actually no more than rules of representation in the guise of descriptions. The proper questions to examine with respect to so-called necessary propositions are not epistemological ones. Nor are they questions concerning the 'sources' of synthetic a priori necessity. Rather, they are, first: What is *meant* by characterizing such propositions as necessary? and secondly: What is their *role*? What are such propositions good for?[9]

(ii) Unlike Kant, indeed unlike the whole of the Cartesian and empiricist traditions, Wittgenstein did not adopt an egocentric approach *in any sense* to the conceptual clarification of experience and its modes. He held that the possibility of groundless self-ascription of experiential predicates depends upon mastery of their third-person ascription, which is *essentially bound up with behavioural criteria*.

(iii) Wittgenstein implicitly repudiated both the Cartesian conception of necessarily conscious *cogitationes* ('thoughts' as something

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[8] For the most part, since there are propositions of arithmetic with no application whatsoever, and others whose only use is to forge connections between different branches of arithmetic. But the rationale of the whole system is to provide rules for the transformation of empirical propositions concerning magnitudes.

[9] Contrast this with the following: 'The philosophical problem of necessity is twofold: What is its source? and How do we recognize it?' (M. A. E. Dummett, 'Review of Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*', repr. in G. Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein* (Doubleday, New York, 1966), p. 424.) This conception of the problem is diametrically opposed to Wittgenstein's. For a comprehensive account of Wittgenstein's later account of necessary propositions, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, 2nd, extensively revised, edition (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009), pp. 241–370.

which one cannot but be conscious of) and the Kantian conception of transcendental apperception. This requires elaboration.

Descartes conceived of the form of a thought-constituting perception as 'It seems to me that I perceive things to be thus-and-so'. Such a thought is indubitable and infallible. Because it is known for certain, he averred, it can serve as a premise for the *cogito*. It is held to be a necessary *object* of consciousness—one cannot have a thought without being conscious of it. Wittgenstein by implication denied that Cartesian thoughts can be objects of one's own knowledge. If they cannot be objects of knowledge, they cannot be objects of consciousness either, since what one is conscious of, one knows. From Wittgenstein's perspective, Descartes confused the *logico-grammatical exclusion* of doubt with the presence of certainty, and the *logico-grammatical exclusion* of mistake with the presence of infallible knowledge. But where doubt, mistake, and ignorance are excluded by *grammar*, so too are certainty, infallibility, and knowledge. The role Descartes allocates to 'I know' is *precisely* to declare that one is in a position to exclude *all* grounds of doubt and fallibility. But if doubt and fallibility are excluded not by experience but by logic in advance of experience, if *it makes no sense to doubt* my own *cogitationes*, if there is no such thing as *not knowing how things sensibly seem to me to be* then there is nothing for the 'I know' to exclude, no *epistemic* work for it to do, no logical space for it to occupy.

Similarly, Wittgenstein implicitly repudiated Kant's 'I think' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations and that expresses the general form of consciousness. 'I am conscious of' and 'I am conscious that' are factive. They are forms of an 'I know' that (if true) guarantees the truth of its operand. 'I think', by contrast, is a *factivity-cancelling* operator. So 'I think' cannot be an expression of *consciousness* of my representations. If the general form of apperception is 'It sensibly seems to me that things are thus-and-so', the operator 'It sensibly seems to me that' can be said to be an 'I think'—but not to be the expression of a form of consciousness, nor to be able to accompany all my representations. Nor can 'It sensibly seems to me that things are thus-and-so' be an object of consciousness (to be sure, Kant did not hold it to be). It makes no *epistemic sense* for the 'I know' of consciousness to accompany 'It sensibly seems to me that things are thus-and-so'—for the same reasons as were cited above in opposition to Descartes. Of course, 'I know that it sensibly seems to me that…' may be a form of emphasis: it *really does* so seem to me; or it may be a grammatical statement that excludes the logical possibility of ignorance in such a case; or it may be a grammatical joke.

(iv) Finally, far from ascription of experiential predicates to others being based upon analogy with one's own case, the possibility of groundless self-ascription of experiential predicates is dependent upon one's grasp of the conditions of their behaviourally warranted ascription to others. One cannot have a one-sided coin, or be given one side of a coin prior to the other. Predicates of sensation and of perception alike are two-sided coins. The Cartesian/Kantian view unavoidably commits one to the intelligibility of a private language. For if the self-ascription of experiential predicates is logically prior to their ascription to other subjects of experience, then their *sense* must be independent of behaviour. If so, then their sense must be determined by reference to subjective experience itself. But that means: by private ostensive definition employing the representation of an experience as a sample. And that, Wittgenstein argued, is unintelligible.

So, looking at the conceptual landscape through Wittgenstein's eyes, all is strange—yet nothing new. Relative to the Cartesian and Kantian viewpoints, everything has changed—yet all remains the same. This *is* a Copernican revolution.

## 3. ARE THERE TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS IN THE *TRACTATUS*?

It is clear enough why one might think that the metaphysics and ontology of the *Tractatus* are in effect established by a form of transcendental argument. For does Wittgenstein not argue that the propositions of logic 'presuppose that names have meaning and elementary propositions sense' (TLP 6.124)? But the meanings of names are the simple objects for which they stand (TLP 3.203). Simple objects are the substance of the world—that which subsists independently of what is the case (TLP 2.024). If there are simple objects, then there are states of affairs—possible configurations of objects. An actual configuration of objects is a fact. Facts are the obtaining or non-obtaining of states of affairs. The world is the totality of facts (TLP 1.1). Does this not appear to be a transcendental argument—from the existence of propositions of logic to the essential nature of the world?

Furthermore, one can run the argument a different way with equally dramatic conclusions. If there were no simple objects, then whether a proposition had sense would depend upon whether another proposition was true (TLP 2.0211). That would generate an infinite

regress. It would also make sense depend upon the facts. But sense must be independent of what is actually the case. So there must be simple objects that are the meanings of simple names. And the logical form of simple names (their combinatorial possibilities in accord with logical syntax) must be the same as the metaphysical combinatorial forms of the objects that are their meanings. What is possible in language must neither exceed nor fall short of what is possible in reality. Language and reality must have the same logical multiplicity. That is a condition of the possibility of representation.

Again, unless there were simple objects, then sense would not be determinate (TLP 3.23). But if the senses of sentences were not determinate, then the law of the excluded middle would not apply. But bipolarity is constitutive of being a proposition with a sense. So unless there is an a priori guarantee of determinacy of sense, there could be no propositions—hence no representation, and no logic either. But we do represent things to ourselves, and there are propositions of logic. So there are simple objects. So there are states of affairs. So there are facts. And these are not contingent truths.

Logic, Wittgenstein averred, is transcendental (TLP 6.13). It is a condition of the possibility of thought (reasoning). But we can think (reason). So whatever is presupposed by logic must be the case.

Now, is this not a battery of transcendental arguments that prove how things must be in reality from considerations that pertain to things we can do and know we can do—namely, reason, think, represent things to ourselves? This is a tempting conclusion. But I think it is at best misleading. It depends on how we are to conceive of a transcendental argument. One common current way of construing the general form of a transcendental argument is:

> We can V (or: We do V);
> Unless things are thus-and-so in reality, then we would not be able to V;
> so,
> Things are thus-and-so in reality.

Or, even more schematically—a straightforward *modus tolens* (and one could throw in a couple of modal operators and the axiom '$p \supset \Diamond p$'):

$$p$$
$$\text{if } \sim q, \text{ then } \sim p$$
$$\therefore q$$

Kant did indeed hold that a transcendental argument is *a form of argument*, but did not hold that it is a *formal argument*. To be sure,

*if* this is the general form of a transcendental argument, then the *Tractatus* offers us transcendental arguments. So indeed does any philosophy that argues from the indisputable character of logic, thought, language, or experience to how the world must be. However, there are three objections to this common construal.

First, very many philosophers have argued in this vein. But it is not obviously fruitful or illuminating to extend this Kantian term of art thus. Historians of philosophy have not found it helpful to characterize Plato's or Aristotle's metaphysics (not to mention all the others who have argued from the nature of language or thought to the nature of the world) as involving transcendental arguments.

Secondly, so to construe transcendental arguments renders them, as it were, an a priori form of scientific arguments to the best explanation. Astronomers argued thus:

> If there is a deviation in the orbit of a planet, the best explanation is the presence of another planet exerting gravitational force upon it;
> There is a deviation in the orbit of planet X;
> so,
> The best empirical explanation is that there is a planet Y exerting gravitational force upon planet X.

Such empirical arguments to the best explanation are confirmable (Neptune) or infirmable (Vulcan) in experience. Now, one might argue that many forms of metaphysics employ arguments to the best a priori explanation, e.g. arguments for the existence of Platonic Ideas as the best explanation for the possibility of predication, of a First Mover as an explanation of the ultimate cause of all motion, of Leibnizian monads, and so forth. But such arguments, unlike those in the sciences, are neither empirically verifiable nor falsifiable. Moreover, such meta-physicists commonly confused a contingent conclusion's (necessarily) following with a necessary conclusion's following, i.e. conflating 'Necessarily, if [if $p$ then $q$] and $p$; then $q$', with 'If [if $p$ then $q$] and $p$, then necessarily $q$'. For to be sure, they typically wished to demonstrate necessities, not contingencies, in reality. In this manner, one might unkindly argue, metaphysics mimics the methods of science to its own detriment.

But what Kant called a 'transcendental proof' does not really look like this at all. He was not concerned with inferences to the best explanation (as Locke was, in inferring the existence of objective material particulars to explain the character of our ideas). In the 'Analogies' his concern is with demonstrating that we can and do know synthetic a priori truths of nature, such as the Principle of

Causality. In the 'Transcendental Deduction' he tries to demonstrate the a priori validity of the categories—that the categories necessarily apply to any possible experience. And even in the 'Refutation of Idealism' what is shown is that inner experience *presupposes* outer experience of objects as a condition of its possibility—not that the existence of objects is the best explanation of inner experience. Nor was he concerned, as rationalists had often been, with transcendent, non-empirical, conditions of experience and its objects, since he denied the applicability of the categories beyond the domain of possible experience.

Thirdly, this construal distorts *Kant*'s idea of a transcendental proof in two ways. First, precisely because he is concerned with proving synthetic a priori truths of metaphysics, i.e. propositions the concepts of which are not analytically connected, he argued that they are connected by a 'third thing', namely, *possible experience*. Reference to possible experience is an essential ingredient in a transcendental proof, but missing in the above (modern) construal of its form. Secondly (and consequently), Kant quite clearly thought that any such proof demands the truth of *transcendental idealism* (A 130)—it is 'the sole means of solving [the] problem [of synthetic a priori knowledge]' (*Prolegomena* 377).

So, if we construe 'transcendental argument' as Kant himself did, then the *Tractatus* is not engaged in transcendental argumentation. For

(i) It is not an attempt to vindicate the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. In fact, it denies that there is any such thing, since it holds that all expressible necessity is logical necessity. Insofar as there is metaphysical necessity it is inexpressible in propositions with a sense, and so cannot be the content of propositional knowledge.

(ii) The *Tractatus* does not link independent concepts by reference to possible experience and the a priori conditions of its possibility. (Rather, it links material concepts with the formal concepts that are in effect variables of which the meanings of the material concepts are values.)

(iii) The *Tractatus* does not attempt to prove that the world of appearances (outer experience) is a condition of the possibility of inner experience. That objects exist and that there are states of affairs is a presupposition of *logic*, not of experience.

Of course, some may think that transcendental idealism is an unacceptable doctrine, but nevertheless hold that the bare idea of a transcendental argument can be salvaged from it. And the form in which

it can be salvaged is the above-cited form in which we argue from something we can do (and indisputably know that we can do) to how things must be in reality for it to be possible for us to do what we can do. If so, they may argue, then there are, in this diluted sense, transcendental arguments in the *Tractatus*.

Certainly, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein did argue from the fact that we can do certain things (represent things to ourselves, reason), that the world must have a certain scaffolding—a necessary structure and necessary forms. (Of course, he also went on to argue that such putative metaphysical statements about how things necessarily are transgress the bounds of sense in the attempt to say what can only be shown.) So, if we construe a transcendental argument to be an attempt to establish how things necessarily are in reality from considerations concerning what we do and know we can do, and if we disregard the ineffability of the metaphysical theses of the *Tractatus*, then, in a watered-down sense, one may say that the *Tractatus* makes use of transcendental arguments. It argues that things must be thus-and-so in reality, otherwise we would not be able to represent things and to reason validly from one propositional representation to another.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Wittgenstein adamantly repudiated even this in the 1930s. For it is this that he referred to as *dogmatism* (cf. MSS 111, pp. 87, 119f.; MS 115, 57; MS 130, 53). It is the dogmatism of projecting features of our method of representation onto the objects represented and then insisting that they *must* be thus-and-so, otherwise we wouldn't be able to…

### 4. ARE THERE TRANSCENDENTAL ARGUMENTS IN THE *INVESTIGATIONS*?

When Wittgenstein initiated *his* Copernican revolution in the early 1930s, he abandoned the thought that necessary, but ineffable, truths of metaphysics were presupposed by logic and the possibility of symbolic representation. In the first place, as we noted above, what looked like ineffable metaphysical truths that are shown but cannot be said, are—insofar as they are correct—rules of representation. To know that red is darker than pink, for example, is no more than to know an inference rule: that if A is red, and B is pink, one may infer that A is darker than B. This rule of inference is partly constitutive of the meanings of the words 'red', 'pink', and 'darker than'. Hence to know that red is darker than pink is not to know a synthetic a priori

proposition about nature, but rather to know a rule. So too, to know what Kant thought of as synthetic a priori propositions of metaphysics, for example that every event has a cause, would (if Kant were right) be no more than to have mastered *the grammar of discourse concerning events*.

If what seemed to be synthetic a priori propositions that are conditions of the possibility of empirical cognition are no more than norms of representation, then the question of how it is possible for us to have knowledge of such truths simply fades away. For there is no great mystery here. (There are no mysteries in philosophy—only mystifications.) For our knowledge of such propositions is just knowledge of the rules of our language—knowledge of our own form of representation. If the law of causality is indeed a part of our form of representation, then to know that every event has a cause is just to know that if something is described as being an event, it may be inferred that it had a cause. If the inference from 'E is an event' to 'E was caused' is a priori legitimate, that would be because it is partly constitutive of the meaning of 'event'. What Kant thought to be synthetic a priori truths describing necessary constraints upon reality are merely what Wittgenstein called 'grammatical propositions' seen through a glass darkly. A grammatical proposition is a rule of representation in the guise of a description of how things necessarily are.

Since grammar, in the sense in which Wittgenstein used the term, is an interwoven network of rules that are partly constitutive of the meanings of expressions in our language, our knowledge of—or perhaps: our grasp of—grammatical propositions is manifest in our linguistic practices. We use the words of our language in accordance with these norms of representation. We draw inferences in accordance with them. If anyone reasons 'A is red, B is pink, so A is lighter than B', we would not understand them. We should correct them; or ask what they mean. For we employ such grammatical propositions as standards for the correct uses of words and as measures of valid inferences. We invoke them in teaching our children ('No, no! If it's red all over, it can't also be green all over', we may say). And we refer to them in explaining to foreigners how expressions in our language are used ('If something is one foot long, then it's not (can't be) shorter than twelve inches', we might explain).

It is a pair of cardinal (grammatical) insights of Wittgenstein that there is no such thing as inferring facts about the world from corresponding rules of grammar, or of inferring rules of grammar from corresponding facts about the world. This is part of what he meant

by his insistence upon what he called 'the autonomy of grammar'.[10] No fact, no contingent fact-stating proposition, entails the content of a rule of representation. Conversely, the content of a rule of representation does not entail that things are thus-and-so in reality. That red is a colour is a rule of inference (i.e. A is red ⊢ A is coloured). That red is a colour does not entail that some object or other is red or coloured. This rule of inference—the grammatical proposition in the guise of a description—is not made true by the fact that red is a colour. For it is not a fact that red is a colour. If it were a *fact* (a *matter of fact*) that red is a colour, we should know what it would be for red not to be a colour. But we do not—for that is a nonsensical form of words.

The autonomy of grammar, however, is perfectly compatible with the idea, which Wittgenstein certainly held, that the existence, employment, and usefulness of certain grammatical forms presupposes a large variety of general facts about us, about the world we live in, and about our engagement with it. It presupposes a host of regularities in the world, as well as regularities in our nature and behaviour. But it would be absurd to suppose that it is the task of philosophy to *prove* the existence of such regularities from the existence of specific norms of representation. (As if one might infer, or even want to infer, the existence of human beings from the existence of the rules of chess!) In the first place, *we already know the relevant truths*, and do not need to infer them from anything. Secondly, Wittgenstein—unlike Kant—would have repudiated the very idea that it is or could be part of the task of philosophy *to prove the existence of anything* (least of all of the 'external world'). What it makes no sense to prove (that I exist, that the 'external world' exists) cannot stand in need of a proof. What philosophy has to do is examine the challenges launched by sceptics of one kind or another, and show why the reasons advanced for thinking that we do *not* know what we take ourselves to know in these respects (e.g. that there are 'material objects' in the room, that there are 'other minds' in the Common Room) are misconceived.

One might object: does Wittgenstein not prove that there cannot be a private language? Does he not prove that there cannot be private ostensive definitions? Does he not prove that one man, just once in his life, cannot follow a rule? To be sure, these are *negative* existential

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[10] For detailed discussion of these principles, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion: Themes in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986), chap. VII.

statements—but they *are* existential statements. What is proved is a truth about the world, indeed—a necessary truth, even if a merely negative one! Not so. As remarked above (§1), such necessary negative existential statements do not exclude possibilities that are impossible, but forms of words that have no use within our language. Despite their appearance, they are not statements about reality, but grammatical statements concerning the use (and uselessness) of words.

Philosophy moves within grammar. It clarifies the network of concepts and conceptual connections of our conceptual scheme. It is not its business to prove that this, that, or the other thing or kind of thing exists in the world—only to show that it is incoherent for the sceptic to claim, for example, that we cannot know whether there is a table in the next room, or whether Jack or Jill has a headache. And equally incoherent of him to suppose that while he knows how things are subjectively with him, he cannot know how things are with others.

Some philosophers may object to this description of Wittgenstein's procedures in the *Investigations*. To be sure, there are no transcendental arguments in Kant's sense of the phrase. There is no attempt to prove the truth of any synthetic a priori propositions by reference to the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience. Nevertheless, in the sense in which one can argue that the *Tractatus* invokes a watered-down form of transcendental argument, does the *Investigations* not do so too? For it has seemed to many that the discussion of the possibility of a private language is a transcendental argument *from*: either (i) the conceptual (grammatical, a priori) conditions of the possibility of knowledge of our own subjective experiences, or (ii) the conceptual (grammatical, a priori) conditions of the possibility of self-ascription of subjective experience, *to*: our knowledge (and hence the existence) of other subjects of experience. Equally, it has been suggested that Wittgenstein's detailed examination of what is involved in following a rule shows that a conceptual (grammatical, a priori) condition of the possibility of anyone's following a rule is that there exist others who likewise follow the rule. For, it is suggested, Wittgenstein showed that the criteria for following a linguistic (meaning-constituting) rule are to be found in community practice—in what is generally *called* 'following the rule' by members of a linguistic community. So my following a rule presupposes that there are others who follow the rule I follow. And is that not, in a loose sense, a transcendental proof of the existence of a community of language-users?

This is mistaken. It misconstrues what is shown by the private language argument and the investigations into following rules, and it misconstrues the method by which it is shown.

First, the examination of the idea of a logically private language does *not* show or even try to show (i) that *knowledge* of how things are with oneself, *or* the possibility of self-ascription of experience, is possible only if (ii) one knows that there are other subjects of experience.

(i) Wittgenstein denies that it makes sense to speak of *knowing* or of *not knowing* that one is in pain or that things sensibly seem to one to be thus-and-so. So there is (in Wittgenstein's later work) no investigation of the conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness as construed by Descartes, since it is an illusion that there is any such thing. A *cogitatio* cannot be both a form of consciousness *and* an object of consciousness. Nor is there an investigation of the conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness (transcendental self-consciousness) as construed by Kant. The 'I think' is *not* capable of accompanying all my representations. Although 'It sensibly (visually, auditorily) seems to me that things are thus-and-so' makes perfectly good sense, that is not a statement of a 'representation of a representation', but a *qualification on a statement of a representation*. But the possibility of qualifying the statement of a representation presupposes the possibility of unqualified statements of representations. The language-games of 'It seems to me that things are thus-and-so' presuppose antecedent mastery of the language-games of 'Things are thus-and-so'.

One may grant that, and nevertheless insist that what Wittgenstein does is to infer the existence and knowledge of the existence of other minds from the bare conditions of the possibility of self-ascription of experience. But that too is mistaken:

(ii) Wittgenstein does not try to show against a sceptic about other minds that we *do* know that there are other subjects of experience. Indeed, he brushes such scepticism brusquely aside on two explicit grounds. First, 'if we are using the word "know" as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?)', then we very often know how things are with other people (cf. PI §246). Secondly, 'just try—in a real case—to doubt someone else's fear or pain!' (PI §303). Wittgenstein was not interested here in refuting the sceptic, any more than Kant was in the 'Transcendental Deduction' (as opposed to the 'Refutation of Idealism'). What he aimed to show is that a condition of the possibility (intelligibility) of groundless avowals and averrals of experience is the recognition of *the logical criteria for the ascription*

*of experience to others*. So what he is doing is showing a connection between the possibility of immediate application of concepts of experience to oneself and mastery of their conditions of application to others. He is *not* showing that we *know* that there are other subjects of experience. ('Do you need a proof?' he might mock one.) Now *this* does have bearing on the sceptic—but not by proving that we know something that he denies we can know. For the sceptic about other minds thinks it intelligible that he should know how things are with him, or at the very least, be able to say how things are with him, while simultaneously denying the *adequacy* of the behavioural criteria for the ascription of experience to others. And, if Wittgenstein's argument holds, that *makes no sense*.[11]

I shall deal more briefly with the construal of Wittgenstein's discussion of following rules as a transcendental argument for the existence of a community of followers of shared rules—of a language-using community—for I have discussed it extensively elsewhere.[12] The so-called 'community view' interpretation of Wittgenstein's discussion of following a rule holds (roughly) that Wittgenstein showed that it is, logically speaking, only possible for an act to be an instance of following a given rule if it accords with what other members of a community of rule-followers do when they count themselves as following that rule. Following a rule, Wittgenstein remarked, is a practice—and a practice is (it is alleged) by definition a *social practice*. So a condition of the possibility of my following a rule to V (to expand the series of even integers, to apply a word in a language in accordance with a rule for its application) is that there be a community of rule-followers who engage in a common practice of following this rule. I have shown elsewhere that this is a misinterpretation of

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[11] This, incidentally, is why Barry Stroud's famous criticism of Strawson's purported transcendental argument in *Individuals* (Methuen, London, 1959), chapter 3 is mistaken. Stroud argued that the most Strawson's transcendental argument can establish is how we must *believe* things to be. But what Strawson's argument establishes is that subjective experience is possible only on condition of the *recognition of the adequacy of logical criteria for other-ascription of experience*. Satisfaction of such criteria, in the absence of defeating conditions, suffices for *knowledge* (not mere belief) of how things are with another. But whether such criteria are, as a matter of fact, satisfied, is not for philosophy to say—that is a matter for experience to determine. And we all know how it determines it.

[12] See Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, in the essays entitled 'Following rules, mastery of techniques and practices' (pp. 135–56), and 'Private linguists and "private linguists"—Robinson Crusoe sails again' (pp. 157–68).

Wittgenstein's observations. In his use of the expression 'Praxis' in German, it is no pleonasm to say that a pattern of action is a social practice.[13] It is not a criterion for correctly following a given rule that one do the same as others do when they follow that rule. Rather if others are correctly following the same rule as one is correctly following oneself, then they will do the same as what one does oneself. It is the rule that determines what counts as following it—given that there is a practice (which may or may not be shared), i.e. a regularity of behaviour, which is recognized as a uniformity, and given the employment of that uniformity as a canon of correctness manifest in critical normative behaviour (e.g. of self-correction, of explaining, of teaching others should the occasion arise).

It would, I believe, be an egregious misrepresentation of Wittgenstein's argument concerning following rules to suggest that it is even a watered-down transcendental argument from the conditions of the possibility of my following a rule to the existence of a linguistic community. What the discussion of following a rule shows is not that an a priori condition of following a rule is the existence of a social practice of following a rule, but rather that there can be no such thing as following a rule which cannot in principle be followed by others. And equally, that there can be no such thing as following a rule in the absence of a practice of following the rule. For someone who follows a rule must not only exhibit a regularity of behaviour, he must also see that regularity as a uniformity, and treat it as a standard. But there is here no vestige of a transcendental argument, not even in a watered-down sense—only an array of connections within the web of concepts.[*]

# 3

## Kant's Transcendental Deduction: a Wittgensteinian Critique

### 1. KANT AND WITTGENSTEIN

Although Wittgenstein read at least parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he never wrote about it. His comments on Kant and Kant's philosophy are few and brief.[1] There are interesting convergences between their respective philosophies, but also deep differences. Despite Kant's brilliant criticisms of the Cartesian and empiricist traditions, there are four very general principles, rooted in Cartesian methodology, which Kant never questioned. These were discussed in the previous essay 'Kant and Wittgenstein: the Matter of Transcendental Arguments', but I shall briefly rehearse them again, as they provide the essential stage-setting for our current concerns.

First, Kant's approach to the resolution of his master-problem: 'How are synthetic a priori judgements possible?' is steadfastly epistemological. He seeks to explain the possibility of synthetic a priori *knowledge* by reference to the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience—understood as objectively valid perception, i.e. *knowledge* of nature.

Secondly, his approach is unwaveringly, if abstractly, subjective. 'In transcendental science everything must be derived from the subject' (*Notes and Fragments* 5058)—and that abstract subject is I, not He. Kant's primary enquiry is not into the conditions of the possibility of other-ascription of experience, but into the *bare form of consciousness*, conceived as the abstract framework for the possibility of empirical self-consciousness.

Thirdly, the concept of consciousness that he deploys in his investigations into the conditions of the possibility of (a subject's own)

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[1] For their itemization, see Chapter 2, section 1, above.

experience is the heir to the concept of consciousness introduced into philosophy by Descartes, developed by Locke, and refined into the concept of apperception by Leibniz. Although he advances powerful criticisms of Descartes's use of the concept to prove his nature as a thinking substance, Kant never challenges the fundamental features of the concept of consciousness that he inherited. On the contrary, what he does is to investigate the a priori conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness thus conceived.

Finally, in conformity with the Cartesian and empiricist traditions, Kant held that the possibility of conceiving of experience as one's own was *logically independent* of the possibility of other-ascription of experience. For he held that experiences are ascribable to others on the basis of analogy with one's own case.

I cannot have the least representation of a thinking being through an external experience, but only through self-consciousness. Thus such objects are nothing further than the transference of this consciousness of mine to other things, which can be represented as thinking beings only in this way.
(A 347/B 405)

It is obvious that if one wishes to represent a thinking being, one must put oneself in its place, and thus substitute one's own subject for the object one wants to consider (which is not the case in any other species of investigation). (A 353)

We have no grounds for conceiving of experiences as our own. So Kant did not think that the concepts of experience thus groundlessly self-ascribed are logically bound up with behaviour.[2] Consequently, he implicitly committed himself to the possibility of mastering the use of such concepts in self-ascription of experience independently of mastering their use in other-ascription of experience. For if such concepts are not partly determined by reference to constitutive behavioural grounds for their other-ascription, then they must be determined in inner sense. But if they are determined in inner sense, there is no way for them to be determined other than by private ostensive definition employing a representation as a defining sample. So Kant implicitly committed himself to the logical possibility of a private language. This will not be discussed here.

In the following essay, I shall be concerned with the third issue: the nature of consciousness and apperception. These concepts are pivotal for Kant's enterprise in the 'Transcendental Deduction of the

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[2] The term 'self-ascription' may seem too weighty. I employ it to do no more than to indicate a first-person present tense sentence with an experiential predicate.

Categories'. That chapter lies at the very heart of transcendental philosophy. It is, I think, possible to bring Wittgenstein's thought to bear directly upon Kant's account of the unity of apperception and the conditions of the possibility of experience. This will shed critical light on Kant's conceptions of consciousness and self-consciousness. I believe it will show that while Kant effectively destroyed the Cartesian/empiricist framework of philosophical thought, he was still entrapped in the rubble.

## 2. KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

Kant's master problem was 'How are synthetic a priori judgements possible?' The answer to this question will also answer the question of whether *metaphysics as a science* is possible (*Prolegomena* 256f., 365–71). We know synthetic a priori propositions of geometry and arithmetic. We also know, Kant thought, synthetic a priori propositions of pure natural science. Metaphysics lays claim to knowledge of the truth of synthetic a priori judgements: for example, that every event must have a cause, that substance must persist throughout change, that objects must stand in reciprocal causal relations. But how *can* we know such truths? They are not derived from experience, since experience can yield only contingent truths. They are not projections of associative habits (as Hume had argued). They are known a priori, and are both universal and necessary. But how is such knowledge possible, if it is neither analytic nor empirical? Kant's critical step was his so-called Copernican revolution—the thought that our knowledge of such synthetic a priori truths does not have to conform to objects, but that objects, insofar as we have synthetic a priori knowledge of them, have to conform to the a priori conditions of our sensible and cognitive capacities. So his aim is to show that the truth of synthetic a priori judgements is an a priori condition of the very possibility of experience (cognition that arises out of perception).

Synthetic a priori knowledge is ampliative. So the possibility of such knowledge cannot be explained by reference to apprehension of direct (analytic) links between concepts (e.g. as with the concepts of *body* and *divisibility*). Rather the concepts (e.g. of *cause* and *event*) associated in a synthetic a priori judgement (viz., that every event has a cause) must be shown to be linked by some third thing. The link is forged by *the possibility of experience* (A 783/B 811). To show

that such a connection of categorial concepts is a condition of any possible experience (and hence, in Kant's view, of the objects of experience) is to give a transcendental proof of a principle: a synthetic a priori judgement concerning experience that is both universal and necessary. It is by means of such transcendental proofs that we can attain transcendental knowledge, i.e. 'All knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*' (A 12/B 25).

The pivot upon which the arguments turn is the 'Transcendental Deduction of the Categories'. In it Kant argued that appearances 'must stand under conditions of the necessary unity of apperception' (A 110). Experience, he averred, requires a twofold unity. First, the unity of the object of experience. What is given in intuition is a manifold of sensory data in different sensory modalities at successive times. If this is to constitute experience, it has to be synthesized into the perception of a unified object. Secondly, the unity of consciousness of the subject of experience. Experience must be such as to be self-ascribable to a single persisting subject of experience—it must be conceived by its subject to be the experience *of* a single persisting subject.[3] Otherwise it could not constitute anyone's *knowledge* of appearances. With remarkable ingenuity, Kant argues that 'inner experience...is possible only under the presupposition of outer experience' (B 275). And it is in this necessary coordination of the possibility of subjective judgements and the possibility of objectively valid judgements that the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge of nature is rooted.

I shall sketch Kant's account. I shall then suggest that the 'Transcendental Deduction' and the subsequent transcendental arguments are rooted in an array of questionable presuppositions concerning consciousness and self-consciousness that he inherited from his predecessors. I shall argue that despite his brilliantly challenging the empiricist and rationalist tradition, and shifting the parameters of the debate from ideas to concepts (conceived to be 'predicates of

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[3] This is a purely formal condition that in itself does not provide criteria of personal identity over time. It is merely the requirement of a single persistent subject as a condition of perceptions constituting cognition (experience). Kant's brilliant criticism of the rationalist doctrine of the soul in the Third Paralogism demonstrates how the rationalist confuses the unity of perception with the perception of a unity. 'The identity of the consciousness of myself at different times is...only a formal condition of my thoughts and their coherence, and in no way proves the numerical identity of my subject' (A 363).

possible judgements'[4]), and from actualities to possibilities, he did not, to use a phrase of Wittgenstein's, 'put the question marks deep enough down' (CV 62).

A legal 'deduction' was an argument justifying a legal right by reference to the source of its legitimacy (*quaestio juris*). A deduction of a concept, in Kant's philosophy, is an argument justifying the objective validity of a concept. A concept is objectively valid if and only if it applies to objects. The objective validity of empirical concepts is determined by empirical deductions by reference to actual experience. The objective validity of pure a priori concepts must be demonstrated, independently of any experience, by reference to their source in the understanding (the faculty of judgement) and its operations on intuitions (given by the faculty of sensibility). The applicability of the pure a priori concepts to objects of experience must be shown to be *a condition of any possible experience* (A 96). A transcendental deduction of concepts is an explanation of how pure a priori concepts *can* relate a priori to objects (A 85/B 117). If the categories (the pure a priori concepts derived from the fundamental forms of judgement in the 'Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories') can be shown to be presupposed by any possible experience, then they will have been shown to be objectively valid.

Kant's argument begins from the examination of the subjective sources which form the a priori foundation of the possibility of experience (A 97). Intuition (receptivity, sensibility) presents us with a synopsis of sensory data. That synopsis requires a transcendental synthesis—a unity-creating combination of the elements of a manifold. A *synthesis of representations* given in intuition is 'the act of combining different representations and grasping their multiplicity in one cognition' (A 77/B 103). Kant distinguishes, within the synthesis of representations, three different syntheses. The first is the synthesis of *apprehension* of the manifold given in intuition, which, as it were, welds the manifold into a synchronic unity. The second is the synthesis of *reproduction* in imagination, which ensures diachronic unity of representations—that successive representations be apprehended as representations of one and the same object. The third is the synthesis of *recognition* of a representation in accordance with a concept.[5]

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[4] Thus anticipating, at the level of concept and judgement, Bentham's, and subsequently Frege's, context principle concerning word- and sentence-meaning.

[5] This conception of synthesis is the heir of the ancient misconception of a *sensus communis* (a general sense) and its function. It is also the ancestor of the contemporary cognitive neuroscientific notion of the *binding problem*. The latter is nicely exemplified in the following passage written by Francis Crick: 'we can see how the

 Before we proceed further, some words are needed to clarify the concept of apperception. The term originates in Leibniz's *Nouveaux Essaies* (written in 1703–5, pub. 1765), replacing Pierre Coste's *s'apercevoir de* (*awareness*), by which Coste, Locke's French translator, had rendered Locke's 'perceiving one's perception'. According to Locke, 'Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a Man's own mind' (*Essay* II–i–19). According to Leibniz, *perception* is 'the transitory state which enfolds and represents a multiplicity in a unity' (*Monadology* §14). It is 'the inner state of the monad representing external things'. *Apperception* is 'consciousness or the reflective knowledge of this inner state'.[6] It should be noted that this notion of consciousness has as its object not the perceived objects in reality that we apprehend by the use of our senses (e.g. the visible room in which I am sitting), but rather *their alleged subjective reproduction in the mind* (as it were, the 'visual room' I have). According to Locke, it is 'impossible for anyone to perceive, without perceiving that he does perceive' (*Essay* II–xxvii–9). Leibniz disagreed, holding that there are indefinitely many '*petites perceptions*' or 'insensible (minute) perceptions' which are not apperceived (i.e. of which we are not aware). The term 'apperception' was picked up by Wolff and through his writings transmitted to Kant. Pure apperception, according to Kant, is distinct from inner sense or empirical apperception. It is, Kant

visual parts of the brain take the picture (the visual field) apart, but we do not yet know how the brain puts it all together again to provide our highly organized view of the world—that is, what we see. It seems as if the brain needs to impose some global unity on certain activities in its different parts so that the attributes of a single object—its shape, colour, movement, location, and so on—are in some way brought together…' (*The Astonishing Hypothesis* (Touchstone, London, 1995), p. 22). To be sure, this is confused. The visual parts of the brain do not take *pictures* apart or put them together again. And what we see are neither pictures nor images—unless we are in a picture gallery. So the binding problem thus conceived is a muddle.

 There are neural analogues of the misconceived tale of transcendental synthesis, and there are neuroscientific analogues of the dubious science of transcendental psychology. For it is a task of cognitive neuroscience to discover how in detail the diverse neural inputs from the sense-organs are processed by the brain *to make it possible for a perceiver to perceive a unified object*. That, however, is not a synthesis of intuitions, for intuitions are not neural impulses. Nor is it the bogus 'binding problem'— for the question is *not* how the brain manages to construct a unified *picture* or *image* of anything. Neural processes make perception of objects possible, but (*pace* Crick) they do not make the objects of perception, and the objects of perception are not internal representations. Nor are they external representations.

 [6] Leibniz, 'The Principles of Nature and Grace, based on Reason' (1714), §4. Reid was critical of Leibniz's idea of unconscious perceptions (*Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2002, orig. pub. 1785), pp. 190f.), and equally critical of Locke's and Leibniz's assimilation of consciousness and reflection (*Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, pp. 42, 421).

wrote in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §24, 'a consciousness of what the human being *does*' (in transcendental synthesis (see below)) and 'belongs to the faculty of thinking', whereas inner sense 'is a consciousness of what he *undergoes*, in so far as he is affected by the play of his own thoughts. It rests on inner intuition, and consequently on the relations of ideas in time' (7:161).

The transcendental unity of apperception is 'the supreme [principle] in the whole of human cognition' (B 135). It requires the satisfaction of three a priori conditions. If a manifold given in intuition is to amount to anything for a subject of experience—even merely to enter the sphere of consciousness as representations—not only must it be unified, it must be apprehended *as belonging to a subject* (the (formal) ownership condition). The data of sense are only *data* if they are given to one and the same persistent subject at different times (the (formal) persistence condition). Contrary to Hume, representations (Humean perceptions) are not a field upon which one can apply a principle of differentiation to distinguish those that are mine from those that are not. That all the intuitions that I 'encounter' (that I 'have') are *mine* is not something derived from the character of the intuitions. It is, in Kant's jargon, 'original' or 'underived'—a transcendental condition of the possibility of experience (the immediacy condition).

All intuitions are nothing for us and do not in the least concern us if they cannot be taken up into consciousness.... We are conscious *a priori* of the thoroughgoing identity of ourselves with regard to all representations that can ever belong to our cognition, as a necessary condition of the possibility of all representations (since the latter represent something in me only in so far as they belong with all the others to one consciousness...). This principle holds *a priori*...    (A 116)

So, Kant argues, it must be *possible* for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations (B 131). Why the modal qualification? Apperception, *pace* Locke, is not universally necessary—I do not have to be conscious of *all* my perceptions. Kant accepted Leibniz's conception of minute perceptions of which I am not conscious. But, *pace* Leibniz, it must be *possible* for me to be conscious of them. Otherwise I could have a sensible experience (a representation) without being able to conceive of it (to represent it to myself) as *mine*. If so, Kant says, it 'would be nothing to me'. So, the manifold given in an intuition would not constitute *my* representations if they did not belong to one persistent self-consciousness (B 132).

As *my* representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must yet necessarily accord with the condition under which alone they *can*

stand together in a universal [i.e. general] self-consciousness, because other-wise they would not throughout belong to me.   (B 133)

This *analytic* unity of consciousness itself presupposes a *synthetic* unity. For it does not suffice that each representation be accompanied (or be capable of being accompanied) by consciousness. For then I would merely have 'as multicoloured, diverse a self as I have repre-sentations of which I am conscious' (B 134). The ultimate condition of the transcendental unity of self-consciousness is that *I* synthesize the manifold given me in intuition, and *am conscious* of so doing.

this thoroughgoing identity of the apperception of a manifold given in intui-tion contains a synthesis of representations and is possible only through the consciousness of this synthesis. . . . [It] does not yet come about by my accom-panying each representation with consciousness, but by my *adding* one rep-resentation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis. Therefore it is only because I can combine a manifold of given representations *in one consciousness*, that it is possible for me to represent the *identity of the con-sciousness in these representations* itself . . . The thought that the representa-tions given in intuition all together belong *to me* means accordingly the same as that I unite them in one self-consciousness, or at least can unite them therein; and although it is itself not yet the consciousness of the *syn-thesis* of the representations, it presupposes the possibility of the latter, i.e., only because I can comprehend their manifold in a consciousness, do I call them all together *my* representations.   (B 133–4)

The synthesis of the manifold of intuitions is the ground of the unity of apperception, which antecedes all determinate experience. But our understanding 'is able to bring about the unity of apper-ception a priori *only by means of the categories*' (B 145, emphasis added). The categories are held to be derivable from the general forms of judgement, and are implicit in every act of judging. So the conditions of the possibility of self-consciousness are precisely the synthesis of intuitions and their subsumption under the categories that are the pure a priori concepts of an object in general. So 'The a priori conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of objects of experience' (A 111).[7] For representations to satisfy the conditions of the unity of apperception, they must have such a character as renders them in general experiences of an objective spatio-temporally unified realm of nature.

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[7] This quotation comes from the A-deduction, whereas the previous one is from the B-deduction. But on this point at least they concur.

We must note Kant's unclarity regarding the 'I think' that must be able to accompany all my representations. It is itself a representation, but not an intuition (B 132). For it is an act of spontaneity and so cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. Kant equivocates between characterizing the 'I think' as a *concept* (although not a concept signifying a thinking being in general (A 354)), and characterizing it as a *judgement* (although by itself it has no content). It is not a category, but it belongs to the table of categories in as much as it is the 'vehicle of all concepts'—serving only 'to introduce all our thought as belonging to consciousness' (A 341/B 400). It is 'a representation that another representation is within me'. Unlike the categories, it is not a condition of the possibility of the knowledge of objects, but rather 'the form of apperception, which belongs to and precedes every experience'[8] (A 354). So it is both *form* and *possible accompaniment*. But although it is merely a *form*, it is, Kant holds, a *necessary form*. And although it is merely an *accompaniment*, it is *necessary* that it be a (possible) accompaniment. Finally, it is a *representation* that must be capable of accompanying all other representations (intuitions), but cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation (B 132). (Roughly speaking, any appearance that 'Things are thus-and-so' can be accompanied by an 'It sensibly seems to me that...' But it cannot sensibly seem to me that it sensibly seems to me that...')

The 'Transcendental Deduction' provides the background for Kant's transcendental arguments in the 'Refutation of Idealism' and in the 'Analogies of Experience'. In the former, he attempts to show that 'the mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me'. The consciousness of my own existence, he argues, 'is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me' (B 276), for 'inner experience in general is possible only through outer experience in general' (B 278). Inner sense involves consciousness of successive perceptions; but all determination of succession in time requires something permanent in perception; there is nothing permanent in inner sense; so my awareness of myself as existing in time presupposes something permanent outside me (and not merely a representation of a thing outside me (B 275)). In the Analogies of Experience, Kant attempts to validate such synthetic a priori propositions as the law of causality and the permanence of substance from the contrasts between the possible temporal order of experiences

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[8]  A Leibnizian 'minute perception' would not count as an experience.

and the determinate temporal order of its objects. In both texts he argues from the temporal nature of apperception to the existence, permanence, and causally determined character of nature, which is presupposed by the very possibility of apperception. He argues from the necessary character of conscious experience to how the objects of such experience must be in order for it to be possible that experience should have such a character.

Let me try to summarize Kant's achievement in respect of our concerns. He realized that the Cartesian/Lockean conception of empirical (perceptual) knowledge is radically mistaken. Our perceptual knowledge of objects is not *derived* from subjective knowledge of impressions, and our perceptual knowledge of how things in nature actually are is not derived from our knowledge of how things subjectively seem to us to be. On the contrary, outer sense is immediate or direct, not mediated by inner sense. Kant realized that self-ascribability of subjective experiences does not imply knowledge of a persistent *thinking substance* that is the subject of experience. The Cartesian arguments for the indivisibility, persistence, and bodily independence of the soul, and hence for its immortality, are paralogisms. Kant saw that the Humean question 'What makes an experience my experience?' is incoherent. He realized that Hume's quest for the principle of unity of experience in empirical relations between experiences (causation and similarity) is likewise incoherent. He saw clearly that Hume's quest for a self in inner sense was a bogus quest. And he realized that inner sense—what he thought of as knowledge of how things subjectively are with one—is possible only on the condition of the possibility of outer sense. For such inner sense is temporally ordered, and temporal ordering presupposes something (relatively) permanent throughout change, which is not given in inner but only in outer sense. These insights were momentous in the history of modern philosophy. They shattered the house that Descartes and Locke had built. But Kant was unable to clear the ground of the rubble or to find a way out of it. That was a task left for Wittgenstein.

### 3. KANT AND WITTGENSTEIN: DIVERGENT PATHWAYS THROUGH THE JUNGLE

Wittgenstein would agree with Kant that self-ascription of experience is groundless, or, as Kant put it, 'original' (the underived condition). But where Kant asks what are the a priori conditions of the possibility

of apperception (of the 'I think' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations), we might imagine Wittgenstein asking what is presupposed by the possibility of groundless self-ascription of predicates of perception (of the 'I perceive' that must be capable of accompanying all my perceptions, as Kant did not put it). While Kant answers his question in terms of the threefold synthesis and the subsumption of intuitions under the categories, Wittgenstein would answer his in terms of public criteria for possession of the concepts of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. What, logically speaking, must a speaker *already be able to do with words*, if he is to be able groundlessly to avow or aver a sensible experience?

Kant's transcendental idealism and his transcendental arguments are deliberately crafted to answer the master-question 'How is synthetic a priori knowledge of nature possible?' How can we *know*, *independently of experience*, that substance in nature must persist; or that objects must stand in reciprocal causal relations; or that every event must have a cause? His explanation of the possibility of such meta-physical knowledge is by reference to what he conceived to be the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience. As long as one thinks of these judgements as describing necessities in nature that are known in advance of experience, Kant's strategy of linking our *knowledge* of them to the conditions of the possibility of experience and hence to transcendental apperception will seem not only ingenious, but profoundly compelling. Wittgenstein's account of what seems to be natural necessity ('Naturnotwendigkeit' (PI §372), i.e. metaphysical necessities in nature) is utterly different. What *appear* to be necessary and universal truths about the world are *norms of representation*. They are not expressions of knowledge of necessities constitutive of the realm of nature, but rather rules for the use of words in the guise of descriptions. They are not rules for nature, but rules for the *description* of nature. They are *grammatical propositions*. Wittgenstein's account of the nature of such propositions is wholly independent of his account of the conditions of the possibility of self-ascription of experiential predicates (or, more accurately, of avowals of experience).[9] This is of capital importance.

So, Kant and Wittgenstein take different paths through the conceptual jungle. To be sure, that does not show that Kant got lost. But if

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[9]  Wittgenstein (like Kant) would not speak of 'self-ascription' of experience—and with good reason. But for present purposes, I hope that it may be allowed as a shorthand facilitating comparison between the two modes of philosophical thought.

Wittgenstein's arguments are correct, then Kant's path can never emerge from the jungle. The source of Kant's troubles lies in his taking the questionable conception of apperception as a reliable compass with which to find his way. To put things epigrammatically:

*The 'I say' that must be capable of accompanying all my representations is not an 'I think'.*

Or, more perspicuously:

*Kant confuses a fictitious form of self-consciousness with the ability to say what one perceives and that one perceives it—and, occasionally, to hedge one's bets.*

Let me explain.

   One can be conscious of objects in one's field of perception. Perceptual consciousness is a mode of non-voluntary attention.[10] It is a form of *cognitive receptivity*—a reception, rather than attainment or achievement, of knowledge. That is why one can order someone to observe something, but one cannot order someone to become or be conscious of something observed. One can try to discover something, but one cannot try to be conscious of something. One can succeed in detecting something, but one cannot succeed in becoming or being conscious of something. Because it is a form of cognitive receptivity, *being conscious* is a cousin of *noticing*, *realizing*, *recognizing*, and *being aware*. Unlike its cousins, however, perceptual consciousness is limited to what catches and then holds one's attention. One may become and then be conscious of the ticking of the clock, or become and then be conscious of the smell of dinner wafting in from the kitchen. The objects of perceptual consciousness are not one's perceivings but the objects of one's perceivings (typically, but not only, objects of peripheral perception). The moot point is whether one can be conscious of one's perceiving what one perceives. This is not an empirical question to be resolved by examining what goes on while we perceive (cf. PI §316). Rather, we must investigate what, *if*

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[10] See A. R. White, *Attention* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1964), chap. IV. For elaboration of the different forms of consciousness, see M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), chaps. 9–12. Consciousness is not an Aristotelian focal concept, it is a multi-focal concept. It has a number of different, but connected, centres of variation (see P. M. S. Hacker, *The Intellectual Powers: A Study of Human Nature* (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2013), chap. 1). For the analysis of another multi-focal concept, see the analysis of causation in P. M. S. Hacker, *Human Nature: The Categorial Framework* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2007), chap. 3.

*anything*, could be *meant* by phrases of the general form: 'being conscious of one's sensible experiences'? In short, is there any such thing as *apperception*?

One perceives things in one's immediate environment by the use of one's senses. So, Wittgenstein queries, 'Do I observe myself, then, and perceive that I am seeing . . . ?' (PI §417). That is, presumably, absurd—and it was no part of Kant's tale to construe either pure apperception or the empirical apperception of inner sense as *perceiving* that one perceives. But—according to Kant—'I think' *must* be capable of accompanying all my representations. For only when it does do they amount to what he calls 'perceptions' (*representations with consciousness*). So, we might imagine Wittgenstein going on to ask, 'Am I then my own *witness* that I am perceiving something?' (cf. PI §416). Kant's answer seems clear: for me to have a perception I must be conscious, or at least capable of being conscious, of it *as my perception*—as the sensible experience I have (the Humean worry that it might be another's cannot arise). How might Wittgenstein respond?

In a remarkable passage that can be viewed as a challenge to the whole Kantian conception, Wittgenstein noted the temptation to claim that when one sees objects, one *has* something—the current experience, the contents of which are subsumed under the very same concepts as the objects perceived:

You want to look about you and say: 'At any rate only *I* have got THIS.'—What are these words for? They serve no purpose.—Indeed, can't one add: 'There is here no question of a "seeing"—and therefore none of a "having"—nor of a subject, nor therefore of the I either'? Couldn't I ask: In what sense have you *got* what you are talking about and saying that only you have got it? Do you possess it? You do not even *see* it. Don't you really have to say that no one has got it? And indeed it's clear: if you logically exclude other people's having something, it loses its sense to say that you have it.

But what are you then talking about? It's true I said that I knew deep down what you meant. But that meant that I knew how one thinks to conceive this object, to see it, to gesture at it, as it were, by looking and pointing. I know how one stares ahead and looks about one in this case—and the rest. I think one can say: you are talking (if, for example, you are sitting in a room) of the 'visual room'. That which has no owner is the 'visual room'. I can as little own it as I can walk about it, or look at it, or point at it. In so far as it cannot belong to anyone else, it doesn't belong to me either. Or again: in so far as I want to apply the same form of expression to it as to the material room in which I sit, it doesn't belong to me. The description of the latter need not mention an owner. Indeed, it need not have an owner. But then the visual room *cannot* have an owner. 'For'—one might say—'it has no master outside it, and none inside it either.'   (PI §398)

Clearly, the 'visual room' consists of subjective experience—one's visual experience of things being thus-and-so (shorn of its factivity). The 'material room' consists of the public objects of experience: things being thus-and-so. Both are described in terms of concepts of objects subordinate to the a priori categories of experience. Kant and Wittgenstein agree that the visual room *could* contain no owner— that nothing in one's perceptual experience could warrant its ascription to a subject. (That is why Hume's search for himself among his fleeting perceptions was a bogus search.) But Kant thinks that the visual room *must be owned* (the ownership condition of transcendental and empirical self-consciousness). For any sensible experience to be mine, *I must be able to conceive of it formally as mine*. For any series of sensible experiences to be mine, I must be able to conceive of them as *belonging to a persistent subject of experience*—to my 'transcendental self' so conceived (the formal persistence condition). To be conscious of my experiences as mine is to *know* that I am having those experiences—for consciousness is a form of cognition (the subjective cognitive condition). The condition of the possibility of this self-consciousness, according to Kant, is precisely awareness or the possibility of awareness of the synthesis of the manifold given in intuition and its subsumption under the categories, which are a priori concepts of an object in general. Only then can the visual room I have also be (for the most part) the visible room I perceive.

   Wittgenstein's response to this might be imagined to be fourfold. First, he would agree that the first person pronoun here, the 'I' of apperception, is formal. It belongs to our form of representation, not to its matter. But it is *merely* formal, and precisely because it is merely formal, it is *unnecessary*. It is unnecessary in the following sense: We can readily envisage alternative forms of representation that dispense with it. Instead of 'I have a pain', a speaker S would say 'There is a pain' (after all, even in our existing form of representation, we say 'It hurts'), whereupon others would say 'S is in pain'. Instead of 'I see . . .', S would say 'There is a visual perception of things being thus-and-so', and others would say 'S sees that . . .'. And instead of 'It sensibly seems to me that . . .', S would say 'There is a sensible seeming that . . .' and others would say 'It sensibly seems to S that . . .'[11] In short,

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[11] One might object: if, in this imaginary form of representation, the subject says 'There is pain', does this not disconnect pain from the sentient creature that is the subject of pain? Might one not then ask 'There is a pain around, but whose is it?' No—this is to conflate two distinct forms of representation. S's *saying* 'There is pain' is what connects pain to a sufferer, and it is what licenses others to say 'S is in pain'.

self-ascribability of experience, irrespective of whether it is objective perception, or subjective seeming-to-perceive, or even mere sensation, is *merely* a formal feature of a possible verbal expression or report of experience. The role of the personal pronoun is to *signal* the subject of experience—the speaker.[12] Or, to put it slightly differently, the role of the pronoun 'I' is to *index* the experience—like the point of origin on Cartesian coordinates (cf. BT 523). But the 'I' is dispensable for the fulfilment of that role, since the speech-act itself fulfils it. In this new form of representation, the apprehension of the unity of the manifold is exhibited in the description of the object of experience and in the behaviour appropriate in the context to the object perceived.[13] The unity of the subject qua subject of experience is exhibited in the behaviour, including the utterances, of the perceiver. But no 'I' need accompany anyone's own representations. On the other hand, 'he', 'she', or 'it' *must* be capable of accompanying all representations. For there can be no representings without representers.

Secondly, Wittgenstein would emphasize that the possessive 'to have' is likewise purely formal. 'To have a pain' is simply to be in pain, 'to have a visual perception' is just to see. We *represent* experience in the possessive form—but that is all the ownership of experience amounts to. *It is merely a representational form.* Its dispensability is evident if we represent experience (as above) in the form of 'there is' (or our being in pain in the form 'It hurts'). For example, instead of S saying 'I have a visual experience of…', he would say 'There is a visual

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Instead of 'I' indexing the utterance, the speaker's saying 'There is pain' (like 'It hurts' in our current form of representation) does so. To the question 'Who is in pain?' the answer is: 'S is in pain'. But if one hears S say 'There is pain', one can no more intelligibly ask 'Who is in pain?' than when someone says 'Do it *now*', one can ask 'Do it when?' ask 'Do it when?' One already knows!

[12] Of course, its role in silent speech 'in the imagination' is not to *signal* anything. Rather it *would* signal the subject, were he to express aloud what he is saying to himself.

[13] One of the many reasons why one *cannot* extrapolate from Kantian considerations of transcendental synthesis to cognitive neuroscience is that patients suffering from agnosia, for example from agnosia for movement, do not perceive a stationary car *and* a dissociated sense of motion—they cannot perceive motion at all. The various forms of agnosia do not exhibit failure to integrate a given intuition of a certain kind together with other synthesized intuitions, but *absence* of intuitions of that kind. This may be because of lack of neural signals (in the case of blindness) or inability of the brain (due to lesions) to process neural signals so as to enable the subject to perceive normally. Blindsight does not consist in failure to synthesize an intuition of a dot in the scotoma, but lack of any such intuition. The possibility of producing an intimation or hunch under prodding does not betoken an unconscious intuition or Leibnizian 'petite perception', precisely because it *cannot* be accompanied by an 'I think', an 'I am conscious of' or an 'it sensibly seems to me'.

experience of...', and others would say 'He (S) sees...' Instead of saying 'I have a pain', S would say 'There is a pain', and others would then say 'He (S) is in pain'. Nothing would be lost by the impersonal non-possessive form, and its third-person correlate would not be in the possessive form.

Of course, we are deeply tempted to think that *only* the subject of experience can *have* the experience he has. You can't have my pain, Frege wrote, and I can't have your sympathy. Another's pain is another pain.[14] *Having* experiences, Strawson argued in a similar vein, is a form of *logically non-transferable ownership*.[15] But that is quite mistaken. Ownership is a relation between an owner and the item owned. But to have a sensible experience is not to stand in any *relation* to anything (other than to an object perceived). In particular, it is not to stand in a relation of ownership *to the perceiving*. Perceiving is something one does or something that happens to one, not something one possesses. Moreover, while ownership may be legally or morally inalienable, it cannot be *logically* inalienable. For logical inalienability *excludes* ownership of *any* kind: 'if it can't belong to anyone else', Wittgenstein remarked, 'then it can't belong to me either' (PI §398 *supra*). Of course, two people may indeed have the same experience, just as two objects may have the same colour. Being A's is not a criterion of identity of a colour; or of an experience. If someone asserts 'You can't have my experience', the correct response is the query 'Your experience! What experience is that?' (cf. PI §253). And if the answer is 'Listening to *Tosca* at Covent Garden', one may well respond 'Yes—I was there too'—in which case we enjoyed the same experience.[16]

Thirdly, not only are 'I' and 'have' misconstrued, so too is the 'think' of the 'I think' that must be able to accompany all my representations. *I think* is neither a *form* of consciousness of anything, nor is it an *object* of consciousness, i.e. something one is conscious *of*. Or, to give the dove some air-resistance in which to fly: to think I see something or for it visually to seem to me that things are thus-and-so, is *neither* to be conscious of seeing, nor is it to be conscious of things being thus-and-so. It is not anything I

[14] Frege, 'The Thought', in *Collected Papers* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), p. 361.

[15] P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* (Methuen, London, 1959), pp. 97f. Strawson's failure to see the error in the doctrine of logically non-transferable ownership of experience does, I think, vitiate his attempted analytic reconstruction of Kant's transcendental deduction in *The Bounds of Sense* (Methuen, London, 1966).

[16] For detailed exposition and defence of Wittgenstein's account of the misconception of private ownership of experience, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Mind*, pub. edn. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1993), Part I—Essays, pp. 19–25.

could be conscious of *or* not conscious of. This denial may seem counter-intuitive. So it should, otherwise three and a half centuries of thinkers would not have been persuaded by the Cartesian/Lockean prestidigitations and their Kantian refinements. Let me explain the flight of the dove.

(a) Thinking that one sees that things are so, and its sensibly seeming to one that things are so, are not something one could be *conscious of* (or *fail* to be conscious of). For

*I am conscious that I think I see that the lights are on

*if it means anything*, can hardly mean more than

I think I (can) see the lights.

Similarly,

*I am conscious that it visually seems to me that the wall is red

*if it means anything*, means no more than

It looks to me as if the wall is red.

That is, the sentence-forming operator on sentences 'I am conscious that', in such cases, is vacuous (like multiplication by 1). But, ironically, one may become and then be conscious that things visually *seem to another person* to be thus-and-so—as when our attention is caught and held by Macbeth's grasping for a dagger in thin air. There is no such thing as being conscious that it sensibly seems to me that things are thus-and-so, or as being conscious that I think I see that things are thus-and-so. (I shall elaborate below.) Rather, any mature language-user *can truthfully say* (i) that he perceives things to be thus-and-so; or (ii) that it sensibly seems to him that things are thus-and-so. Of course, the former, but not the latter, may be false for all one's truthfulness. Kant confuses the ability to *say* what we perceive or think we perceive with the fictitious ability to *apperceive* all our 'representations'.

(b) 'It sensibly seems to me that…' ('It seems to me just as if I were seeing/hearing…') is not (contrary to what Descartes suggested) the expression of indubitable and infallible subjective knowledge. Rather, its truthfulness guarantees its truth (cf. PPF §319)—and that is what confused Descartes. 'It sensibly seems to me that *p*' is not an assertion *of consciousness* that *p* (and hence of knowledge that *p*). Nor is it the description of something (a 'representation') *of which* one is conscious, and so knows (infallibly and indubitably) to be as one apperceives it

to be. On the contrary, its role is to qualify the assertion that *p* or the assertion that I see that *p*.

(c) Its sensibly seeming to me that…(the representation that another representation is in me, as Kant put it) is *not* a possible accompaniment of all my representations. On the contrary, it is *excluded* when I correctly and confidently perceive that…Seeming to see (I think I see) is not a common constituent of both seeing and having illusions and hallucinations.[17] Macbeth seemed to see a dagger, but he did not *seem to see* the blood on his hands—he saw it. Seeing is not successful seeming to see. But one might say that seeming to see is often unsuccessful seeing. If someone satisfies the criteria for seeing a dagger, he *thereby* fails to satisfy the criteria for seeming to see a dagger. The two 'experiences' could not be more different—since one involves the visible presence of a dagger in the subject's visual field and the other requires its absence. The fact that Macbeth could not, for a moment, distinguish the two does not show that they contain a common core of *seeming to see*. What it shows (unsurprisingly) is that he was hallucinating. It is not as if, when he previously did see the real dagger in his hand dripping with Duncan's blood, his seeing the dagger was a successful seeming to see it.

In short, we must disentangle the knotted threads in the putative concept of self-consciousness that is conceived to be both accompaniment and form of experience (perceptual cognition). Let us distinguish:

(i) The object of my perception, i.e. *what* (relative WH-pronoun) I perceive, namely, a material object array.
(ii) The content of my perception, namely, *that things are thus-and-so* (including, for example, that there is such-and-such a material object array before me).
(iii) My perceiving what I perceive, i.e. my seeing what I see, my hearing what I hear, etc.

'To perceive' and verbs of perception signifying species of perceiving are *factive*. However, 'I perceive that things are thus-and-so' is not, according to Descartes, the expression of a *cogitatio*. For it is neither indubitable nor infallible. But it is a Kantian *cognition* (i.e. an 'objective perception' (A 320/B 376)).

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[17] *Pace* Grice and Strawson. 'It sensibly seems to me…' is not like 'I am breathing', i.e. always true but therefore not worth saying. But this is not the place to confront the contrary claim.

(iv) Its sensibly (visually, auditorily, etc.) seeming to me that things are thus-and-so (a Cartesian *cogitatio*). But now we are faced with a dilemma. Is *my thinking* (of apperception)

(a) identical with *my being conscious of…*?

or is it

(b) *what* I am conscious of?

It seems to have to be both; but that it cannot be. Nor indeed can it be the one or the other. Let us examine both possibilities.

(a) Suppose that 'It visually seems to me…' amounts to much the same as 'I am conscious that I see // a so-and-so // things to be thus-and-so//' or 'I am conscious of seeing // a so-and-so // things to be thus-and-so//'. Then this, far from cancelling the factivity of 'I see…', reinforces it. For if I am conscious that I see, then it follows that I see. But the whole point of the Cartesian 'It seems to me' was to cancel the factivity of the verb of perception. Equally, the Kantian 'I think that…' does not amount to an *objective* perception—a cognition. For it is supposed to be common to both 'subjective' and 'objective' perception, and therefore does *not* guarantee that the representation it accompanies is an objective representation.

(b) So suppose that 'It seems to me that I see…' and 'I think my representation is…' are expressions of thoughts (*cogitationes*) or of apperception. Then they seem to be candidates for being *what I am conscious of.* According to Descartes, I cannot think without being conscious of my thinking. So when it seems to me that I see that things are thus-and-so, *I must be conscious of its so seeming to me.* According to Kant 'I think' must be capable of accompanying all my representations. It is, he says, *a representation of a representation.* But the representation that is the object of the 'I think' (that is the 'content' of consciousness) must be a *seeming*. Otherwise it would be tantamount to an objective perception, i.e. a perceptual cognition. So Kant is either in the same boat as Descartes, or he is in the deep blue sea. But now: what is the difference between 'it sensibly seems to me that…' and 'I am conscious that it sensibly seems to me that…'? What conceivable role can the operator 'I am conscious that' fulfil when prefixed to 'It seems to me that I see…' or 'It visually seems to me that…'?

It is all too easy to suppose that its role is to declare *subjective knowledge of thoughts.* The factivity-cancelling, thought-specifying operator on statements of perception—'It seems to me that'—seems

to secure the indubitability and infallibility of thoughts. For while I may doubt whether I really see a given material object array, and while I may be mistaken as to whether I actually do perceive that things are thus-and-so, I cannot, it seems, doubt or be mistaken that things sensibly seem to me to be thus-and-so. Certainly, for Descartes, it is precisely this that ensures that perceptual thoughts can function as premises in the *cogito*. But the very idea of perceptual *cogitationes* or of consciousness of representations thus conceived is a dire confusion. We confuse the grammatical fact that, in such cases, *truthfulness guarantees truth* with the idea that thoughts are indubitable and infallibly known to be as they are. But it is precisely because truthfulness guarantees truth that thoughts thus conceived are *not* objects (or contents) of subjective knowledge, and so too *not* objects (or contents) of consciousness. Why so?

One role of 'I know' is to declare that grounds for doubt and error have been excluded. They may be excluded by evidence, by the satisfactory concept-laden exercise of a cognitive faculty (e.g. sight, hearing), by reliable hearsay or authority. But if truth is already guaranteed by truthfulness, then ignorance (doubt and error) are *logically* excluded anyway. It makes no sense to say: 'Either it sensibly seems to me that $p$, or it sensibly seems to me that $q$, but I don't know which.' (If someone were to say, 'Either it (sensibly) seems to me that there is a rose in the vase, or it (sensibly) seems to me that there is bread in the bread-bin—but I don't know which' we would not understand him.) But if ignorance of such an empirical truth is *logically* excluded, if 'I don't know which' makes no sense here, then so too is knowledge—*for there is no epistemic work for it to do*. What it normally serves to exclude (viz., grounds for doubt and the possibility of error) is already precluded by logic. There is no logical space within which knowledge may be located.

So the apperception of a sensible representation can be neither a form of consciousness nor an object of consciousness. So a transcendental deduction is impossible.

## 4. THE WAY OUT OF THE JUNGLE

What has gone wrong? As usual in philosophy, the fault lies in the fundamental questions asked, or even further back—in their presuppositions. The first mistake lay in Kant's master-question: How are synthetic a priori judgements possible? Or: How is knowledge of syn-

thetic a priori propositions possible? The correct questions to ask are: What is it for a proposition to be a necessary proposition? and: What is the role of necessary propositions? These are indeed the questions that lie at the heart of Wittgenstein's treatment of the variety of propositions that we deem to be necessary truths.[18] The questions, *pace* Kant, are *not* epistemological, but logico-grammatical ones. Wittgenstein's answers were that necessary truths are either norms of representation in the misleading guise of descriptions, or internally related to such norms of representation. Their role is as inference rules. They are not descriptions of anything, but rules of description. How is it possible for us to know them? To know them is to know rules. We learn these in the course of learning our language—for they are partly constitutive of the meanings of the words we use.

The treatment of the philosophical questions about necessity is to be detached from epistemological considerations. So the treatment of the philosophical problem of the conditions of the possibility of original (underived, groundless) self-ascription of experience is to be detached altogether from the treatment of the Kantian epistemological question of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge of synthetic a priori judgements. How then is *this* problem to be characterized? *Not* by reference to the misguided question of what experience must be like in order to constitute cognition.[19] Nor is the answer to the problem to be by reference to the imaginary 'science' of transcendental psychology according to which I must be aware, or be able to be aware, of a transcendental synthesis of intuitions.[20] Rather the question is to be transposed to the linguistic plane: how is it possible for a language-user to apply present-tense perceptual verbs to himself without any grounds whatsoever? Or, not: 'What must *experience* be like to be groundlessly self-ascribable by a subject of experience?', but rather: 'What must the logico-grammatical character of

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[18]  For detailed discussion, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar, and Necessity*, 2nd edn. (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009), pp. 241–370.

[19]  Misguided, because what is self-ascribed is the *experiencing*, not the *experienced*. So the question is akin to 'what must seeing be like to constitute my seeing something to be so?', or transposed to sensation 'what must having a pain be like for me to be able to have a pain?' These are surely nonsensical questions, the incoherence of which is masked by the deceptive nominalizations 'representation', 'experience', 'perception'.

[20]  The fact that Kant has to have recourse to the idea of consciousness of the power of synthesis and its exercise (A 108/B 133) is a token of the fact that the questions he is asking are misconceived. For such consciousness could not be empirical—since it is a condition of the possibility of experience. But there is no such thing as non-empirical, atemporal, consciousness of an act or activity.

*predicates of experience* be in order for their groundless self-ascription to make sense?'

Wittgenstein's treatment of self-ascribed predicates of sensation (e.g. 'to have a pain') is too well known, I hope, to need much rehearsing. Criterionless self-ascription of psychological concepts is possible only on condition of mastery of the concept self-ascribed without criteria. Mastery of the concept self-ascribed without criteria involves grasp of the criteria for its other-ascription, and mastery of the language-games in which both self- and other-ascription are embedded. In the case of *having a pain*, the primitive roots of the language-game lie in natural behavioural expressions of pain. For the child learns to say 'Ow', 'Hurts', 'It hurts', and later 'I have a pain' as extensions of natural pain-expression—first as avowals, later as averrals. In learning this, the child also learns that his own pain-expressions and pain reports are a reason for others to ascribe *having a pain* to him, and hence too that the pain-utterances and pain-behaviour of others are a reason for saying of them that they are in pain. But this form of linguistic graft onto natural behavioural stock is *not* a general pattern. Each concept must be examined in its own right, and located within its own language-games.

So, how is it possible for a language-user to apply predicates of sensible experience to himself, defeasibly—but without grounds, and to apply them to others on the basis of behavioural grounds? A full reply would be lengthy. All that I aim to do here is indicate what sort of reply a Wittgensteinian approach would yield. But what I here briefly sketch is, I hope, in the spirit of his thought. Mastery of the perceptual vocabulary (the use of verbs of perception and their cognates) and hence possession of concepts of perception, presuppose antecedent mastery of an observational vocabulary of perceptibilia, and, by and large, a vocabulary of perceptual qualities (both special and common sensibles). This, with us, requires competence in its use in description, interrogation, and command.[21] Once a significant fragment of that is mastered, indeed, *while* it is being mastered, perceptual verbs come into play: 'Can you see…?', 'Did you hear…?', 'Does that feel cold?', and so forth. In response to an assertion of

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[21] One can readily imagine more primitive languages with only substance names and no names of perceptual qualities, or with only orders, or only questions with yes/no answers. But that is not to the point here, since we are patently concerned with any language rich enough to admit of a systematic distinction between subjective experiences (and statements of what they are experiences of) and their objects (and the descriptions of their objects).

how things perceptibly are, the question 'How do you know?' can now arise. So the child learns to reply 'I saw him in the garden', and 'I can hear her outside'. He learns to play 'I spy with my little eye', and so on, and so forth. In short, he learns the use of verbs of perception as operators on descriptions of perceptibilia, and as indicative of validating sources of knowledge. He learns the first-person use *and* the third-person use. He learns the groundless application of verbs of vision as operators on descriptions of visibilia qualified by visual sensibles, which he has been able to report on using his sight, i.e. on looking, watching, glancing, and spotting. (He would not have been able to do so with his eyes closed!) And so too, *mutatis mutandis*, he learns the first-person use of the other perceptual verbs. At the same time, the child learns the use of these verbs in respect of his parents, siblings, and friends: he learns to say 'Look!', to ask 'Can you see?', to order 'Listen!' and to query 'Did you hear?', not to mention 'Mummy, taste!' or 'Daddy, smell!' So too, he learns to apply this battery of verbs to others on the grounds of what they do and say—of their looking, listening, tasting, smelling, and feeling, and the evident upshot of their perceptual activities.

Once this expansion of vocabulary and concept-acquisition is under way, illusion and error are made explicit. Perceptual descriptions and claims are not always right. Observation conditions are sometimes suboptimal, the sense-organs are sometimes defective (temporarily or permanently), the objects of perception are sometimes deceptive and look or sound other than they are. Parental or peer correction commonly follows error. The child himself learns to correct error—by looking again, or improving the observation conditions (moving closer, turning on the light), and so forth. So he learns to budget for the defeat and defeasibility of observation claims and perceptual self-ascriptions. He learns the use of the operators 'It seems to me as if', 'I think it's a . . . ', 'As far as I can see', and so forth. The *fundamental* role (others will come later) of these sentence-forming operators on observation-sentences and on perceptual sentences is not to report the 'representation of a representation that is in me', but to *qualify* an observation-sentence or perceptual sentence. The *basic* role is to indicate that the operand is not wholly reliable, that the employment of the cognitive faculty of sense was, in one way or another, non-optimal (either by way of sense or by way of recognition), that defeating conditions cannot be ruled out. Once that basic role is in place, other roles can be assigned to the operation, e.g. characterization of the manner of perceiving (at the oculist's, for example), qualifications on thought rather than on perception, characterization

of the objective appearance of the object perceived by 'It looks like', 'It appears', 'It seems to be'.

Self-consciousness, as conceived in the Cartesian/Lockean tradition culminating in Kant, was, I suggest, a grammatical red-herring. There is indeed such a thing as self-consciousness.[22] But it is not a matter of the capacity for self-ascription of experience. That a child has learnt to say 'Mummy, I can see you', 'Daddy, I heard a noise', or 'That feels hot!' does not imply any increase in, or development of, self-consciousness. That a language-user has advanced to this stage does indeed imply that he can *think about* and *express his thoughts about* his own perceptual experiences ('Oh, it is so nice to see that garden', 'I enjoyed listening to you'). Is this a mark of achieving self-consciousness? One *might* say so. It is true that language-users such as ourselves, unlike the other animals, can think about our current perceptual experiences and say what we think about them. But is that sufficient for self-consciousness? To think about something (e.g. Julius Caesar) is not in general to be conscious of what one is thinking about. Why should thinking about one's perceiving what one is currently perceiving be conceived to be a mode of self-consciousness? One might rather opt for a weightier notion. Self-consciousness, taken weightily, is *related* to the bare idea of thinking about one's experiences. It is indeed *cogitative* rather than cognitive—so it belies its etymological ancestry. But unlike mere *thinking about* one's currently perceiving something, it is a reflective, cogitative *disposition*. Moreover, its objects are not current perceptions. To be self-conscious, in this sense, is a matter of having a disposition to *think about* one's tendencies, attitudes, character traits, actions and the reasons and motives one has or had for them—but it is *not* being *conscious of them*. For those who are, in this sense, self-conscious (introspective) personalities are also much given to self-deception.[23]

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[22] I deliberately disregard here the perfectly decent, but clearly irrelevant, notion of self-consciousness associated with one's reactions to awareness of other people's eyes being upon one. I also pass by the notion of self-consciousness linked with deliberation in creativity ('Flaubert was a highly self-conscious author').

[23] I am much indebted to Hanjo Glock, Anthony Kenny, Adrian Moore, Hans Oberdiek, Herman Philipse, Bernhard Ritter, and Daniel Robinson for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

# 4

## The Development of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology

### 1. PROLEGOMENON[1]

An overview of Wittgenstein's engagement with problems in the philosophy of psychology must start with the very beginning of his philosophical career, not because we can find there early reflections on the subject, but rather because we find there an array of relatively unreflective presuppositions. These are of interest for two reasons. First, they form the well-concealed psychological hinterland of the logic and metaphysics of symbolism of the *Tractatus*. So they shed light on the book. Secondly, these presuppositions were largely misconceived and became the target of Wittgenstein's critical investigations in the 1930s. The themes—meaning something, wanting, intending, understanding, explaining the meaning of an expression, knowing what an expression means, believing things to be so—in effect provided Wittgenstein's gateway to investigations into the philosophy of psychology.

When Wittgenstein returned to philosophy in 1929, the psychological presuppositions that characterized his early work only gradually came under scrutiny. That is not surprising. Locating the roots of one's thought and then pulling them up is no easy matter. *The Big Typescript* was an early attempt to weld his new philosophy into a unified whole that would both confront the errors and misconceptions of the *Tractatus* and elaborate his new ideas on the nature of language and linguistic representation. These attempts continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s with the *Umarbeitung*, the *Zweite Umarbeitung*, *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung*, and

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[1] This essay was written in honour of Anthony Kenny. The first paragraph, concerning the honorand, has been omitted here. It was he who first delved beneath the surface of the Tractatus to disclose its psychological presuppositions.

the four different drafts of the *Philosophical Investigations* that preoccupied him until 1946/7. Here, in his second masterwork, we find a sustained engagement with the subjects of understanding, privacy of experience, the impossibility of a private language the nominata of which are supposedly 'private' experiences, expressions ('Äusserungen') of the 'inner', thinking, imagination and mental images, mind and behaviour, the first-person pronoun, consciousness, intentionality, memory and recognition, the will and voluntary action, intention, and meaning something. Most of these have a direct bearing on the central themes of the book. But with regard to others, such as the nature of psychological investigation, of mental states, recognition, voluntariness and the will, and the nature of intention (the remarks on which were all added only in the final draft), Wittgenstein's interest was caught by these topics in their own right.

In 1946 Wittgenstein turned explicitly to investigations in philosophy of psychology. The last lecture courses he gave as professor at Cambridge in 1946–7 were on the philosophy of psychology, and from April 1946 until March 1949, he bent his efforts to explorations in this domain. The results were the MSS volumes 130–8, comprising some 1,900 pages of notes. A selection from these, completed in October 1947, was dictated to form TS 229, since published as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 1. A further selection was dictated to form TS 232, completed in October 1948, and since published as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 2. These selections are not reordered or arranged—they are merely a sifting of material in chronological order.[2] The second half of MS 137 and the whole of MS 138, written between October 1948 and March 1949, and now published as *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, volume 1, were not made into a typescript. But in the spring of 1949 Wittgenstein made a handwritten selection of remarks—the loose-leaf folder MS 144—which formed the basis for the lost typescript (TS 234) of what was published in 1953 as Part 2 of the *Investigations*. This contains 374 remarks, the large majority from MSS 137–8. It is doubtful whether this compilation was meant to be a part of the *Investigations*, and more probable that it was intended as a preliminary stage of a larger volume on the philosophy of psychology. Wittgenstein may have made the selection and dictated the

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[2] He did, however, cut up one copy of TSS 229 and 232 into slips, and preserved 369 of them for future use. This collection of cuttings, together with cuttings from other typescripts, has been published as *Zettel*.

typescript primarily to take it with him to America in the summer of 1949 in order to show his recent work to Norman Malcolm.[3]

The 1,900 pages of notes on the philosophy of psychology to some extent form a new departure for Wittgenstein, at least in the following sense. The *Investigations* is a Janus-faced book. On the one hand, it looks back critically to the *Tractatus* and the philosophical tradition of which Wittgenstein conceived it to be the culmination and termination. On the other hand, it goes over similar ground in a wholly novel way, advancing very different solutions to a wide range of problems concerning the nature of language, meaning, and linguistic representation. The subsequent writings on philosophical psychology do not have this counterpoint. Moreover, the style of the remarks is much less dialogical than in the *Investigations*. The author is no longer talking to an imaginary interlocutor, but, if to anyone at all, then to himself. The therapeutic note is much muted; and conceptual geography is everywhere evident. There is no systematic confrontation with his earlier self or with a great tradition in the manner in which Augustine's picture of language provides the *mise en scène*, and the Augustinian conception of language a muted leitmotif, for the *Investigations*. The *Tractatus* is barely mentioned, and there are but few references, explicit or implicit, to his previous views. Few other writers are alluded to, although James is often used as a stalking horse, and Köhler and Gestalt psychology are subjected to criticism. Rather, what we find is a painstaking *exploration* of language-games with psychological concepts. Many different concepts are investigated, patterns of similarity and difference are

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[3] G. H. von Wright ('The Troubled History of Part II of the *Investigations*', *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 42 (1992), pp. 181–92) relates that on 18 February 1949 Wittgenstein wrote to Malcolm that he was planning to dictate materials that he had been working on since the autumn of 1948 and would send Malcolm a copy. In March Malcolm invited Wittgenstein to visit him in Cornell. Wittgenstein accepted the invitation. So he never sent Malcolm a typescript, but brought with him the typescript made in early July 1949 from MS 144 in order to show Malcolm later that month (see N. Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein—A Memoir*, 2nd edn. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984), p. 66). It is noteworthy that the discussion in which Wittgenstein told Rhees and Anscombe that he intended to suppress a good deal of the last 30 pages of the *Investigations* and to work 'what is in Part II, with further material, into its place' (PI, Editors' note) took place in Dublin in December 1948, *before* he had written MS 144, and six months before he had dictated it. It is, therefore, impossible to ascertain what he may have had in mind. The hypothesis that his writings were intended as preliminary work for a projected volume on the philosophy of psychology is, of course, perfectly compatible with the idea of modifying and adding *some* of the new material to the discussions of PI §§571–693 on expectation, belief, recognition, voluntariness, intention, and meaning something.

painstakingly teased out, and conceptual connections described. The tone is tentative. We see Wittgenstein applying the methods of philosophical analysis that he had developed over the previous sixteen years. Direct remarks on philosophy in general—so common in his earlier notes—are rare. That seems to be a subject that has now been settled and about which he has no further qualms. But there are numerous reflections on methodology in philosophical psychology as Wittgenstein struggles to determine his goal and to find his way. Although these writings are incomplete and unpolished, we can learn much about how he thought problems in philosophical psychology should be handled. That in turn sheds light on his general conception of philosophy and philosophical method.

In the following I shall survey the evolution of Wittgenstein's engagement with philosophy of psychology, and essay an overview of his conception of the subject.

## 2. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HINTERLAND OF WITTGENSTEIN'S EARLY PHILOSOPHY

Anti-psychologism was increasingly common in Germany (e.g. Lotze) and Britain (e.g. the Absolute Idealists) towards the end of the nineteenth century. Wittgenstein inherited this methodological commitment from both Frege and Russell. As he put it bluntly, 'psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science' (TLP 4.121), and he noted that his study of sign-language corresponds to the study of thought processes which philosophers used to consider essential for the philosophy of logic, and that he must take care not to get entangled in inessential psychological investigations.[4] The central subject of the *Tractatus*—the nature of the proposition and the logico-metaphysical consequences that flow from its essential nature[5]—can and should be handled without reference to psychological considerations. For something *is* a proposition only insofar as it is meant and understood. So since, from a logical point of view, propositions are given, then meaning and understanding, qua psychological

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[4] Presumably he meant the investigation of the psychological nature of judgement, the difference between entertaining a proposition and believing it to be true, the nature of ideas and the differences between affirming and denying one idea or another, and so forth.

[5] An early title Wittgenstein proposed for the book was *Der Satz*.

acts or processes, drop out of any *logical* considerations. Consequently, the psychological presuppositions of the book are largely tacit, and are made clear only by Wittgenstein's notebooks and correspondence. The following five points can be gleaned from these:

1. Excluding psychological considerations seemed to license avoiding reflection on psychological *concepts*. That meant taking for granted a range of unexamined preconceptions concerning meaning something, understanding, and thinking. These were anything but trivial or innocuous. Hence Wittgenstein's later remark in the *Investigations* §81, 'All this, however, can only appear in the right light when one has attained greater clarity about the concepts of understanding, meaning [*meinen*], and thinking. For it will then also become clear what can lead us (and did lead me [in MS 142, §78, he added here 'Log. Phil. Abh.']) to think that if anyone utters a sentence and *means* or *understands* it, he is operating a calculus according to definite rules.'

2. In 1915, Wittgenstein wrote: 'Names are necessary for an assertion that *this* thing possesses *that* property and so on. They link the propositional form with quite definite objects. And if the general description of the world is like a stencil of the world, the names pin it to the world so that the world is wholly covered by it' (NB 53). *How* are names connected to their meanings? The correlation of a name and its meaning, he had claimed in his 'Notes on Logic' in 1913, is *psychological* (NB 104). In 1915, he averred that it is *the speaker* who correlates the components of the picture with objects (NB 33f.). How then did Wittgenstein conceive of the mechanism of the correlation effected by the user of a name?

3. Names have a meaning only in the context of a proposition, just as the toy cars and figures in the Paris law court stand for specific cars and people only when they are arranged in a representation of the traffic accident under consideration, and not when the little cars and figures are put back in their boxes. One projects a state of affairs into a representing fact, and the elements of the representing fact stand for the elements of the state of affairs represented. The method of projection is 'to think the sense of the proposition' (TLP 3.11; or 'thinking the sense of the propositional sign' PTLP 3.12–3.13). The sense of a proposition is (roughly) the (possible) state of affairs it represents,[6] and thinking the sense of a proposition is, I suggest,

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[6] Strictly speaking it is the agreement and disagreement of the proposition with the obtaining and non-obtaining of the state of affairs it represents (cf. TLP 4.2).

*intending* or *meaning* BY the proposition (the sentence in use) *that* state of affairs. In so doing, one *means* by the constituent names of the proposition the constituent objects of the state of affairs meant. So it is the speaker's meaning (*meinen*) that correlates names with objects that are their meanings (*Bedeutungen*). (A corollary of this conception, not mentioned in the *Tractatus*, is that all understanding of the discourse of others is interpreting.)

This account of Wittgenstein's ideas has been challenged on the grounds that it takes for granted that 'thinking the sense of a proposition' is a 'mental proceeding' that constitutes the method of projection.[7] This is mistaken. It does not take any such thing for granted. It relies on Wittgenstein's assertion that the correlation of a name and its meaning is psychological (NB 104), that names link the propositional form with quite definite objects (NB 53), and that it is 'By my correlating the components of the picture with objects, [that] it comes to represent a situation and to be right or wrong' (NB 33f.). The interpretation is strengthened by the fourth general point:

4. Explicitly in the *Notebooks* and implicitly in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein argued that propositions that appear to be vague in their surface grammar are actually determinate, or at least determinately indeterminate, in their depth grammar. A proposition like 'The book is lying on the table' appears vague, since it appears indeterminate what exactly counts as 'lying on', and hence the proposition might seem to lack any determinate truth-value. However, the speaker means *something* by the sentence, 'and as much as we *certainly* mean, must surely be clear' (NB 67). What the speaker means may be a disjunction of possibilities, but each of the disjuncts must be sharp. So all indeterminacy is determinately indeterminate. Indeed, the speaker is at least sometimes in a position to assert 'I *know* what I mean; I mean just THIS (pointing to the appropriate complex with my finger)' (NB 70).

The interpretation is clinched by the fact that when Wittgenstein returned to philosophy in 1929, he continued for a while to conceive of intending or meaning (*meinen*) as the method of projection whereby a state of affairs is projected into a proposition. In MS 108, 218f. he wrote:

…can the intention be an external relation?

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[7]  See Cora Diamond, 'Peter Winch on the *Tractatus* and the Unity of Wittgenstein's Philosophy', in A. Pichler and S. Säätelä (eds.), *Wittgenstein: The Philosopher and his Work* (Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen, Bergen, 2005), p. 147.

Because the intention brings it about that this process is a picture which gets confirmed or disconfirmed and because this constitutes the real essence of intention, therefore the intention can be no [external] relation of the picture to something else. I see before me how the thought—the meant sentence [*gemeinte Satz*]—reaches right up to reality, i.e. already models its form in advance. As does the ruler, or perhaps just two gradation marks on it, with which reality is now especially compared?

One could say that the intention is the method of projection.

The picture (in the narrower sense) does not suffice because how it is to be compared with reality is not given with it. Together with it must be the method of projection; but then the picture indeed reaches right into the place where the object [*Gegenstand*][8] of the picture is.

It is the intention that determines what is *meant* and that transforms a mere sign into a representation of a possibility that may or may not be actualized. In MS 109, 218, he wrote 'An intention sets a standard against which the fact can be judged', so it is by meaning or intending the sign to represent a certain state of affairs that the sign becomes a true-or-false picture. In his lectures in Lent Term 1930, he remarked: 'The proposition is a picture', but not a picture by resemblance, like a portrait, but rather 'something which is *intended* to be a picture of another [*sic*] without resembling it... That it is a picture consists in the intention' (LWL 4). In MS 145, 49f. (written in 1933) he discusses the manner in which we are prone to think of intention as giving life to the sign. It is, I think, plausible to view this as being also an articulation of how he himself had once thought:

By 'intention' I here mean what thinks the sign, what directs the sign, what gives it meaning,[9] what makes the sign fulfil its function, what uses the sign in thought. Intention seems to interpret, to give the final interpretation.

5. The last commitment to which I want to draw attention is patent in the letter to Russell of 19 August 1919. In response to Russell's question about what the constituents of a thought are and what their relation is to the components of the pictured fact, Wittgenstein replies 'I don't know *what* the constituents of the thought are but I know

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[8] 'Gegenstand' here could be translated either as 'subject' or 'object', and which of them one opts for affects the sense of the passage. I believe that what Wittgenstein had in mind was the state of affairs (the possibility) of which the thought is a picture. Whether that 'logical place' is 'occupied', i.e. whether the state of affairs obtains or not, determines whether the thought is true or false.

[9] 'Meinung', rather than 'Bedeutung'. It is used here in an Anglicism that is common in Wittgenstein's later writings, to signify meaning something. What he has in mind in this remark is: that in virtue of which something is meant by the sign.

*that* it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of Language.[10] Again, the kind of relation of the constituents of thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out.' Further, to Russell's query of whether a Gedanke consists of words, Wittgenstein responds: 'No! But of psychical constituents that have the same sort of relation to reality as words. What those constituents are I don't know' (CL 69).

This expresses a highly problematic idea of a 'language of thought', which Wittgenstein was later to assail. It also poses a destructive dilemma: if thought constituents stand to the constituents of depicted facts in the same relation as words, then they are not 'intrinsically representational', and a further explanation—an interpretation—is required to link them to their meanings. Words, as we have just seen, are conceived to be linked to their meanings by *thinking*, namely, by thinking the sense of the sentence that expresses the thought, i.e. meaning by the sentence the state of affairs it represents, and hence meaning by the names the constituents of the state of affairs represented. But thoughts cannot be linked to what they are thoughts of by further acts of thinking, for then thought would not be 'the last interpretation', which it must be. On the other hand, if they are 'intrinsically representational', then they do not stand to their meanings in the same relation as words. Moreover, their supposedly intrinsic representational character would still need elucidating.[11]

There is a further conflict lurking in the background. On the one hand, the concepts of meaning, intending, understanding, interpreting, and thinking have to be, as Wittgenstein later put it, *metalogical*. Otherwise they would merely signify phenomena. But they cannot signify mere phenomena, since what they signify must contain *a picture* of what is meant or intended, of what is understood or thought—and no mere phenomenon can do that. Phenomena are not intentional; they may have a 'natural meaning', but not a 'non-natural' one.

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[10]  It is *this* kind of anankastic pronouncement that Wittgenstein later meant when he castigated himself for 'dogmatism' in the *Tractatus* (WWK 182ff.), and not, as has recently been suggested, remarks about how words are used, or grammatical statements of rules for the use of words.

[11]  The resolution to this destructive dilemma is, of course, that thoughts are not representations at all. Any representation must have a medium of representation that has non-representational qualities (e.g. the colour of the ink, the timbre of the voice). But thoughts are, as Marshall McLuhan might have put it, all message and no medium. It is unfortunate that contemporary proponents of the LOT (language of thought) hypothesis are apparently unaware of this decisive objection to their misconceived hypothesis.

However, if they do not signify psychological phenomena, they cannot belong to the subject matter of psychology. So the only sense in which psychology could find out, for example, what the constituents of thoughts are would be that it could investigate thoughts 'from the outside'—for example, as cortical phenomena (MS 145, 48f.). But that would be of no interest to philosophy.

### 3. THE 1930S AND THE *INVESTIGATIONS*

The early and mid-1930s were spent on two great tasks. The first consisted of attempting to articulate a new philosophy on the themes of the nature of language and linguistic representation, of thought and intentionality, of meaning and understanding, of the nature of mathematics and of philosophy itself. The second consisted of dismantling the philosophy of the *Tractatus*, identifying its errors and their sources. The destructive work went remarkably smoothly. Once Wittgenstein had rejected the independence postulate for elementary propositions and allocated the role of sempiternal objects to samples that belong to the means of representation, the whole structure of the *Tractatus* collapsed. But it took much longer to arrive at the alternative he presented in the *Investigations*.

A glance at the table of contents for *The Big Typescript* suggests extensive engagement with themes in philosophy of psychology. The section headings herald discussions of understanding, meaning (*meinen*), interpreting, thought and thinking; expectation, wish and their fulfilment; current experience, pain, and idealism; and so forth. However, this is misleading, since his engagement with all these themes is geared primarily to issues pertaining to his early philosophy and its demolition, on the one hand, and to the effort to find new solutions to much the same problems, on the other. The only question we need address for present purposes is what the achievements of *The Big Typescript* and its revisions were in respect of psychological concepts, on the one hand, and the psychological presuppositions that had arguably characterized his early philosophy, on the other.

First, he came to realize that thinking, understanding, and meaning are not metalogical concepts, but humdrum concepts like others. Wittgenstein used the term 'metalogical' to indicate a purported attribute of a fundamental concept (or of what is signified by such a concept) which was conceived to signify (or to be) what links the domain of logic, i.e. propositions, thoughts, representations of how

things are, with reality. He had long been tempted to believe that 'understanding' is a metalogical word (MS 116, 16), the idea being that understanding is a metalogical process that gets one from the bare sign to its verifying fact (MS 110, 193). Similarly, one readily thinks of meaning something (*meinen*) as a metalogical act, and of *agreement with reality* as a metalogical concept that signifies the relation between picture and what is pictured. But this whole conception of a 'connection between language and reality' is misguided. 'Just as there is no metaphysics', he wrote on the opening page of *The Big Typescript* (BT 1), 'there is no metalogic; and the word "understanding", the expression "understanding a proposition", aren't metalogical. They are expressions of language like all others.' 'The proposition "I mean something…" is not metalogical' (Vol. XIV, Um. 27). 'Depicting' is no metalogical concept (BT 285v), and neither is 'agreement with reality' (MS 113, 49v; MS 115, 85). What a sentence means is said by *an explanation*, i.e. by *another sentence* (MS 116, 3)—so the very idea that processes of meaning and understanding are metalogical, foundational (MS 110, 160), necessary to link language to reality, or to bridge the apparent gap between an order and its execution (MS 110, 191; MS 116, 22) is chimerical. In the end, he came to realize that the very idea that thinking is something unique and mysterious is itself an illusion (cf. PI §§95, 97, 110).

Second, the supposition that language has, as it were, an inorganic and an organic part—a system of signs, and underlying psychological processes that infuse signs with life by thinking them, meaning such-and-such by them, understanding them as representing such-and-such—has to be abandoned (BT 283–7; cf. BB 3). The meaning of an expression is its use, and it is its use that gives it life.

Third, he accordingly reiterates his anti-psychologism. Psychological *phenomena* are of no concern to his logico-linguistic investigations (BT 284). The temptation to explain symbolic processes by reference to psychological ones must be resisted (BT 283). It can never be essential to his investigation that a phenomenon of symbolizing takes place in the mind and not on paper (BT 284). So too, the psychological *process* of understanding is of no interest to him (BT 330). Indeed, one must beware of constructing a mythology of psychological processes (MS 114, 35), as he had done in the presuppositions underlying the *Tractatus*. But the *concepts* of understanding, meaning, knowing, interpreting, thinking, need elucidation (and subsequent elucidation was to show that understanding is not a process at all).

Over the next decade, as his reflections on these concepts evolved, he shifted from the formal or realist anti-psychologism that he had

taken over from Frege to a form of philosophical anthropology in which full justice was done to these psychological concepts and their roles in the web of concepts surrounding the notions of linguistic representation, without lapsing into psychologism.

Fourth, the puzzlement about the pictoriality (intentionality) of the proposition, about how it is possible to think something that is not the case, about the possibility of a proposition's being false but nevertheless meaningful, dissolves. The *Tractatus* had tried to solve the problem by means of the picture theory of the proposition and its attendant modal realism (realism about objective metaphysical possibilities). The harmony between language and reality was orchestrated metalogically. Now Wittgenstein realized that '*It is in language* that it is all done' (PG 143). The discussions of expectation and wish are focused upon their 'business part', i.e. upon their pictoriality (how they 'reach right up to reality' and seemingly 'foreshadow the facts'), not upon those aspects of expectation that might concern the philosophy of psychology. It was confused to suppose that the expectation that $p$ contains a picture of what is expected, and to construe that in terms of metalogical relations of words or thought-constituents to world. Rather, it is a simple rule of grammar that the expectation that $p$ is the expectation that is fulfilled by its coming about that $p$ (PG 161f.). The patent internal relation between the expectation that $p$ and the event that $p$ is merely a shadow of a grammatical substitution-rule. The picture theory was a metaphysical mountain postulated to solve a puzzle that is dissolved by the description of a grammatical molehill.

Fifth, just as the relationship between a proposition and the fact that makes it true is not a relationship between thought and world, but an intra-grammatical one, so too 'The assignment of a name to an object is nothing other than that produced by the words "That is…" or by a table, etc. It is part of the symbolism. Therefore it's incorrect to say [as he once had] that the relationship between a name and an object is psychological' (BT 174).

It is clear that the metaphysics and modal realism of the *Tractatus* has been eliminated, the picture theory has collapsed and with it the whole idea of word–world semantic correlations. This has been replaced by an intra-grammatical resolution of the problems of the intentionality of the proposition. The thought that certain psychological acts and processes must be metalogical has been swept aside, but the insistence that psychology—the study of psychological *phenomena*—is irrelevant to logical investigations is

retained. However, only a little progress has yet been made towards elucidation of the concepts of meaning something, thinking, understanding, and interpreting.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Wittgenstein laboured prodigiously. He clarified his ideas on metaphysics—a non-subject that rests on a confusion and conflation of empirical and conceptual questions. He elucidated the use of the first-person pronoun, and its misuse that informs both dualism and solipsism, and disentangled the knotted threads that lead to solipsism. These epistemological and metaphysical themes, though they touch questions in philosophy of psychology, are tangential and need not concern us. He also elucidated the concept of understanding—an ability, rather than a state or process; the concept of meaning something—neither a process nor an act of any kind; of interpreting—not an act or process that always accompanies understanding. He gave a detailed overview of the concepts of thinking and of imagining, where they bear on the overall theme of the *Investigations*. By and large, his engagement with specific psychological concepts is subordinate to more general concerns in philosophy. It is in the course of these clarifications that he laid the foundations for his subsequent engagement with philosophy of psychology. So before turning to the latter, I shall survey the former.

1. Wittgenstein clarified his position with regard to behaviourism. He agreed with logical behaviourists that behaviour is internally related to the mental, and with behaviourists in general that language learning is founded on brute training, that it presupposes natural behaviour and behavioural reaction, and that avowals of experience are themselves a form of behaviour. Unlike the behaviourists, however, he denied that the mental is a fiction (as Watson had insisted), or that the mental is reducible to behaviour (as logical behaviourists such as Carnap in the early 1930s and Hempel in the 1940s had suggested). Above all, he denied that behaviour is 'bare bodily movement'—a residual half of a false Cartesian duality. On the contrary, human behaviour is grasped as *animate*—as the behaviour of a living animal. It is perceived as *a manifestation* or *expression* of cognitive, cogitative, affective, and volitional powers, and is so described.

2. He clarified his position with regard to dualism and its conception of inner and outer as externally related domains. The dualist (and 'mentalist' or idealist) conception of the inner as ethereal (or 'pneumatic'—animated by psychic pneuma), as being privately owned, as a domain to which the subject has privileged access by introspection, and as the object of indubitable first-person knowledge, is misconceived.

The corresponding conception of the outer as 'mere bodily behaviour' is equally misguided. And the conception of the relationship between the inner and outer as *external* and *causal* is likewise flawed. Consciousness is no 'inner searchlight'; the ability to say how things are with one is not the result of a kind of 'inner perception'; self-consciousness is not a matter of an 'I think' being able to accompany all my representations; and experiences are not *this*-es and *thus*-es (qualia, as current jargon would have it) revealed to consciousness by introspection.

3. Stimulated by his reading of Köhler, Wittgenstein disagreed with the received conception of the distinction between psychology and the natural sciences. Psychology does not treat of processes in the mental sphere as the physicist does in the physical sphere (PI §571). That idea is rooted in dualist conceptions of mind and body and attendant misunderstandings of the relationships between the mental and its behavioural manifestations. But mental 'objects' (such as sensations), events, and processes, are not just like physical objects, events, and processes, only immaterial. The psychologist observes the behaviour of human beings (which is not 'bare bodily movement') and draws conclusions about their minds, but not on the model of the physicist drawing inferences from the observed to the unobserved—as if the mental were hidden 'behind' the observable behaviour and as if the procedure were a kind of analogical or inductive inference, or an inference to the best explanation. The behaviour the psychologist observes is an *expression* of the mental. The pain, joy, depression, thought, intention, etc. are not hidden *behind* the painful movement, joyful smile, depressed mien and tone, expression of thought, intentional action, etc. The psychologist does not observe them 'indirectly', and the subject does not observe them 'directly'—since he does not observe them at all.

4. Wittgenstein paid more attention than any other philosopher to the asymmetry between first- and third-person present tense psychological propositions.[12] The asymmetry consists in the fact that predicating psychological attributes of others is warranted by what they do and say. By contrast, one's use of such sentences in the first-person present tense does not rest on one's observation of one's own behaviour. According to tradition, the asymmetry is a reflection of *epistemic* differences, explicable by reference to the essential (metaphysical) privacy of experience. Wittgenstein denied this. The asymmetry is an

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[12] For detailed discussion and defence of this point, see P. M. S. Hacker, 'Of Knowledge and of Knowing that One is in Pain', in Pichler and Säätelä (eds.), *Wittgenstein: The Philosopher and his Works*, pp. 203–35.

aspect of *grammatical* differences between first- and third-person utterances reflecting their different roles in our language-games. The first-person utterance is not, in the primal case, a *description* of anything (in particular, not of anything observed *in foro interno*) but rather an *expression*. But that does not preclude reports and descriptions of the inner (which remain unlike reports and descriptions of the outer). To be sure, not all expressions of the inner are extensions of primitive behaviour, but even when they are not (e.g. expressions of belief or intention), grammatical asymmetries persist.

5. For an important subclass of psychological verbs, it makes no (epistemic) sense to ascribe to oneself knowledge, belief, doubt, or certainty regarding what they signify in the present tense. 'I know that I am in pain' may indeed have various uses, but no *epistemic* use.[13] Doubt and ignorance are excluded by grammar, and by the same token so are certainty and knowledge. Avowals of thought and experience do not rest on introspection (indeed, the very idea that they do depends on a misconception of introspection). They rest on nothing at all.

6. In third-person cases, psychological attributes are predicated of agents on the basis of what they do and say (including their avowals of thought and experience) but this is not inductive evidence for the inner, it is *logically* good evidence or 'criteria'. The inner stands in need of outer criteria. Such evidence is circumstance-dependent and defeasible. But if not defeated it typically suffices for certainty.

7. The subject of psychological attributes is not the ego, the mind, or the body a sentient being may have, but the animal as a whole.[14]

8. The conception of experience as *privately owned*, such that different people cannot have the same experiences, but only similar ones, i.e. ones that are numerically distinct but qualitatively identical (different tokens of the same type, as some contemporary philosophers misguidedly put it), is mistaken. Insofar as it makes sense for two people to have the same experience, then, to be sure, it is perfectly common for different people to have the same experience.[15]

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[13] There is nothing contradictory about this. When one *forgets* one's troubles in the company of a cheerful friend, this is not a cognitive, mnemonic defect, but a matter of distraction of attention. So it is a non-epistemic use of 'to forget'. So too 'I know I am in pain' may be an emphatic or concessive, non-epistemic use of 'I know', altogether unlike 'I know he is in pain'.

[14] With the exception of verbs of sensation, such as 'to hurt', 'to itch', 'to tickle', which can be ascribed to the body and its parts.

[15] Why 'insofar as it makes sense'? It makes sense to say that you have the same headache as I if one has reason to believe that your headache, like mine, is dull, throbbing, and in the left temple. But it makes no sense to suppose that we *share* the

9. Concepts of experience are not acquired by means of association or by a private analogue of ostensive definition. There *is no such thing as* private ostensive definition, that is: the phrase 'a private ostensive definition' is excluded from the language, just as is the phrase 'checkmate in draughts' (Z §134). Similarly, there is no such thing as a memory of an experience fulfilling the function of a defining sample.

10. The limits of thought are the limits of the behavioural expression of thought. It is perfectly possible, in certain circumstances, for an animal to think and not show it. But it makes sense to ascribe thinking to an animal only insofar as the animal's behavioural repertoire includes such behaviour as *would* express what the animal is said to think. Consequently, the capacity to think in anything other than the most primitive manner is parasitic on the ability to speak. For all but the most primitive thinking can be expressed only in forms of linguistic or symbolic behaviour. Speech is not a translation from language-independent thoughts into words, and thinking is not normally an *accompaniment* of thoughtful speech.

These controversial, indeed revolutionary, conceptual commitments are prominent in the *Investigations*. They are all grammatical clarifications supported by reasoned argument. Their denial leads to incoherence. And they provide a very substantial grammatical framework for more detailed investigations of the large network of psychological concepts that inform the lives of language-using creatures like us. It was to such investigations that Wittgenstein turned in 1946.

## 4. REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY: FINDING HIS WAY

Wittgenstein's investigations into the nature of language, linguistic meaning, and representation led him, after 1944, deeper and deeper into philosophical questions concerning psychological concepts and psychological phenomena. He moved on three related fronts: the classification of psychological phenomena and the categories under

same pain, as we might share the same house. And for us to have the same pain does not mean that you have my pain, as you might have my keys. *I* can't significantly be said to have *my* pain either (since 'my pain' = 'the pain I have', and 'I have the pain I have' says nothing). 'N's pain' specifies neither a pain nor a relation of possession. So 'I have your pain' makes sense only if it has been specified *what* pain you have, and even then it is merely a clumsy way of saying that I have the same pain as you.

which they are to be subsumed; the connective analysis of psychological concepts and the description of the language-games in which they are at home; and the connections between psychological concepts and certain very general facts of nature concerning ourselves and the world in which we live, which in an important sense condition our concepts. The latter strand in his reflections explains the (non-Humean) sense in which he can be said to have *naturalized* philosophy in general and philosophy of psychology in particular—but not by assimilating it to an 'armchair science' or by cleaving to a form of scientism.

   These explorations, especially those into wanting, intending, and meaning something, proved to be fruitful—finding new pathways through old jungles. It was altogether natural that, with the completion of the final draft of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein should turn to concentrated work on the philosophy of psychology. It is clear that he found the themes that he was working on of interest in their own right. When he was struggling with the similarities and differences between seeing something and imagining it, he remarked 'The problem with which I am basically concerned here is really much more wonderful than will perhaps appear to someone who reads these lines. For it is a very general conceptual problem. (Comparable, I believe, to a *great* problem in mathematics.)' (MS 136, 7a). He himself raised the question of the point of his investigations into philosophy of psychology:

Is it right to say that *my* investigations are characterized by a certain kind of purposelessness?—I don't mean that they are useless, but that they are not explicitly conducted with a view to a purpose. Is it then a case of 'l'art pour l'art'? I would *not* want to say that. That sounds too arty [*spielerisch*], and as if one wanted to say 'I do it because it is beautiful' or something like that.—But I could surely say: must everything we do be done with a clear purpose? And if not—is it therefore without any connection with the rest of life? Does it therefore have no consequences; or bad ones?   (MS 134, 154)

A couple of pages later, he responds further to his worries. The point of his classifications and comparisons of psychological phenomena is that they can answer a whole array of philosophical problems. It is a *method* (although, to be sure, not a mechanical one) of getting clear about conceptual difficulties (MS 134, 156). In some cases, e.g. Moore's paradox of belief or the paradox of puzzle pictures, Wittgenstein did tackle a philosophical conundrum directly. And here his investigations bring us to realize conceptual affinities and differences of which we were previously unaware. But for the most part,

his concern was with plotting the conceptual terrain—what Ryle was later to call 'logical geography'.[16] For, as Wittgenstein put it, 'The philosopher wants to master the geography of concepts; to see every locality in its proximate and also in its most distant surroundings' (MS 137, 63a). Indeed,

In order to know your way about an environment, you don't merely need to be acquainted with the right path from one district to another; you need also to know where you'd get to if you took the wrong turning. This shows how similar our considerations are to travelling in a landscape with a view to constructing a map. And it is not impossible that such a map will sometime get constructed for the regions we are moving in. (MS 131, 121 = RPP I, §303)

He himself is not so much engaged with constructing a detailed map as with preparing a preliminary survey, as it were, something that will enable people to orient themselves. He aimed not at exactness, but at surveyability (MS 134, 83), not at completeness, but at putting his reader in a position to shift for himself when he encounters conceptual difficulties (LW I, §686).[17]

He was, he wrote apropos his lectures, showing his pupils a segment of a vast landscape in which it is impossible that they should know their way around by themselves (MS 133, 44r).

The difficulty is to know one's way about among concepts of 'psychological phenomena'. To move about among them without repeatedly running up against an obstacle. That is to say: one has got to *master* the kinships and differences of concepts. As someone is master of the transition from any key to any other one, modulates from one to the other. (MS 135, 73 = RPP I, §1054)

Of course, everyone has mastered the *use* of these commonplace psychological concepts—we are as familiar as can be with the language-games in which they are at home. But we lack an overview of the field of psychological concepts. This is emphatically *not* a matter of having an ability, but lacking a theoretic representation of that ability, or

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[16] It is impossible to know whether Ryle got the analogy from Wittgenstein or hit upon it independently. What is clear, however, is that Wittgenstein was already using the geographical analogy in 1933/4 (see AWL 43; cf. LFM 44).

[17] He repeatedly castigates himself in 1948 for going into more detail than is necessary (MS 134, 98; 135, 186), remarking that 'It seems to me that I am still a long way from understanding these things, namely, from the point where I know what I needn't talk about. I still get myself entangled in details, without knowing even whether I should talk about these things' (MS 136, 37a).

of knowing the meanings of psychological expressions but lacking a theory of their meaning.[18] The last thing we want, Wittgenstein averred, is a philosophical *theory* (MS 130, 218) that misguidedly tries to ape theories in the sciences. The aim is to produce surveyable representations or presentations ('Darstellungen') of segments of the domain of psychological language. The method is *descriptive*. But we are not accustomed to *comparing* the various concepts, whose use we have mastered, with each other. We are not used to *juxtaposing* different concepts in order to note similarities and differences. And that is just what we have to do in order to attain an overview of our psychological language. But when we try to describe these conceptual similarities and differences, sentences whose use we cannot survey constantly intrude themselves (MS 130, 220), leading to bafflement, distortion, and misrepresentation of the conceptual terrain.

In 1948, after he had been working on themes in the philosophy of psychology for almost two years, experimenting with different ways of classifying and ordering psychological concepts and phenomena, Wittgenstein remarked 'I am the inventor of certain discussion-clarifying devices; like someone who invented novel, more surveyable, ways of book-keeping' (MS 135, 146).[19] For part of his struggle throughout this period was to find a fruitful and illuminating method of *classifying*, or of *ordering*, the problematic concepts with which he was concerned. The result of a philosophical investigation, he remarked early in the course of his enquiries, is sometimes *a new filing system* (MS 130, 82). What did he have in mind? At one stage he suggested that maybe what is needed is 'a new nomenclature' for psychological categories.[20] What he meant is not so much a new terminology as a new *classification*. It is not that new *words* are needed— as if the trouble with psychology were an impoverished language. Nothing could be more wrong than supposing, as James often did, that mistakes and confusions in psychology could be remedied by introducing new *names* (MS 134, 108).[21] What is needed is 'a pro-

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[18] An idea that was the drive-shaft of M. A. E. Dummett's researches into theories of meaning for a natural language.

[19] A metaphor strikingly related to his much earlier remark 'Grammar is the account books of language' (PG 87).

[20] He notes parenthetically that this is a step that is only rarely to be recommended in philosophy.

[21] This Jamesian misunderstanding continues. Colin Blakemore, for example, has recently suggested that some of the conceptual difficulties in cognitive neuroscience are due not to conceptual confusion but to 'inadequacy of vocabulary [of everyday language] and notation' ('Understanding Images in the Brain', in H. Barlow, C. Blakemore,

found change in our thought; for example, in what we are looking for and in what we stop looking for. Such changes, to be sure, often get expressed in a changed terminology' (MS 134, 108). What did Wittgenstein have in mind here? I suspect that the *kind* of thing that he meant is that, for example, once we have cleared the ground of the houses of cards built out of misapprehensions of the concept of consciousness, the search for so-called neural correlates of consciousness will be abandoned, at least in its present form,[22] and be replaced by better questions which neuroscience *can* handle. Once we clarify what it is to possess a concept, we shall cease to search for a concept module in the brain where concepts are stored and correlated with words.[23] Once we have disentangled confusions about the concept of vision, we shall cease looking for the part of the brain that 'puts together the information' from the sense organs to form a 'picture' of 'the external world' around us,[24] and investigate the vehicle of our visual powers without the encumbrance of unintelligible questions.

So, what is needed, it seemed, was a new array of psychological categories in terms of which to *order* psychological concepts. What did he conceive to be the existing categories, and what was wrong with them? Arguably they were such general categories as *mental state*, *mental process*, *mental event*, *mental act*, and *experience*.

and M. Weston-Smith (eds.), *Images and Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), p. 283).

[22] Christhof Koch (like his late colleague, Francis Crick) aims to discover the neural correlates of consciousness. He suggests that 'Whenever information is represented in the NCC you are conscious of it. The goal is to discover *the minimal set of neuronal events and mechanisms jointly sufficient for a specific conscious percept*.' *The Quest for Consciousness* (Roberts and Company Publishers, Englewood, Colo., 2004), p. 16.

[23] See, for example, W. J. M. Levelt, 'Accessing Words in Speech Production', *Cognition* 42 (1992), pp. 1–22. For critical discussion of the idea that there could be a 'concept module' in the brain that stores concepts, see M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, 'Language and Cortical Function: Conceptual Developments', *Progress in Neurobiology* 80 (2006), 20–52.

[24] For example, contemporary neuroscientists' formulation of what they call 'the binding problem': 'How is information carried by separate pathways brought together into a coherent visual image? . . . How does the brain construct a perceived world from sensory information and how does it bring it into consciousness? . . . what the visual system really does [is] to create a three-dimensional perception of the world which is different from the two dimensional image projected onto the retina' (E. R. Kandel and R. Wurtz, 'Constructing the Visual Image', in E. R. Kandel, J. H. Schwartz, and T. M. Jessell (eds.), *Principles of Neuroscience and Behaviour* (Apple and Lange, Stamford, Conn., 1995), p. 492). For critical discussion of the binding problem, see M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), pp. 137–43.

Philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive neuroscientists are prone to rely on these very general terms in specifying their subject matter. So, we are often told at the beginning of an epistemological investigation, that knowing is a mental state, just as being in pain is.[25] Similarly, it is a widespread view that believing is a mental state.[26] Philosophers and linguists alike conceive of understanding the speech of another as a process—of interpretation, or of deriving the truth-conditions of the heard sentence (which are conceived to constitute the meaning of the utterance) from the meanings of the individual words and their mode of combination.[27]

Wittgenstein held that these terms, far from signifying sharp and clear-cut categories, are exceedingly imprecise:

The concept of experience: like that of event, of process, of state, of something, of fact, of description and of statement. Here we think that we are

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[25] See, for example, T. Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), p. 21, who claims that knowing *p* is a 'state of mind', that a state of mind is a mental state, and that the mental state that constitutes knowing *p* is an attitude towards a proposition. But a mental state is not the same as a state of mind. Knowing, lacking 'genuine duration', is not a mental state, let alone a state of mind. And, unlike 'ridicule', 'contradict', 'endorse', or 'approve', which *can* signify attitudes towards something propositional, such as rumours, stories, claims, declarations, statements, and indeed propositions, 'know' takes 'that-clauses', which such verbs do not (one cannot endorse that *p*). To know that *p*, unlike endorsing *the proposition* that *p*, is not to have any attitude to anything. (See B. Rundle, *Mind in Action* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997), p. 62.)

[26] D. Davidson held that beliefs are correctly called 'states of mind' ('The Myth of the Subjective', repr. in his *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2001), p. 40), and that 'having a belief is... being in a state' ('Indeterminism and Antirealism', repr. in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, p. 74). J. R. Searle holds that beliefs are 'intentional mental states' (*Intentionality* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1–4), and T. Williamson (*Knowledge and its Limits*, p. 21) writes of believing that *p* as 'the paradigmatic mental state'. For ten reasons why it is mistaken to classify belief as a mental state, see P. M. S. Hacker, 'Of the Ontology of Belief', in Mark Siebel and Mark Textor (eds.), *Semantik und Ontologie* (Ontos Verlag, Frankfurt, 2004), pp. 185–222. For a discussion of Wittgenstein's equivocal views, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Mind and Will* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996), Exg. §§572–5.

[27] See, for example, M. A. E. Dummett, who claims that it is 'an undoubted fact that a process of derivation of some kind is involved in the understanding of a sentence' ('What Is a Theory of Meaning?', in S. Guttenplan (ed.), *Mind and Language* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975), p. 112; see also his 'What Is a Theory of Meaning II?', in G. Evans and J. McDowell (eds.), *Truth and Meaning: Essays in Semantics* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976), pp. 69f.; cf. N. Chomsky, *Reflections on Language* (Fontana, London, 1976), pp. 32f.) and J. Fodor and J. J. Katz, 'What's Wrong with the Philosophy of Language?', in C. Lyas (ed.), *Philosophy and Linguistics* (Macmillan and St Martin's Press, London, 1971), p. 282.

standing on the hard bedrock, deeper than any special methods and language-games. But these extremely general terms have an extremely blurred meaning. They relate in practice to innumerable special cases, but that does not make them any *solider*; no, rather it makes them more fluid.   (RPP I §648)

In our superficial classifications, we go wrong before our enquiries have even properly commenced. He had already remarked on this in the *Investigations*:

How does the philosophical problem about mental processes and states and about behaviourism arise?—The first step is the one that altogether escapes notice. We talk of processes and states and leave their nature undecided. Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them—we think. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a certain conception of what it means to learn to know a process better. (The decisive move in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one that seemed to us quite innocent.)   (PI §308)

It seems utterly innocuous to classify knowledge or belief as mental states (after all, they are neither mental events, nor mental processes). What exactly these mental states are, we think, remains to be seen. And we proceed to speculate that they must surely be identical with brain states. But not only is it mistaken to take them to be mental states (*inter alia* because they lack 'genuine duration'), it is further evident that we have no conception whatsoever what might count as a brain state and what the criteria of identity for such brain states are. 'Thinking', we innocently proclaim, 'is a mysterious process, and we are a long way from fully understanding it'—and so we start *experimenting*—apparently without being aware *what* mystifies us (MS 135, 113), and without pausing to examine whether thinking is a *process* at all, and what differences there are even between those kinds of thinking that *do* approximate processes and incontrovertible processes.
    We unthinkingly assume that mental states and processes are just like physical states and processes, only mental, that mental states are a species of state, another species of which is physical states. But that is precisely what we have no title to do. (Chess moves, Wittgenstein remarked, are not kinds of movements.) We think that mental processes are comparable to physical processes like digestion or breathing. But, Wittgenstein stresses, these are *incomparable*. If one wanted to find bodily conditions that *are* comparable to mental processes and states, they would be such things as the *quickness* of breath, the *irregularity* of the heartbeat, the *soundness* of digestion,

and suchlike—all of which characterize corporeal behaviour (cf. RPP I §661).

Wittgenstein struggled to find a fruitful system of classification—initially, a *genealogy* of psychological concepts (MS 133, 73r = RPP I §722), or phenomena (MS 134, 83), and of experiences (MS 134, 124). (Whether he thought of these as the same investigation, or as different ones is unclear.) What did he mean by 'a genealogy'? This too is unclear, although some light is shed on the matter by the fact that he raises the question of whether what he is hunting for is something akin to the genealogy of different number concepts (such as natural numbers, signed integers, rationals, reals, etc.)—i.e. a kind of *logical* (non-historical) genealogy. Perhaps he meant such things as the reciprocal dependency of cognition and volition; the priority (contrary to the Cartesian and empiricist tradition) of observation statements (e.g. 'The chair is red') over perceptual statements, and of perceptual statements (e.g. 'I see…') over sense-datum statements (e.g. 'It visually seems to me just as if…'); the dependence of the intelligibility of doubt upon the possibility of certainty; the presupposition of the possession of a tensed language for the possibility of regret or remorse; and so on. But I find it impossible to be sure, since it is far from evident whether Wittgenstein actually thought of himself as having even begun to carry out the project.

What does seem clear is that the idea of a systematic genealogy foundered. Wittgenstein then attempted to construct *a systematic scheme of hierarchical classification* based on the thought that the field of the psychological can be deemed to be that of *experiences*, subclasses of which are undergoings (subsuming both images and impressions), emotions (directed and undirected), and forms of conviction (e.g. belief, certainty, and doubt) (MS 134, 42f. = RPP I §836–7; on 18 March 1947). For various reasons, this too proved fruitless.[28] Nevertheless, Wittgenstein persisted with two guidelines. First, that his task was to impose *an order* upon psychological concepts. Secondly, that this itself would involve *new* categorial concepts. He noted that Weierstrass had introduced a whole series of new concepts to impose an order upon thought about the differential calculus. 'In just that way it seems to me, I shall have to impose an order upon psychological thought by means of *new* concepts' (MS 135, 115; 30 July 1947). Strikingly, he invoked Goethe's idea of ordering botanical classification by reference to the organizing principle that the organs

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[28] See J. Schulte, *Experience and Expression* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993), chap. 3 for a very helpful discussion of the matter.

of the plant should be seen as transformations of a leaf. The affinity between his task in philosophy and Goethe's botanical project had occurred to Wittgenstein in the early 1930s, in connection with the idea of a surveyable representation ('Darstellung') of a domain of grammar.[29] Now he wrote:

What does a conceptual investigation do? Is it the natural history of human concepts?—Well, natural history describes, say, plants and animals. But could it not be that plants have been described in all their detail, and then someone turns up and notices analogies in their structure that nobody had noticed before? So he imposes an order on these descriptions. He says, e.g. 'Don't compare this part with that; rather, with this other one!' (Goethe wanted to do some such thing.) And in so doing, he is not necessarily speaking of descent [i.e. actual genealogy], but nevertheless the new way of arrangement might also give scientific investigation a new direction. He says 'Look at it in *this* way!'—and this may have advantages and consequences of different kinds.   (MS 134, 153 = RPP I §950)

On 14 December 1947, he noted that where he had previously spoken of a genealogical tree, he could just as well have spoken of an *order* in which one should discuss psychological concepts and explain their connections. But, he remarked, he was not clear about this order, especially about its beginning (MS 135, 184f.).

By 1948, however, Wittgenstein had apparently abandoned the idea of finding a specific sequential order in which one should discuss psychological concepts. (To suppose that there is would perhaps be akin to supposing that there is a specific sequential order in which one should describe a landscape.) There are *various* ways in which these concepts can be ordered for philosophical discussion, and which is most appropriate depends on one's purposes and interests. He had also abandoned the idea, never really executed, of introducing new classificatory concepts. He had introduced the novel concept of *genuine duration*—a very fruitful and illuminating one—but it was the only new concept for which he had found a need.[30] However, he

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[29]  For detailed discussion see J. Schulte, 'Chor und Gesetz: Zur "morphologischen Methode" bei Goethe und Wittgenstein', repr. in *Chor und Gesetz* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1990), and G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, 'Surveyability and Surveyable Representations', in *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, vol. 1 of *An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, 2nd edn., extensively revised by P. M. S. Hacker (Blackwell, Oxford, 2005), Part I—Essays.

[30]  The only other novel concept mentioned is that of a 'germ' (MS 133, 87v), presumably like the experience of being about to do something—but, Wittgenstein immediately notes, this could be misleading (as James was misled into talking of experiencing a tendency), and he makes no use of the idea.

did not abandon the idea of *imposing an order* upon our psychological concepts for purposes of surveyability.

> We must always remember that we aren't trying to explain one psychological phenomenon in terms of another; rather, [taking them] as we find them, we should arrange them in an order. So we don't want to say that *this* is really *that*, but only, insofar as we can, to point to similarities and dissimilarities. (MS 137, 9b; 6 February 1948)

This conception accords with something that he had written right at the beginning of his investigations into the philosophy of psychology:

> Don't forget that we don't have to *explain* a phenomenon, but only to describe! What we are not looking for is a 'philosophical theory'.
>    A completely unordered description is of no value for us. But to see a relevant order is difficult, because it is concealed by the net of grammar.
> <div align="right">(MS 130, 218f.; 28 July 1946)</div>

The purpose is a survey of the terrain of psychological concepts that will enable one to find one's way around. Indeed, he noted in January 1948, the importance of his treatment of the phenomena of mental life is not because he is keen on completeness, but because *each one casts light on the treatment of all* (MS 136, 129 = RPP II §311 (Z §465)). Each of his peregrinations displays the investigative methods and techniques of elucidation appropriate for plotting the terrain anywhere else in the landscape.

 At the end of 1947 (MS 136, 3a–4a = RPP II §63; 18 December 1947), Wittgenstein drew up a plan for the treatment of psychological concepts without any genealogy, and without any hierarchical classification. He emphasized the first/third-person asymmetry characteristic of many psychological verbs and the associated distinction between expression and description. He distinguished sensations from kinaesthetic awareness, on the one hand, and from sense perception, on the other.[31] He began to sketch out differences between sense perceptions and visual and auditory mental images—a task he subsequently took up and treated in refined detail. Six days later, he limned the contours of the concept of emotion and of the related

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[31] Sensations, e.g. pain, have genuine duration, degrees (from scarcely noticeable to unendurable), and qualitative mixtures. They have *a bodily location* (unlike seeing and hearing, but like feeling pressure, warmth, or even taste). One knows, i.e. one can say, *where* a pain is. There is a distinctive reaction to touching *the place* of a pain. But the sensation of pain does not have a place-indicative component (just as there is no temporal sign to a memory image). Pain is differentiated from other sense experiences by its characteristic expression, which makes it akin to joy, which is not a sense experience at all (RPP II §63).

concepts of mood and attitude (MS 136, 27b = RPP II §148). For much of the remainder of his notes on the philosophy of psychology, he pursued the objective of comparing and contrasting psychological concepts. He often could not resist darting down side-streets from time to time to examine a little known but fascinating locality off the High Street (LFM 44), so we find long digressions and subsidiary investigations. Nevertheless, the objective and the methods had become reasonably clear. He was no longer hoping to introduce a new nomenclature, or new categories. He did not aim at a systematic genealogy of psychological concepts or phenomena, or at an order of introduction. So what exactly was he doing?

## 5. THE PROJECT

Wittgenstein came to see his goal as that of ordering psychological concepts in surveyable representations. Far from eschewing existing categories, he was perfectly willing to make use of them, with five provisos.

First, that it be clear that these categorial concepts are vague and elastic, hence not *very* useful in mapping the contours of psychological concepts. 'They relate in practice to innumerable special cases' (RPP I §648). With regard to expecting, Wittgenstein noted 'If one asks: is this a mental state—one sees that neither the answer "Yes" nor the answer "No" helps. There are too many (psychological) categories all of which could be called "mental states". The classification no longer helps here. One must distinguish the concepts from one another individually' (MS 167, 6). This is of capital importance—it rules out mechanical pigeon-holing.

Secondly, we must constantly bear in mind that these vague categorials, applied to the domain of the mental, are not species of a genus, of which the coordinate species are physical. The striking differences between, for example, a mental state (e.g. feeling excited) and a physical state (e.g. being in a filthy state), or between a mental act (e.g. deciding) and a physical act (e.g. shutting the door) need to be clarified and emphasized. Above all, we must beware of classifying something as a mental state (for example, knowledge or belief), or as a mental activity (for example, thinking), and cautiously leaving its nature undecided—thinking that sooner or later science will reveal the nature of this peculiar mental state or that strange mental process. But this apparent caution is in fact a form of negligence—and

the decisive move in the conjuring trick has been executed without our even noticing it (PI §308).

Thirdly, there should be no presumption that a problematic concept (or phenomenon) is subsumable under *any* useful or illuminating existing category (belief, for example, is not). This should not be surprising—these very general terms were not introduced into our language to serve the special classificatory purposes of a Linnaeus, but to serve the ordinary non-classificatory purposes of ordinary speakers (indeed, the use of 'mental state', as well as its differences from 'state of mind', are worthy of careful investigation).

Fourthly, there should be no presumption that a given psychological concept or phenomenon that *is* subsumable under one or other of these general categories is subsumable under *only* one. The psychological verbs have manifold uses. 'Being gloomy', for example, may signify an occurrent mental state with genuine duration, an enduring dispositional state or a character trait. 'Expecting' may signify an occurrent mental state, a belief or supposition ('I expect he'll be there'), or a demand ('I expect you to be there!').

Fifthly, categorial classification may sometimes be positively useless for the purposes of a comparative overview. 'Knowing, believing, hoping, fearing, etc. are such different kinds of concepts', Wittgenstein wrote, 'that a classification, arranging them in different drawers, is of no use for us. But we want to recognize the differences and similarities between them' (MS 137, 89b). Being told, for example, that knowledge is an ability, whereas belief is not, will not shed much light upon the complex relationships between the two concepts, upon the language-games in which they are at home, and upon their point.

With these provisos, Wittgenstein was now willing to go along with existing classifications. 'I don't want to produce some sort of final classification of psychological concepts,' he wrote, 'but rather to show to what extent the existing one can be justified, and also to show that uncertainty clings to any such classification. The classification should be used only to emphasize rough differences between concepts' (MS 137, 89b).[32] Consequently, his categorial observations

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[32] A conclusion strikingly similar to Ryle's some years later. Having placed far too much emphasis on the notion of a category-mistake in *Concept of Mind* (1949), in *Dilemmas* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1953), p. 9, Ryle came to the conclusion that 'this idiom [of categories] can be helpful as a familiar mnemonic with some beneficial associations. It can also be an impediment, if credited with the virtues of a skeleton-key. I think it is worthwhile to take some pains with this word "category", but not for the usual reason, namely, that there exists an exact professional way of using it, in which, like a skeleton-key, it will turn all our locks for us;

are more often than not *negative*: meaning something is *not* a mental act or activity; understanding is *not* a mental state or process, but more akin to an ability; thinking is *not* generally an activity, and even when it approximates one, it is logically altogether unlike a physical activity (and that does not merely mean: it is mental, not physical).

At the end of 1947 (at the same time as he drew up his plan for the treatment of psychological concepts), Wittgenstein wrote that he felt that he should write 'about "psychological phenomena" in general. As it were, about the different ways the different psychological categories come into being' (MS 134, 98). It is clear from the sequel that he did not mean the very general categories of (mental) states, processes, acts and activities, etc., but the more specific categories such as perceptions, sense-impressions, emotions, and so forth. What had caught his attention was, for example, the question of how one arrived at the thought that seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, etc. belong together (MS 136, 131b). The suggestion that they all inform us about 'the external world' he brushes away, rather surprisingly, as superficial. We should imagine a language, he suggests, without the general term 'perception', but with words such as 'see', 'hear', 'smell', 'taste', etc. And now examine the affinities and differences between the senses—the complex web of connections—and these concepts immediately drift much further apart than one might expect. The connections that warrant classifying them together are far more complex and subtle than might initially seem.

The description of affinities (both similarities and connections) and of differences is a hallmark of Wittgenstein's method in philosophy of psychology. The surface grammar of psychological verbs and nouns is especially misleading (MS 134, 126). The concepts are disguised (MS 134, 125). Countless psychological verbs that look so alike in their surface grammar 'have a barely comparable mode of application. Once that is realized, the investigation of the particular case becomes much easier' (MS 129, 178). How is one to combat the illusions of homogeneity generated by surface grammar? In three ways:

First, 'direct your interest to the language-games' (MS 130, 151) in which the concept is at home—the *behaviour* with which the word meshes, and the *occasion* on which it is appropriate (MS 134, 126).

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but rather for the unusual reason that there is an inexact, amateurish way of using it in which, like a coal-hammer, it will make a satisfactory knocking noise on doors which we want opened to us. It gives answers to none of our questions but it can be made to arouse people to the answers in a properly brusque way.'

If one is baffled by the misleading similarities between seeing something and imagining something, then one should attend to the different situations in which these verbs are used, the different forms of behaviour that are appropriate to 'I see (and "He sees") X' and 'I imagine (and "He imagines") X' as well as to 'Look at X!', as opposed to 'Imagine X!'

Secondly, investigate the ways in which the concept might be taught, for there is a systematic connection between possible ways of teaching and meaning. If one is baffled how dreaming that something is so and perceiving that something is so differ, start by examining how one might teach a child to prefix 'I dreamt' to a description. If one is puzzled how a person can 'know what he intends', investigate how one might teach a child the use of 'I'm going to...' The primitive language-games here involved are not the ground-floor of a theory, but poles of a description (RPP I §633).

Thirdly, one must overcome the misleading features of surface grammar by description of the kinships and differences of concepts (MS 135, 73). Importantly, one should not look merely for similarities in order to justify a concept (i.e. a classification), 'but also connections. A father gives his name to his son, even though his son is altogether unlike him' (MS 134, 125 = RPP I §923). Seeing and imagining are *connected*, but contrary to Hume, not by *similarity*, and their distinctness is not a matter of relative vivacity. Seeing and tasting are both forms of sense perception, but not because they are alike.

How are kinships and differences of concepts to be discerned? Apart from language-game contextualization, surely by careful examination of usage. We need to examine the dozens of familiar paths leading off in different directions from a given concept. It is possible to say something quickly or slowly, but not to mean something quickly or slowly. One can be interrupted in one's state of concentration, but it makes no sense to say that one was interrupted in knowing or believing. 'He believes that $p$, but it is false that $p$' makes sense, but 'I believe that $p$, but it is false that $p$' does not. And so on. Each such grammatical observation is part of the profile of the constituent concepts, and an appropriate ordering of such observations depicts a distinctive feature in the landscape of psychological concepts.

However, the geography of psychological concepts is exceptionally irregular. Ridges that appear connected are separated by sudden crevasses, bodies of water that seem separate are connected by channels, and fog lies on the swamps and bogs. The perils of misdescription are accordingly great:

Mere description is so difficult because one believes that one needs to fill out the facts in order to understand them. It is as if one saw a screen with scattered colour-patches, and said: the way they are here, they are unintelligible; they only make sense when one completes them into a shape.—Whereas I want to say: Here *is* the whole. (If you complete it you falsify it.)

(RPP I §257; cf. §723)

Surface grammar in this domain is so deeply misleading because the forms of grammar make profoundly different concepts appear much more similar than they are. We think of knowledge as a state (like ignorance[33]), of meaning something as a mental act or activity (like saying something), of seeing something as a mental episode, like hallucinating, only with a cause that corresponds to the content of the episode. In all such cases, we are misled by surface grammar. So we make the wrong comparisons. But, 'What appears at first sight to be homologous, we must not, if we seek for a deeper understanding, consider to be homologous. And we must be able to see as homologous things which, to a superficial appearance, do not appear to be' (MS 130, 83). Interestingly, he observes that this is also a method of mathematics. Presumably what he had in mind is, for example, that in topology a pyramid is more like a sphere than a doughnut is, or that in geometry a parabola is more like a circle than like a line. One must compare what looks like a jawbone with a foot (MS 134, 125)—thinking, not with talking to oneself, but with the expression with which one talks; meaning something, not with saying something, but with intending; knowing what one wants, not with knowing what another wants, but with having decided; and so on.

   Often philosophers introduce a new use for a familiar word without even being aware of having done so, for example by assimilating its use to that of another word (e.g. 'want' to 'wish'), or they construct certain uses for words—ascribing to them a far more elaborate use than they have (e.g. 'attitude'). Sometimes they try to follow up certain features of the ordinary use of a word to make it 'more consistent' (MS 130, 116 = RPP I §§51f.)—thereby falsely representing it (e.g. thinking to find an epistemic use for 'I know I am in pain', or supposing that the reason we do not say that whatever we see we also seem to see is because it is too obviously true to be worth saying). Philosophers commonly admit that the use they are introducing, of 'knowledge', for example, does not accord with ordinary usage, but

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[33] As when we say 'She is in a blissful state of ignorance'. But ignorance is not a *mental* state, and knowledge is not a state of any kind. (One can be in a paralysed state, but not in a state of being able to walk.)

insist that it is more important and more interesting than ordinary usage. 'But the philosophical concept', Wittgenstein noted, 'is derived from the common one through a variety of misunderstandings, and it reinforces those misunderstandings. It is not in the slightest bit interesting, except as a warning' (MS 136, 94b = RPP II §289).

'We must take a concept as one finds it, and not want to refine it', Wittgenstein wrote (MS 137, 15a). 'Because it is not our business to modify it, to introduce a concept appropriate for certain purposes (as it is done in the sciences); rather, it is to understand it, that is, not to draw a false picture of it.' The goal is not a theory—how could it be? what would be the observations grounding such a philosophical theory? and what evidence would verify it (what *experimentum crucis* would confirm or disconfirm the existence of 'qualia', for example)? The task in philosophy of psychology is to give an overview of the conceptual scheme that we have, not to introduce an alternative one. It is to present the methods and techniques of comparing and contrasting concepts and language-games. It is to teach us to find our way around this irregular landscape, and to fend for ourselves when confronted with conceptual unclarities and problems—in philosophy of psychology, in psychology itself, and in cognitive neuroscience.

## 6. SURVEYABLE REPRESENTATIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

When reflecting on Wittgenstein's writings on philosophy of psychology after 1945, one must bear in mind the fact that one is looking at work in progress, not at finished work. With the exception of MS 144 and the lost typescript made from it (TS 234, originally published as Part II of the *Investigations*), the materials are not even ordered. In fact what we have is raw material for a book, the scope and shape of which we do not know. We have little, if any, idea how Wittgenstein might have decided to arrange his materials or what guiding principle of arrangement he might have adopted—and perhaps he too had little idea. Nevertheless, the privilege of seeing the work in progress is instructive and illuminating.

One striking contrast between these materials, and the finished work of the *Philosophical Investigations*, is that, as already noted, the *Investigations* was Janus-faced. It is no coincidence that Wittgenstein would have liked to see it published in a single volume together

with the *Tractatus*, so that his new thoughts could be seen in the right light by contrast with, and against the background of, his old way of thinking—in which he now recognized grave mistakes (PI, Preface p. x). This dialectic, of course, provided a principle of arrangement for a significant part of the book. No such principle is in play in the reflections on the philosophy of psychology. He is not confronting his old ways of thinking about problems in the philosophy of psychology (that had already been done in the reflections on understanding, thinking, intentionality, and meaning in the *Investigations*). Rather, he was exploring the field of psychological concepts, partly for their intrinsic interest, partly to resolve some deep problems and puzzles that caught his interest (like Moore's paradox of belief, or the paradoxes of aspect perception), and partly to extirpate a range of endemic errors and misconceptions. There is no evidence to suggest that after 1946 he saw any need to modify the conception of the goals and methods of philosophy that he had advanced in the *Investigations*. So we can assume, at least as a working hermeneutical hypothesis, that his raw writings on philosophy of psychology, despite their incompleteness and tentative character, exemplify his conception of the methods, limits, and goals of philosophical investigation—not, of course, by way of finished work, but rather by way of procedure. That in turn serves to illuminate contentious aspects of his methodology and conception of philosophy.

Looked at from this point of view, it is evident that in his writings on the philosophy of psychology

(i)  there are no theories (PI §109)—on the model of the hypothetico-deductive theories that characterize the natural sciences. Rather, his grammatical remarks sketch out fragments of the logical geography of locations and environments within the landscape of psychological concepts.

(ii)  there are no theses (PI §128)—which assert that things *must* be thus-and-so as a condition of the possibility of our thinking or reasoning, on the model of the *Tractatus* and of Waismann's *Thesen* for the Vienna Circle that were based on it. Of course, his grammatical remarks are not *theses*—they describe *the nature* of the psychological phenomena under scrutiny. So, they are expressions of rules for the use of the constituent words, or, as one might also say, for the use of the concepts expressed (cf. PI §§371–3). Only gross misunderstanding would lead one to think that these are exclusive (cf. PI §370).

(iii)  there is nothing hypothetical (PI §109), that might stand in need of empirical confirmation or disconfirmation, or that might be

more or less probable. The investigation is wholly a priori, and so too are the grammatical remarks the arrangement of which resolves philosophical problems. It is not a *hypothesis* that pain is a sensation, or that one can experience an aspect change without anything in the object perceived changing, or that one can speak quickly or slowly but cannot mean something quickly or slowly.

  (iv) the only explanations are grammatical, i.e. the calling to mind (PI §127) of familiar rules for the use of words.

  (v) nothing that is hidden from view plays any role in the grammatical explanations or elucidations (PI §126)—for were anything hidden from view, it could not play a role in the guidance, justification, correction, and criticism of linguistic behaviour. The sense-determining rules for the use of expressions could no more be unknown to those who use them than what they see could be invisible to them. For what is unknown cannot fulfil the guiding, justifying, and critical function that is intrinsic to rules. But there may well be *comparative features* of familiar rules for the use of words that one had not *realized*.

  (vi) everything *in the grammar of psychological concepts* is left as it is (PI §124)—it is not the task of philosophy in general, or of philosophy of psychology in particular, to reform language or to introduce a novel (logically more perfect) language. (Of course, that does not *preclude* introducing new *classificatory concepts* in terms of which to order our existing psychological concepts, although, as we have seen, at the end of the day, the only novel concept Wittgenstein brought into play is that of 'genuine duration'.) What is *not* 'left as it is' are the conceptual confusions rife in philosophy of psychology, on the one hand, and in empirical psychology, on the other (PPF §371)—these are ruthlessly exposed.

  (vii) the methods of clarification are descriptive (PI §109)—the uses of psychological expressions that are, for one reason or another, problematic are described, the presuppositions of their use teased out, the contexts of their use elaborated, and the language-games in which they are embedded characterized. To be sure, the choice of the grammatical propositions selected is constrained by the philosophical, conceptual, problems at hand.

  (viii) the problems are solved by the *arrangement* of what we already know (PI §109), namely, the relevant rules for the use of the words that are the source of our difficulties. The arrangement of grammatical remarks is guided by the goal of giving us an overview of the grammar of the problematic concept in its conceptual field, enabling us to see affinities and differences of which we may well

have been unaware. That is why, whereas the appropriate response to a scientific discovery may be 'Goodness me, who would have thought of that!', the response to a philosophical insight should be 'Of course! I should have thought of that.'

(ix) the ordering of grammatical remarks is neither arbitrary nor person-relative, but rather problem-relative. It is guided by the goal of providing a *surveyable representation* of the problematic concept that will provide the key to the solution or dissolution of the problems or puzzles that arise.

We should view Wittgenstein's struggles with the philosophy of psychology between 1946 and 1949 as the endeavour to collect grammatical materials for surveyable representations of problematic psychological concepts. These do not add to our knowledge of the world, but only to our understanding of the forms of our thought and talk about the world. They provide us with a map of Treasure Island. But the only treasure is the island—and the map.[34]

# 5

## Wittgenstein's Anthropological and Ethnological Approach

### 1. THE ETHNOLOGICAL METHOD

In July, 1940 Wittgenstein wrote 'If we use the ethnological approach, does that mean we are saying that philosophy is ethnology? No, it only means that we are taking up our position far outside, in order to see things *more objectively*.'[1] This remark, written at a time when Wittgenstein's later views were largely formed, is of considerable interest and worth reflecting on.

In his first masterwork, the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had conceived of philosophy as an investigation into the essence of the world and the nature of things. Logic, he later wrote in the *Investigations*,

seemed to have a peculiar depth—a universal significance. Logic lay, it seemed, at the foundation of all the sciences.—For logical investigation explores the essence of all things. It seeks to see to the foundation of things, and shouldn't concern itself whether things actually happen in this or that way.—It arises neither from an interest in the facts of nature, nor from a need to grasp causal connections, but from an urge to understand the foundations, or essence, of everything empirical.[2]

He had thought that logic showed the scaffolding of the world, and that the essential nature of things *had to be* reflected in the forms of analysed propositions with a sense. It was only in the 1930s that he gradually came to realize that what had appeared to be the scaffolding *of* the world was actually the scaffolding *from which we describe the world*. Again, as he wrote in the *Investigations*,

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[1] Wittgenstein, MS 162b, 67v; CV 2.7.1940.
[2] Wittgenstein, PI §89.

We feel as if we had to *see right into* phenomena: yet our investigation is directed not towards *phenomena*, but rather, as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena. What that means is that we call to mind the *kinds of statement* that we make about phenomena...

Our enquiry is therefore a grammatical one. And this enquiry sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away. Misunderstandings concerning the use of words, brought about, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of our language.[3]

What had seemed to be the logico-metaphysical forms of things that *had to be* mirrored in the logical syntax of any possible language were no more than the shadow cast by grammar upon the world. What seemed to be metalogical[4] connections between language and reality, that pinned names to the objects that are their meanings, and ensured a pre-established harmony between thought, language, and reality, were actually no more than instruments of language, and connections within grammar. For what appeared to be sempiternal objects constituting the substance of the world are actually samples, employed in ostensive definitions as explanations of word-meaning and standards for the correct application of words. And what had looked like a metalogical agreement between the proposition that *p* and the fact that *p* that makes it true, is no more than an intra-grammatical rule that allows one to replace the phrase 'the proposition that *p*' by the phrase 'the proposition that is made true by the fact that *p*'. So too, the metaphysical statement that the world consists of facts not things, *correctly understood*, amounts to no more than the grammatical proposition that a true description of (some features of) the world consists of a statement of facts, not of a list of things. And this grammatical proposition is itself a statement of a linguistic rule concerning the use of the phrases 'true description', 'list of things', and 'statement of facts'.

This transformation of philosophical vision that occurred between 1929 and 1931 was, of course, accompanied by a complete reorientation in Wittgenstein's vision of philosophy itself. He had thought that philosophy must investigate

the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of *possibilities*, which the world and thinking must have in common. But this order, it seems, must be *utterly simple*. It is *prior* to all experience, must run through all experience;

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[3]  Wittgenstein, PI §90.
[4]  This is Wittgenstein's idiosyncratic use of the expression 'metalogical'.

no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty may attach to it.—It must rather be of the purest crystal. But this crystal does not appear as an abstraction, but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the *hardest* thing there is. (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 5.5563)[5]

This, he now saw, was an illusion. This change in his conception of the method of doing philosophy was *perhaps* what he referred to in 1929 as 'my way of philosophizing' and characterized as being 'still new for me'. He described it thus: 'This method is essentially the transition from the question of truth to the question of sense.'[6] What he meant by this remark is unclear and contentious. But the change in his general conception is surely what he referred to in his lectures in 1930–1 as 'a new method' that had been found. It was a method that made it possible for the first time for there to be *skilful* philosophers, rather than great ones, as in the past.[7] Great philosophers have achieved a sublime vision of the world and of man's place in it, have erected grand systems to articulate their vision. And each such grand system, tormented by questions that brought itself into question,[8] collapsed under its own weight. Skilful philosophers are local cartographers, not meta-physicists or meta-physical cosmologists. They have the journeyman's skill to map the terrain where people lose their way, to track their footsteps and to identify the place where they took the wrong turning, and to explain why they ended in bogs and quicksands. This is why Wittgenstein said that philosophy had *lost its nimbus*. For the *Pathos* of the sublime is cast back upon the illusions to which we are subject.

Far from investigating language-independent essences of things, the task of philosophy is to investigate the uses of words that are the source of conceptual problems and confusions. It sketches the logical geography of those parts of the conceptual landscape in which we are prone to lose our way, not for its own sake, but in order that we should know our way around. It is not a metaphysical investigation (there are none such), but a conceptual or grammatical one. It reminds us how we use the words of our language, invites us to bring to mind features of usage in order to get us to realize the way in which we are inadvertently misusing words, crossing different uses of words, drawing inferences from one use that can actually be drawn only from

[5] Wittgenstein, PI §97.
[6] Wittgenstein, MS 106, 46.
[7] Wittgenstein, M 113.
[8] Wittgenstein, PI §133.

another. It draws our attention to conceptual differences, where we were misled by conceptual similarities. These differences are ones which we may well not have noted, since the mastery of the use of a word does not require mastery of *comparative* use. But when the differences are pointed out, we recognize them.[9] And when we recognize them, the philosophical knots we have tied in our understanding start to disentangle. So, for example, when we are reminded that one can speak quickly or slowly, but cannot mean something quickly or slowly, that one may speak better than one writes, but cannot mean something better than one writes, that one may begin to say something but cannot begin to mean something by what one says, and so forth, it may dawn on us that meaning something by one's words is not an activity of the mind. Philosophy, i.e. theoretical as opposed to practical philosophy (Kant), is a conceptual investigation the twofold purposes of which are the dissolution of philosophical problems and the disentangling of conceptual confusions, on the one hand, and the description of the logical geography of our concepts, on the other.

That human beings use language, engage in language-games, perform acts of speech in the context of their activities—these are anthropological facts about the natural history of man. What warrants using the epithets 'ethnological approach' or 'anthropological approach' in describing Wittgenstein's later philosophy is the perspective from which he views conceptual matters. Unlike Frege, Wittgenstein treats concepts not as entities to be discovered, but as techniques of using words. To have mastered a certain concept is to have mastered the technique of the use of a certain word in some language or other. To possess a concept is to be able to use a word or phrase correctly, to explain what one means by it in a given context, and to respond with understanding to its use. Concepts are human creations, made not found. They are comparable to instruments made for human purposes, and their acquisition is comparable to the mastery of the technique of using an instrument. They are rule-governed *techniques* of word use. They are given by explanations of word meaning, and their techniques of application are exhibited in the use of words in practice. The use of words is integrated into the activities of human beings in the stream of life. These activities are part of human natural history. Wittgenstein found it fruitful to view them anthropologically or

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[9] This is not a case of tacit as opposed to explicit knowledge, as these notions have been deployed in recent decades by philosophical theorists of meaning. It is rather a matter of explicit knowledge of correct use (meaning) but lack of a synoptic comparative view.

ethnologically. This comes out in two aspects of his approach to the characterization of concepts and conceptual networks: first, the primacy of action and practice, and second, the historicism.

Wittgenstein liked to quote Goethe's remark in *Faust*: '*Im Anfang war die Tat*'[10]—not 'In the beginning was the Word', but rather: 'In the beginning was the Deed'. For, as he observed, 'Words are deeds'. To learn to speak is to learn to act. 'Ordering, questioning, recounting, chatting', he wrote, 'are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing.'[11] What children learn is not how to translate their thoughts and wishes into words, but how to request, demand, beg, nag, ask and answer questions, call people and to respond to calls, tell people things and to listen to what others tell; in short, *they learn to be human*—not *homo sapiens*, but *homo loquens*. As the linguistic behavioural repertoire of the child grows, so too the horizon of possible thought, feeling, and volition expands. The child becomes able to think things he could not conceivably have thought, to feel things he could not possibly have felt, and to want things that no non-language using animal could intelligibly be said to want. For the limits of thought, feeling, and volition are the limits of the behavioural *expression* of thinking, feeling, and volition.

We are not inducted into a human community by learning, let alone by being taught, the depth grammar of our native tongue; nor even by being taught its ordinary (surface) grammar—but rather by being trained to imitate, drilled to repeat, and later: learning and being taught *how to do things with words*, how to engage in innumerable *language-games* in the human community of family and friends, and later strangers too. The words with which we learn to do things are, of course, rule-governed. Their rule-governed employment is manifest in a regularity *that presupposes recognition of a uniformity*.[12] The normative practices of using words are surrounded by normative activities of correcting mistakes, explaining what is meant, appropriate responses to correct use, manifestations of understanding, misunderstanding, and not understanding. And it is the normative practices of the speech community that fix and hold firm the internal relations between a word and its application, between explanation of meaning and what *counts*, in the practice of using the word, as correct use, as well as what is determined as *following from* its use in an utterance.

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[10] Goethe, *Faust*, Vers 1237.
[11] Wittgenstein, PI §25.
[12] Wittgenstein, RFM 348.

Side by side with the primacy of action and practice we find in Wittgenstein's approach a powerful *historicist* point of view. But, in a sense that I shall explain, it is historicism *without history*. The concepts employed by different linguistic and social groups are the product of social interaction, responses to shared needs, inventiveness and discovery, common interests called forth by the varying circumstances of social life, that evolve in idiosyncratic ways in different societies at different times and places. It was not for nothing that Wittgenstein cited Spengler as one of the important influences on his thought. Chapter 2 of *The Decline of the West* is dedicated to a survey of the different mathematics of different cultures. For Spengler viewed mathematics as a historical phenomenon and historical creation— not as something that has been progressively *discovered* in the course of human history, but as a motley of techniques and concepts that have been progressively *created*, and one might add, progressively unified, throughout human history. This, it seems to me, is an important legacy which Wittgenstein seized. 'Mathematics', he wrote, 'is after all an anthropological phenomenon.'[13] Of course, mathematical propositions are not anthropological propositions describing how men infer and calculate, any more than a penal code is a work of anthropology describing how people in a given society deal with criminals.[14] It is a system of norms that determine what is called 'calculating', 'inferring', 'working out' magnitudes and quantities of countables and measurables, just as the penal code is a system of norms of behaviour and of penalties for transgression of those norms. But *that* these norms determine these concepts and therefore these ways of *doing* things, is an anthropological phenomenon.

The young Wittgenstein, when he wrote the *Tractatus* was virtually oblivious to the history of concepts—as oblivious as Frege and Russell. The conception he had of language and of our conceptual scheme was of a timeless logical structure. The essential forms of any possible scheme of representation *must*, he thought, mirror the essential forms, the logico-metaphysical scaffolding, of any possible world. Only simple names can represent simple objects, only relations can represent relations and only facts can represent facts. And the representation of whatever is represented *must* be isomorphic with what it represents. That is a metalogical requirement for the possibility of true or false representation. This sublime, static, picture collapsed

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[13]  Wittgenstein, RFM 399.
[14]  Wittgenstein, RFM 192.

(slowly) after 1929—and was replaced by a thoroughgoing dynamic historicist conception of language and of conceptual forms. But it is a historicism without history.

It is remarkable that someone who had arrived at such a historicist conception should have been so indifferent to the actual history of arithmetic and geometry, the history of our different concepts of the *psuchē*, *nephesh*, *anima*, *mind*, *Geist*, *l'esprit*, the history of the varying geometries of colour in different societies and languages. This lack of interest is, biographically speaking, surprising.[15] But philosophically speaking it need occasion no surprise. For instead of investigating empirical facts about Egyptian, Babylonian, or Mayan arithmetical systems, or Chinese and Japanese colour grammar, Wittgenstein has no compunction about *inventing* different forms of representation. He made this point forcefully apropos the dependency of our concepts on general facts of nature—but his observations are readily applicable to particular facts of the history of human societies. This is what he wrote:

If concept-formation can be explained by facts of nature, shouldn't we be interested not in grammar, but rather in what is its basis in nature?—We are, indeed, also interested in the correspondence between concepts and very general facts of nature. (Such facts as mostly do not strike us because of their generality.) But our interest is not thereby thrown back onto these possible causes of concept-formation; we are not doing natural science; nor yet natural history—since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes.[16]

In the same way, it is not necessary to describe Egyptian or Greek arithmetic in order to make it clear that different arithmetical concepts are perfectly intelligible—for one can *invent* different ways of counting, calculating distances, speeds, weights, lengths, heights, and volumes. In 1940 he wrote: 'One of my most important methods is to imagine a historical development of our ideas different from what has actually occurred. If we do that the problem shows us a quite new side.'[17] It is in this sense that Wittgenstein invokes a historicism without history for philosophical purposes.

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[15] For a discussion of Wittgenstein's attitude to history and to the history of philosophy, see H.-J. Glock, 'Wittgenstein and History', in A. Pichler and S. Säätelä, eds., *Wittgenstein: The Philosopher and his Works* (The Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen, Bergen, 2005).

[16] Wittgenstein, PPF §335.

[17] Wittgenstein, MS 162b, 68v.

## 2. THE AUTONOMY OF GRAMMAR

Given Wittgenstein's anthropological approach to the nature of concepts and conceptual networks, it should not be *very* surprising to find him insisting upon the *autonomy of grammar*. There is no such thing as 'absolutely correct' concepts any more than there are 'absolutely correct' instruments—only more or less useful ones, and more or less important, or even indispensable, ones—indispensable ones *given our natures and purposes*, and *given the nature of the world around us*. It is a cardinal thought in Wittgenstein's later philosophy that grammar owes no homage to reality. Grammar is not answerable to the facts for correctness—it is, in an important sense, *arbitrary*.[18] The arbitrariness of the rules of grammar does not mean that they are capricious, discretionary, unimportant, a matter for individual choice, easily changed, or that other rules would do just as well. Rather, it means that they cannot be said to be right or wrong, correct or incorrect relative to how things are in reality. It means that they are constitutive rules, not means–ends rules. They determine meanings of words, and are not answerable to the meanings of words. Unlike means–ends rules, they are not contingent on natural regularities, as rules of cooking are, and are not answerable to the laws of nature. They are not justified by reference to the facts, since they are neither justified nor unjustified. They are, it might be said, an ethnological phenomenon. Human beings, living together in communities, use signs in these-and-these ways, and exclude using these signs in those-and-those other ways. Using signs thus, they do such-and-such things—give orders, ask questions, describe things, reason. The signs, thus used, determine the way they conceive of things, determine the logical space within which their thought moves—and are an integral part of their form of life.

  With what is this ethnological approach to be contrasted? Why should we conceive things thus? How will distancing ourselves in this way help us attain a greater degree of objectivity? Because this way of looking at things will *help* to rid us of a pervasive array of illusions that have dogged philosophy since its beginnings. These are the illusions of metaphysics conceived as a description of the sempiternal and rigid scaffolding of the world. It *seems* that grammatical propo-

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[18]  For detailed discussion, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Mind and Will*, vol. 4 of *An Analytic Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996) in the essay 'The arbitrariness of grammar and the bounds of sense'.

sitions such as 'substances are bearers of properties', 'all events are temporally related to all other events', or 'causes cannot follow their effects' are correct if they truly describe the nature of things. So, it is correct that nothing can be red all over and green all over simultaneously, since it lies in the nature of colour that one colour excludes any other colour. It is correct that red is darker than pink, because it is part of the essence of red to be darker than pink. That is not just how things are, it is how they *necessarily* are. These truths are not physical, but meta-physical.

It is against this conception of meta-physical facts that Wittgenstein wars. The proposition that red is darker than pink is a grammatical one—it is a rule for the use of the colour words 'red' and 'pink' and for the relational term 'darker than'. *This* ☞ colour is red, and *that* ☞ colour is pink, and *this* ☞ colour does not *count* as *that* ☞ colour. So, if anything is *this* ☞ colour all over, it cannot also be described as being *that* ☞ colour all over. Moreover, any such ordered pair of colour samples serves us as a sample of the relation *darker than*. So, if any object A is red, we can infer *without looking* that it is darker than a pink object. The grammatical proposition is an inference licence, not a description of a 'necessary fact'.

Does this 'arbitrariness' mean that we can change our grammar? That we can decide that henceforth red should be lighter than pink? Yes and No. No, as we use the words 'red', 'pink', and 'lighter than' it is nonsense (not false) to say that red is lighter than pink. The proposition that red is lighter than pink is neither an empirical truth or falsehood, nor the expression of a grammatical rule for the use of these words. Yes, we can change the rules for the use of our words. But were we to change our grammar thus, we would be changing the meanings of the terms 'red', 'pink', and 'lighter than'. That is what is meant by saying that grammatical propositions are *constitutive rules* for the use of their constituent words. They determine meanings and are not answerable to them.

## 3. CONCEPT-FORMATION AND SHARED CONCEPTS

Wittgenstein views conceptual forms and networks as the creation of human beings. Concept-formation is dependent in various ways upon the empirical nature of the world around us and upon *our* empirical nature. That dependence, however, is a dependence for use and for usefulness, not for truth or correctness.

Human beings have, by and large, similar perceptual capacities. They have much the same discriminatory powers, comparable mnemonic abilities, similar natural reactive propensities, common basic needs and shared forms of natural behavioural disposition. They share natural forms of expressive behaviour—of pain, disgust, pleasure, amusement, fear, and anger. To be sure, these forms of expression are duly moulded by acculturation. Nevertheless, they retain their roots in natural behaviour. Other forms of expressive behaviour are primarily linguistic, in as much as the form they take is linguistic and what they express is an attribute that can qualify only a language-using animal.

The world in which human social groups form concepts, in which children acquire concepts, and in which human beings use concepts is by and large a *regular* world of material objects distributed in space and time and subject to causal regularity, and of living creatures exhibiting regular patterns of teleological activity and life cycle. The persistence of such regularities is a condition for the usability and usefulness of the concepts we possess.

These very general facts of nature are background conditions for concept-formation, concept-possession, concept-application, and concept-utility. They could be otherwise. Were they to change, many of our common concepts would cease to be useful, and some would even cease to be usable. We would have to introduce different concepts, or be left without the conceptual apparatus that makes us human. Of course, that is an empirical hypothesis. As such, it is of little interest to Wittgenstein. The reason he draws our attention to such pervasive general facts about ourselves and the world we inhabit is that

if anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we realize—then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him.[19]

Facts about human beings and human natural behaviour to which Wittgenstein draws our attention in the course of his grammatical clarifications of concept-formation concern natural expressive and responsive behaviour. They also concern primitive linguistic behaviour and the more sophisticated forms of linguistic behaviour that

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[19] Wittgenstein, PPF 366.

grow out of these primitive roots. These are not recherché or arcane. On the contrary:

What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes.[20]

So, for example, natural pain behaviour is the root onto which we graft acculturated linguistic pain behaviour. Without pain behaviour, there would be no pain-language, without common pain behaviour no shared pain-language. Looked at anthropologically, one might say, human animals injure themselves and cry out, they contort their faces *thus*, assuage the injured limb *thus*, favour the uninjured limb *thus*. Unlike other animals, they also use words and do things with the words they use. They exclaim, cry out, ask for help, describe their pain, point at the pain location—and other human beings help them. For others view such pain behaviour as a reason for assisting the injured and as a reason for commiseration.

Why are such anthropological facts illuminating? Not because they resolve any philosophical questions. After all, no empirical discovery, let alone such empirical commonplaces, *could* resolve a philosophical question, any more than a discovery in physics, let alone commonplaces about the physical behaviour of things, could confirm or disconfirm a mathematical theorem. Rather they position us in such a manner that we can see the problem in a new light. In the case of problems pertaining to the concept of pain, or, more generally concepts of the 'inner', of subjective experience, this anthropological viewpoint helps to rid us of an obsessive preoccupation with introspection, privileged access, epistemic privacy, and private ownership of experience. For *that* is the typical position from which philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive neuroscientists view the phenomena and the concepts that bewilder us. And the change of viewpoint makes us more receptive to the idea, which Wittgenstein advances, that the possibility of groundless verbal expression and report of experience is *grammatically* bound up with the behavioural criteria, including verbal expression and report, in appropriate circumstances, for other-ascription of experience.

Animals generally display conative behaviour. They have wants and felt needs and strive to get what they want or need. On such natural conative behaviour of infants, such as *reaching for* and *crying*

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[20]  Wittgenstein, PI §415.

*out for* a desired object, human beings graft the use of such words as 'want', 'give me', and in due course, 'I want', and even later 'May I have'. And from these humble beginnings of conative language humans extend their conative behaviour to begging for, asking for, demanding the object of their desire, and, in the fullness of time, to describing the object of their desire as well as requesting it from others.

This humdrum anthropological observation encourages us to look upon expressions and reports of wants not as descriptions of an inner phenomenon, accessible only to the subject, but rather as acculturated extensions of conative behaviour. And that in turn helps to shake the grip of the idea that desires and wants are inner states or objects perceived by the subject of desires and wants. Wanting something is no more a private *experience* than reaching for something. Saying that one wants something and specifying what it is that one wants is not a report of a private observation. Knowing what one wants is not a cognitive achievement consequent on peering into one's breast and apprehending there a want or a state of wanting, but the upshot of a *decision* consequent on thinking about or examining the options available to one.

Animals display not only conative behaviour, but more generally, teleological, goal-directed, behaviour. Wittgenstein goes so far as to identify the behaviour of a cat stalking a bird as a primitive manifestation of intention. That is perhaps questionable (and was questioned by Stuart Hampshire[21]). But his suggestion about the roots of the language-games human beings play with *expressions* of intention is illuminating. Here we do not graft a piece of linguistic behaviour onto natural expressive behaviour, rather we introduce a piece of linguistic behaviour that *heralds* an action. We say 'I'm going to V (throw the ball, give you the ball)' and immediately *go on to V*. The child's initial use of 'I'm going to' is to herald an action. And from this primitive beginning, long-term intentions and their expression grow, and the nexus with immediate performance weakens.

Further examples could easily be added. But instead of doing so, I should like to expand the focus of this discussion a little. For one can discern a similarly anthropological strand in Wittgenstein's reflections on the conditions for shared concepts, and hence for shared language-games. Here his emphasis is upon a shared form of life, common human discriminatory and mnemonic powers, agreement in

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[21] S. Hampshire, *Thought and Action* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1959), 97f.

definitions, or more generally explanations of word meaning, and broad consensus in judgements. A shared form of life is presupposed by logic, i.e. by what we call 'inferring', 'concluding', 'affirming', 'denying', 'contradicting oneself'. This is not an agreement in opinions, let alone an agreement in opinions on questions of logic.[22] Rather, it is an agreement in behaviour and response, in *what counts* as understanding, misunderstanding, and not understanding.

Common human discriminatory powers are presupposed for the possibility of shared concepts of perceptual qualities that are standardly explained, and sometimes applied, by reference to perceptible samples. For our concepts of colours, sounds, tastes, smells, as well as our concepts of thermal and tactile qualities are determined by the samples we use in explaining the meaning of predicates of perceptual qualities, and the ways in which we use them as standards of correct application. Unless we can see and discriminate colour samples in the same way, we shall not have a common colour grammar. The blind and the colour blind cannot master the use of our colour grammar precisely because they cannot use our colour samples—and they cannot use them because they cannot see them, or because they cannot distinguish them as we do. They cannot *do* something that we can. If general agreement in the samples we use to explain what 'red', 'magenta', or 'Brunswick green', etc. vanished, our colour language would disintegrate and confusion would supervene. As Wittgenstein noted,

The phenomenon of language is based on regularity, on agreement in action.

Here it is of the greatest importance that all, or the enormous majority of us agree in certain things. I can, for example, be quite sure that the colour of this object will be called 'green' by far the most of the human beings who see it…

We say that, in order to communicate, people must agree with one another about the meanings of words. But the criterion for this agreement is not just agreement with reference to definitions, e.g. ostensive definitions—but *also* an agreement in judgements. It is essential for communication that we agree in a large number of judgements.[23]

Definitions, explanations of the meanings of words, are rules. The understanding of a rule, and hence too the *common* understanding of a *shared* rule, is exhibited in *two* ways: in formulating the rule, for

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[22] Wittgenstein, RFM 353.
[23] Wittgenstein, RFM 342f.

example in giving an ostensive definition, and in applying the rule, for example in making empirical judgements. Whether different people understand a rule for the use of a word in the same way is manifest in their generally reaching the same verdict on its application. Agreement in judgements is *not independent* of agreement in definitions, for agreement in applying a definition in judgement is a criterion of shared understanding. This does not mean that the truth of our empirical judgements depends upon the agreement of other speakers. Rather the meaningfulness of our judgements, and hence the *possibility* of their being either true *or* false, depends on widespread agreement.

## 4. A COMPARISON WITH ALTERNATIVE METHODS AND CONCEPTIONS

To conclude this discussion, I should like briefly to compare Wittgenstein's ethnological approach with three other currently common approaches, rooted in different conceptions of the subject, which he rejected or would surely have rejected.

First, one might cite Platonism—a perennially tempting conception that cleaves to a priori essentialism regarding concepts and real definitions, and realism regarding logical possibility. Accordingly, philosophy is conceived to be a cognitive discipline the task of which is to reveal the nature of things and the objective language-independent structure of all possible worlds. For things of different kinds are conceived to have an essential nature, which is given by a real definition specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a thing of the kind in question. Logical possibility is conceived to be language independent—circumscribing the limits of all possible worlds. And the propositions of logic are held to be boundary stones set in eternal foundations, which our thought may overflow but never displace (Frege). Clearly Wittgenstein set his face against this conception of philosophy and philosophical investigation. It is a misconception to suppose that all words are defined, or indeed are definable in terms of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions of application. Numerous terms are quite differently explained, e.g. by ostensive definition in terms of a sample, by a series of examples together with a similarity rider, by paraphrase or contrastive paraphrase, and so on.

Furthermore, it is misguided to suppose, as Frege did, that all concepts must be sharply defined. Numerous expressions in our language are vague, and they are none the worse for that. If this undermines our Platonist conception of logic, then it is high time it was undermined. We must *look and see* how we use words and how we explain our concepts. Not only are most of our concepts not sharply defined, we very often *do not want* sharply defined concepts. As Wittgenstein remarked, 'I asked him for a bread knife, and he gives me a razor blade because it is sharper.'

Far from logical possibility constituting the language-independent limits of all possible worlds, it is merely the limits of language, as determined by our conventions for the uses of words. We labour under an illusion if we think that logical possibility corresponds to something in reality—as if a logical possibility were more real than a logical impossibility. But nothing corresponds to a logical possibility—and there cannot be less than nothing to correspond to a logical impossibility. A logical impossibility is not a possibility that is impossible, and a logical possibility is not a shadow of an actuality. For if something is merely logically possible then it does not exist—and how can something that does not exist cast a shadow? If a logical possibility is a shadow, then it is a shadow of any form of words that makes sense.

A second, quite different approach that enjoys current popularity is a posteriori essentialism—with roots in Aristotle and Locke, and flowering branches today in Putnam and Kripke. On such a view there are a posteriori necessary truths to be discovered. So, for example, it is an empirical truth, but a 'metaphysically necessary' one, that water is $H_2O$, or that lightning is electrical discharge. Of course, the discovery of such truths is not the task of philosophy. The task of philosophy, it seems, is to demonstrate that they are necessary, and then to employ them in resolving certain philosophical problems.

It is obvious that Wittgenstein would hold this to be confused. For he showed that what we deem to be necessary truths are, with the exception of the tautologies of logic, norms of representation. And there is no such thing as *discovering* norms of representation in reality. For something is a rule only insofar as it is used as a rule. Nature is the realm of *phusis* not of *nomos*. Rules are human creations, and their existence is exhibited in human practices. Rules for the use of words are exhibited in human discourse, in explanations of meaning, in corrections of errors, in what counts as accepted usage. It was a chemical *discovery* that pure water consists of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen in chemical combination. If chemists since then

have transformed this discovery into a rule for the use of the expression 'pure water', that is *a decision*, namely, to deny the epithet 'pure water' of anything that does not consist solely of $H_2O$. They did not find an unused and hitherto unknown rule in nature and they did not discover a language-independent metaphysical necessity. They simply hardened what was an empirical discovery into a rule for the use of the phrase 'pure water'.

The very idea that there might be a posteriori necessities would, I believe, have struck Wittgenstein as utterly misguided. For to say that a proposition is a necessary truth is to say something about its role in inferences and in the rule-governed transformation of propositions. But to present chemical and physical *discoveries* as necessary truths is to say nothing at all about their role or function, and explains *nothing* concerning the differences in role between such propositions and those propositions of natural science that are contingently true.

A third current strategy that would not have found favour with Wittgenstein is Quinean and neo-Quinean naturalism. This eschews all distinctions between analytic and synthetic propositions, a priori and a posteriori ones, and necessary and contingent ones. The only acceptable distinctions are between logical and non-logical sentences, and between sentences that are deeply embedded in our total theory of the world, those that are less deeply embedded and can therefore be relinquished at less cost, and observation sentences that lie on the periphery of the web of our beliefs.

This homogeneity, Wittgenstein might have argued, is purchased at the cost of obscuring and indeed obliterating differences, in particular differences in role and function of sentences of our language. In particular, it conflates the normative net of grammar with the empirical fish that we catch with it.

Wittgenstein eschewed the terminology of analytic/synthetic, invoking instead his own quite different distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions—grammatical propositions being norms of representation. He thought that our distinction between necessary and contingent propositions was not a useful classificatory instrument, but a knot that needed unravelling. He unravelled it not in terms of deeply embedded truths, but in terms of deeply entrenched norms for description. He thought that the traditional conception of the a priori rested on profound misconceptions—which he strove to undermine in his elucidations of the various kinds of so-called necessary propositions.

Quinean naturalism certainly has an anthropological methodology. But the conception of human nature, and of explanation and

understanding of human thought, feeling, and behaviour, is sorely defective. In Quine's case, it is wedded to crude Skinnerian behaviourism, and in the case of his followers, it is committed to reduction of reasons to causes, and the analysis of teleological explanation as a form of nomological explanation or as replaceable by nomological explanation. Wittgenstein by contrast held explanation in terms of reasons and motives to be irreducible, and altogether distinct from nomological explanation.

Wittgenstein's ethnological point of view is not a commitment to construing philosophy as a branch of anthropology. Although mathematics is an anthropological phenomenon, propositions of mathematics are not anthropological propositions saying how men calculate and infer[24]—they are expressions of rules, not statements to the effect that certain rules exist. Although it is an anthropological phenomenon that human beings have chromatic vision, and an ethnological fact that they construct different colour grammars and describe visibilia in terms of their colours, the propositions of colour grammar, such as 'red is darker than pink', 'red is more like orange than like yellow', 'nothing can be white and transparent', are not anthropological propositions. They are norms of representation.

The problems of philosophy arise primarily (but not only) as a result of entanglements in the net of grammar. The ethnological approach helps to distance us from the phenomena that bewilder us in our philosophical reflections and confusions. It helps us to view the normative grammatical structures that inform a language as a net, to see it as a human artefact that could have been woven differently, to realize its normative role in the natural history of a human, language-using community, to understand that its purpose is to catch fish, and to avoid confusing the net with the fish. But the *philosophical* task is to disentangle the knots we have tied in the net. For that purpose, we have to describe the net and its reticulations—and that is not an ethnological task. It is a logico-grammatical one, in which familiar rules of the uses of expressions have to be carefully selected and properly marshalled in order to exhibit the sources of confusion and misunderstanding. For that we require, as it were, an 'internal point of view', not an ethnological or anthropological one.[25]

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[24] Wittgenstein, RFM 192.

# 6

# Two Conceptions of Language

## 1. DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE

If we view from afar the various philosophical attempts throughout the ages to achieve a satisfactory conception of the nature of language, it is evident that the one that has dominated reflection is the psychological representationalist theory. According to this familiar conception, the meaning of a word is the idea or mental representation it stands for. A judgement was held to be a combination of ideas—in the simplest case, of a subject of predication and the idea that is predicated of it. Words are essentially names of ideas. A simple declarative sentence is a combination of words. The propositional link, which was also conceived to carry assertoric force, is the copula. The declarative sentence is the vehicle for a judgement. The content of a judgement is a representation. The role of the expression of a judgement by the assertion of a sentence is to communicate the content of judgement from speaker to hearer. Understanding what has been asserted consists in the associative generation of the same ideas in the same combination in the mind of the hearer. This conception had its ancient precursor in Aristotelian thought. Among its great advocates, in the early modern era, are Hobbes, Arnauld, and Locke. In one form or another, this conception dominated philosophical reflection on language from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Objections to the classical idealist conception are legion and familiar. It will not be discussed further.

A paradigm shift resulted from the rise of modern function-theoretic logic in the hands of Frege and Russell, and from the attempts to explore its philosophical implications by the young Wittgenstein. This conception much influenced philosophy in the USA, Carnap and the European émigrés from the Vienna Circle being the main conduit from the Old World to the New. Its most

distinguished later representative was Davidson, who advocated the elaboration of a theory of meaning for a natural language. The fundamental notions by which to put in order our ideas of a language are those of representation and of the truth of a representation. I shall characterize this approach as the *calculus conception* of language. Its post-*Tractatus* advocates, inspired by the achievements of formal logicians in inventing the predicate calculus and its related variants, argued that all languages, in their depth grammar, are, or can be represented as being, meaning calculi. Such a conception is to be found not only among philosophers of language, but also among linguists, for example those of Chomsky's school, as well as among psycholinguists, such as Levelt and Coltheart.

   If the young Wittgenstein gave impetus to the development of the calculus conception of language, the later Wittgenstein, like Captain Nolan in the charge of the Light Brigade, tried to rectify the misdirection. For he had come to think that the conception he had advocated was fundamentally mistaken. Language is an anthropological phenomenon.[1] It is an extension of human behaviour. Speaking a language, according to the later Wittgenstein, is a normative practice. To master a language is to learn techniques of applying words, above all in communicative human behaviour. To learn a language, he argued, is to learn to play language-games. It is *not* to learn a meaning calculus. It is not the acquisition of non-conscious computational skills. It is to learn how to participate in the language-games characteristic of the culture or form of life into which one is born. A language is an ethnological phenomenon. This conception is *not* (and was never meant to be) epitomized by the dictum that the meaning of a word is its use. Nor is it a 'use-theory of meaning'. I shall refer to it as the anthropological or ethnological conception of language.

   In the late 1960s a further contender arose, namely, communication-intention theory, as perhaps suggested by Austin in Oxford, and

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[1] Wittgenstein wrote of himself as using 'the ethnological approach' (CV, under 2.7.1940; MS 162b, 67v). Later sociologists would no doubt have described it as 'ethno-methodological'. For elaboration, see Chapter 5, 'Wittgenstein's Anthropological and Ethnological Approach', above. The term 'anthropological approach' perhaps has some warrant by reference to *Investigations* §415 and RFM 399 ('Mathematics, after all, is an anthropological phenomenon'). Neither term is altogether felicitous.

certainly advanced by his pupil Searle in the USA, on the one hand, and by Grice, on the other. It was supported briefly by Strawson in his 1969 Inaugural Address 'Meaning and Truth', where he claimed it to be the primary contender against formal semanticist conceptions. It is now evident that, like behaviourist conceptions of language that were popular in the inter-war years, it is but a minor force on the battlefield of ideas. But like behaviourism, it drew attention to important features of language.

What I should like to do in this chapter is to compare the main commitments of the calculus conception of language, on the one hand, and of the anthropological conception of language, on the other. I shall try to bring into the open their very different priorities and presuppositions.

## 2. THE CALCULUS CONCEPTION OF LANGUAGE—AN OVERVIEW

Painting on a large canvas with a broad brush, one can say that in the calculus conception of language the pivotal explanatory notion is truth; the primary unit for analysis is the assertoric sentence; the fundamental function of sentences is conceived to be to describe how things are; and the essence of communication is telementation. By the second half of the twentieth century, the meaning of a sentence was argued to be explained by spelling out its truth-conditions on the model of Tarskian T-sentences. The meaning of a word was held to be explained by specifying its contribution to the determination of the truth-conditions of any sentence in which it occurs. A theory of meaning for a natural language was a latecomer on the stage. It was held to be a deductive theory that, from an array of meaning axioms and syntactical formation-rules, would be able to deliver the meaning of any well-formed sentence of a language in the form of a T-sentence. This envisaged theory was sometimes supposed to be a theoretical representation of our practical linguistic abilities (Dummett). (It is far from obvious whether that description is intelligible.) It was also commonly held to illuminate the nature of linguistic understanding. Insofar as communication was conceived of as telementation, it was commonly held that understanding must involve a non-conscious mental or neural process of calculating the meaning of any utterance-sentence one hears from one's knowledge of the meanings of its constituent words and their

mode of combination (Dummett, Chomsky).[2] So all understanding of the utterances of others is interpretation (Davidson).

One of the apparent merits of the calculus conception of language was held to be that it solved what was declared to be the fundamental problem of theoretical linguistics and philosophy of language, namely, our ability to understand sentences we have never heard before, or, to put it slightly differently, our ability to understand a potential infinity of sentences. This was widely held to be explicable only on the assumption that hearers possess tacit knowledge of a generative compositional theory of meaning for their language, which knowledge is put to use in the interpretative (computational) process of understanding the utterances *of others*. What is involved in understanding what *we ourselves* say with understanding was, suspiciously, left in darkness. (After all, we know what we mean by our words, and we speak with thought, without calculating the meaning of the sentence we are about to utter from anything.)

It is striking that this conception of language, of what it is for a word, sentence, or utterance of a sentence to have a meaning, of what meaning something by a word or utterance amounts to, of what an explanation of meaning consists in, of what constitutes understanding what someone has said, was not the result of examining the use of the familiar words and phrases: 'meaning', 'word', 'sentence', 'meaning of a word', 'meaning something by a word', 'the meaning of a sentence', 'meaning something by the utterance of a sentence', 'explaining the meaning of a word', 'what is said by the use of a sentence', and 'understanding what was said'. In fact, the calculus conception of language evolved in almost complete disregard of how these expressions are used. It was originally motivated by the exigencies of mathematical logic, by the assumption that the function-theoretic logical calculus invented by Frege is a logically ideal language, or that the somewhat different function-theoretic logic of *Principia* is the syntax for an ideal language. Alternatively, in the case of the *Tractatus*, it was supposed that logic, represented by the new logical calculus, is the transcendental condition for the possibility of symbolic

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[2] 'A process of derivation of some kind is involved in the understanding of a sentence', M. A. E. Dummett, 'What is a Theory of Meaning?', in *Mind and Language* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975), p. 112. '…the computations involved may be fairly intricate…But since they rely on principles of universal grammar that are part of the fixed structure of the mind/brain, it is fair to suppose that they take place virtually instantaneously and of course with no conscious awareness and beyond the level of possible introspection', N. Chomsky, *Language and the Problems of Knowledge* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1988), pp. 90f.

representation and hence provides the structural forms of the depth grammar of any possible language.

It was because of such assumptions, their theoretic commitments and ramifying consequences, that the early calculus theorists of language were willing to countenance utterly bizarre claims, which outside their theoretical contexts would rightly have been dismissed as ridiculous. So, for example, Frege averred that the concept of a horse is not a concept; that a statement ostensibly about whales is actually about the concept of a whale; and that sentences are names of one of two objects, the True or the False. Russell was willing to assert that the only *real* names are the indexicals 'this' and 'that'; that believing that Jack loves Jill is a multiple relation between the believer, Jack, Jill, the relation of loving, the form $aRb$, and the 'direction' of the relation; and that it would be absolutely fatal if people meant the same things by their words, for it would make all intercourse impossible. The young Wittgenstein held that one cannot say that red is a colour or a table an object; he claimed that the meaning of a name is the object it stands for; and he declared that we do not know whether the sun will rise tomorrow. One could cite similar absurdities in the writings of the successors of these three great philosophers, who were familiar with ever more sophisticated forms of logical calculi, such as Davidson and Dummett. What is important to remember is, first, that these are not *stupid* absurdities, and secondly, that these *are* absurdities.

### 3. THE CALCULUS CONCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE: THE PRINCIPLES

I should like to stand back from the numerous competing factions within the camp of calculus theorists of language, and to draw attention to just how questionable some of their shared commitments and principles are. In giving primacy to truth in their account of meaning, calculus theorists thereby also give primacy (i) to representation rather than to communication and linguistic intercourse in their account of language, and (ii) to description in their account of the function of the sentence in use. Why the primacy of truth? Not because of meticulous observation of how speakers of a language actually explain what words mean, or of how they explain the meaning of sentences, no matter whether de-contextualized type-sentences

or utterance-sentences, in an appropriate context of some misunderstanding or unclarity. The motivation derives from logical calculi that are concerned with elaborating the principles of truth-preserving forms of deductive inference. In particular, the motivation lies with the function-theoretic calculi of Fregean and post-Fregean logic, which represent sentences as decomposing into function- and argument-expressions, concepts as functions mapping objects or lower level functions as arguments onto a truth-value as a value, and logical connectives as truth-functions mapping truth-values as arguments onto a truth-value. The predicate calculus, with further sophisticated elaborations, became the *form of representation* for the description of natural languages and for reflections on linguistic meaning. Characteristically, features of the form of representation were projected onto what was represented. If natural language does not accord with the forms of the calculus of logic in its surface grammar, then it must do so in its depth grammar.

The pivot upon which the consequent theoretical structures turned was the notion of the truth-conditions of a sentence. The meaning of a sentence was held to be explained by specifying the conditions under which it is true. For to understand a sentence with a sense was held to consist in knowing what is the case if it is true.[3] The initial model for this construal of sentential meaning and correlative understanding was the truth-functional analysis of molecular sentences. The later model was the Tarskian T-sentence.[4] I should like to draw attention to some widely neglected features of this programme of philosophico-semantic analysis.

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[3] Of course, we must distinguish between a sentence, the meaning of a sentence, the utterance of a sentence on an occasion, and the statement made by the utterance of a sentence. Strictly speaking, it is not declarative sentences or their meanings that can be true or false, but rather what is said by their use. For the most part I shall disregard these nice distinctions for the sake of brevity.

[4] It is noteworthy that neither of the founding fathers of the calculus conception of language actually claimed that the meaning of an elementary (atomic) sentence is given by its truth-conditions. The only mention of truth-conditions in the whole of the Fregean corpus is §32 of *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, vol. I. That is concerned exclusively with the truth-conditions of sentences formed from Frege's eight primitive function-names that take names of truth-values as argument expressions. Here the sense of elementary sentences (which are conceived to be names of truth-values) is taken as given. Insofar as Frege has any account of the sense of elementary sentences, it is that their sense is the mode of presentation of a truth-value as the value of a function for an argument. Similarly, the *Tractatus* claim that the sense of a sentence is given by its truth-conditions is tailored for the molecular sentence, and applies to an elementary sentence only in the Pickwickian sense that every elementary sentence is a truth-function of itself ('$p$' = '$p.p$').

I shall begin with some qualms about the concept of a truth-condition, about the conception of meaning and of what counts as an explanation of meaning. First, there is an important and little-noticed equivocation in the use of the term 'truth-condition'. A truth-condition of a molecular sentence such as '~$p$', '$p$ & $q$', '$p$ v $q$' or '$p$ ⊃ $q$' is a condition *on the sentence*. For the molecular sentence '$p$ & $q$' to be true, *it* has to satisfy the condition that both *its* constituent sentences be true; for a disjunctive molecular sentence to be true, one of the disjuncts must be true; and so on. But to stipulate that the T-sentence '"$p$" is true iff $p$' specifies the truth-conditions of an elementary sentence '$p$' is to abandon the very idea of *a condition a sentence has to fulfil*. Instead, what is stipulated as a truth-condition of an elementary sentence is what must be the case in reality if the sentence is to be true.

All right, we may think, then we must simply abandon the older way of talking, and follow the path Tarski pioneered, Carnap developed, and Davidson followed. We shall simply accept the idea that the meaning of a sentence is given by specifying how things must be if it is true. But it is not that straightforward. If a sentence '$p$' is to be said to be true, then things must indeed be as it describes them as being. But '"$p$" is true iff $p$' does not explain what '$p$' means, but only *reiterates* how it describes things as being. In particular, it does not explain to someone who does not understand it what the sentence means. It presupposes its meaning as given, and explains (trivially) only what it is for it to be true. A child, who does not know what 'purple' means, will not understand the sentence 'The curtains are purple', and his understanding will not be furthered by being told that the sentence 'The curtains are purple' is true if and only if the curtains are purple, as opposed to being given the explanation '*This* ☞ ■ is purple, and the curtains are this ☞ ■ colour'.

Whereas one might *count* the explanation of '$p$ & $q$' in terms of its truth-conditions as an explanation, what it explains is this particular use of the conjunction in logical formulae. It explains the meaning of the molecular sentence while presupposing the meanings of the constituent sentences as given. The form of explanation '"$p$" is true iff $p$' is not what anyone other than a truth-conditional theorist of meaning would *count as* an explanation of the meaning of a sentence '$p$'. It is not what is called 'an explanation of meaning', for an explanation of meaning eliminates or is meant to eliminate some misunderstanding or lack of understanding. If someone does not understand the sentence 'Snow is white', his incomprehension will not be eliminated by reiteration, any more than Englishmen can make themselves better understood abroad by loudly repeating what they said.

It will not avail to modify the formula to read '"*p*" *means* that *p*'. For neither the sentence 'It is raining' nor the sentence 'Es regnet' means that it is raining. What may mean that it is raining is the drumming of water drops on the window pane. The sentence 'Our country is now at war' does *not* mean that our country is now at war. For if it did, then were I to say falsely 'Our country is now at war', that would actually mean that Britain is at war—which is absurd.

When concerned with semantic meaning, we can say that one sentence or utterance does or does not *mean the same as* another. We can explain what a misunderstood sentence means in terms of another sentence that means the same and *is* understood. So, the sentence 'It is raining' *means the same as* 'Rain is falling', or as 'Water drops are falling from the clouds', or as 'Es regnet'. But neither the sentence nor its utterance means that it is raining. That is a non-trivial misuse of the word 'meaning' in its semantic sense.

All right, one may say. But that is just a peculiarity of English idiom. Why should we not introduce a special philosophical sense of 'meaning'? Of course, truth-conditional theorists may do so. But then they had better explain what *they* mean by the phrase 'the meaning of a sentence (of an utterance)'. *That they have not done!* They had better explain how 'meaning' in the special new sense is related to 'meaning' in the familiar old sense; how it is related to explanation of meaning; how it is related to understanding and to criteria of understanding. For to be sure, no one is held to satisfy the criteria for understanding a sentence or utterance by mere disquotation. We should be forewarned by the fact that special philosophical senses are usually special philosophical muddles, which have to be exposed.

We can explain what a sentence means by a synonymous sentence. But very often quite different methods of explanation of meaning are needed. If someone does not understand what the sentence 'Sexual selection is the mainspring of the evolution of species' means, *no one* would think that it is explained by saying '"Sexual selection is the mainspring of the evolution of species" is true if and only if sexual selection is the mainspring of the evolution of species'. Or again, if someone fails to understand sentences such as 'Ultramarine is my favourite colour' or 'This longcase clock is six cubits high', his failure to understand it will not be alleviated by disquotation or meta-linguistic descent. *Outside formal semantics, this is not what counts as an explanation of meaning.*

So much for the use and abuse of the concept of meaning and explanation of meaning. I now turn to a quite different, but now almost forgotten, difficulty. The primacy of truth and truth-conditions

in the account of sentence-meaning commits the calculus theorist to some form or other of a sense/force distinction. For interrogative and imperative sentences must be shown 'on analysis' to decompose into a descriptive component that can be said to have a truth-value, and a force-indicative component that shows what is being done with the true or false description. For it is a cardinal commitment of the calculus conception that the meanings of words consist in their contribution to the determination of the truth-conditions of any sentence in which they may occur. So either imperative and interrogative sentences are meaningless—which is absurd—or, on analysis, they have truth-conditions (or contain a constituent complex that has truth-conditions). And either words as they occur in imperative and interrogative sentences are meaningless—which is absurd—or their meanings consist in their contribution to the truth-conditions of imperative and interrogative sentences. So what must be shown is that despite appearances, imperative sentences and sentence-questions, on analysis, have truth-values. This is a *sine qua non* for a truth-conditional account of linguistic meaning.

 There were various tentative attempts, by Russell, Stenius, Hare, Grice, Dummett, Davidson, and others to elaborate and vindicate this proposal.[5] The most persuasive form it took was that every sentence contains a truth-value-bearing component with a sense, represented by the form 'that things are so'—sometimes called a 'sentence-radical'—, and a force-indicative component represented by such forms as 'It is the case', 'Is it the case', and 'Make it the case'. So, for example:

| *Analysandum* | *Force-indicator* | *True or false sentence-radical* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The door is shut = | It is the case ($\vdash$) | … that the door is shut |
| Is the door shut? = | Is it the case (?) | … that the door is shut |
| Shut the door! = | Make it the case (!) | … that the door is shut |

This was held to show that not only are declarative sentences true or false, but sentence-questions and imperatival utterances (or their nominalized constituent on analysis) are too. Indeed, although no one seems to have noted it, every felicitous order, request, plea, or entreaty (or their sentence-radical) has to be false, and every order,

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[5] For the history of attempts to deliver such analyses, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Language, Sense and Nonsense* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1984), chap. 2.

request, plea or entreaty (or their sentence-radical) has to be known or believed by the speaker to be false at the time of utterance. For one cannot felicitously order someone to shut a shut door or to open an open one. These forms of analysis were conceived to leave the calculus theorist free to proceed with an account of lexical meaning in terms of contribution to determination of the truth-conditions of any sentence in which the lexical item occurs.

To the unblinkered eye, this is no discovery, but *at best* an infelicitous form of representation. It is, to be sure, absurd to think that twentieth-century philosophers of language *discovered*, for the first time in human history, that orders or questions are true or false. They did not even *discover* that imperative and interrogative sentence can be paraphrased into a force-indicator and a truth-value-bearing nominalized sentence. Rather, they *proposed* this as a means of saving their preferred account of meaning in terms of truth and truth-conditions, which is tailored to the exigencies of the logical calculus.

There are two complementary ways of criticizing this sense/force theory. The first is tactical, the second strategic. Tactical criticisms will show, case by case, a wide range of sentential forms the meaning of which would be distorted by the envisaged paraphrases. For example: how are we to understand the following utterances

| | |
|---|---|
| 'Could you pass the salt, please?' | = 'Is it the case // that you could pass the salt' |
| 'I promise to meet you tomorrow' | = 'It is the case // that I promise to meet you' |
| 'God help me!' | = 'Make it the case // that God helps me' |
| 'Somebody open this door!' | = 'Make it the case // that somebody opens this door' |
| 'Let's go!' | = 'Make it the case // that we go' |

Examples can be multiplied by the hundred (see *Language, Sense, and Nonsense*, chaps. 2–3). Moreover, it should be obvious that although the discourse forms of declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences are *indicators* of discourse function, they are defeasible ones. A rhetorical question is a contrary assertion ('Is the king dead, is the throne vacant?'), questions can be used to request or

order ('Can you shut the door?'), many declarative sentences can be used to order or command ('I expect you to be there', 'You will be there', 'I should like you to be there'), and so on. To translate these mechanically into their so-called depth-grammatical forms of force-indicator and sentence-radical, far from displaying them in their true lights, distorts them. This form of criticism, involving death by a thousand cuts, shows that the method of projection employed by the calculus theorist in giving the alleged depth-analysis of sentences distorts the sentences of natural language, their meaning, and their uses, in countless ways.

The second form of criticism is strategic. We might accept, at any rate for the sake of argument, the possibility of such paraphrases. Perhaps we could envisage such a language—although, to be sure, it is not ours. But the moot question is: does this show anything at all about the forms and structures of our languages? After all, as Wittgenstein pointed out (PI §22), we could replace every declarative sentence by a corresponding interrogative sentence coupled to an affirmation. So 'It is raining' would be represented by 'Is it raining? Yes.' *Would this show that every sentence, on analysis, contains a question?* Even if one can paraphrase every sentence in any natural language into a force-operator and sentence-radical, that shows nothing beyond itself. Above all, it does not show that the meanings of words consist in their 'semantic value', i.e. their contribution to the truth-conditions of any sentence in which they occur.

Moreover, since the sentence-radical (or 'descriptive content') has to have truth-value, and since the truth-value of the sentence-radical of a command has to be false on the occasion of the giving of a felicitous command, it is incoherent to suppose that a command has to be understood as the command to make the sentence-radical true—for then *it would be a different sentence-radical*! For the sentence-radical has to be timelessly true or false.

Finally, the nominal that-clause (the 'sentence-radical'), which is supposed to express the sense, or descriptive content, of a sentence (declarative, interrogative, or imperative), cannot do so. For only a sentence can have the sense of a sentence. But if we abandon the nominal clause 'that $p$' in favour of the sentence '$p$', and write 'It is the case – $p$', it is obvious that the operator 'It is the case' is redundant. Furthermore, to write 'Make it the case – $p$' and 'Is it the case – $p$?' are gibberish. In short, the demands made on the concept of a declarative sentence are incoherent. For it is essential to the concept of a declarative sentence that it *can* be used to make an assertion, but *need not* be so used. But a sentence-radical, which is supposed to express the sense of a sentence, cannot be used to make an assertion,

and the result of affixing an assertoric mood operator to a sentence-radical *cannot but* be used to make an assertion.

A cardinal principle of calculus theorists concerns the relationship between word-meaning and sentence-meaning. For priority is assigned to sentence-meaning, and word-meaning is explained in terms of the contribution of a word to the meaning, i.e. the truth-conditions, of any sentence in which it may occur. So, it is argued: *a word has a meaning only in the context of a sentence.* This principle was advanced by Frege in *The Foundations of Arithmetic* for broadly function-theoretic reasons pertaining to the possibility of *alternative forms of function-theoretic sentential decomposition.* It was endorsed by the *Tractatus* for quite different *picture-theoretic reasons.* The principle is plainly wrong. Obviously, the original reasons for it are misconceived. A sentence is not composed of function-expression and argument-expression—rather sentences of Frege's concept-script are so composed. So too, contrary to the *Tractatus*, a sentence is not a representing fact, and words do not represent objects in virtue of being constituents of a representing fact. One-word sentences such as 'Help!', 'Fire!', 'Snow', are perfectly decent and they cannot be decomposed into an argument-expression and a function-name.[6] Even if such one-word utterances can be represented as elliptical (e.g. for 'Help me!', 'Fire has broken out', 'There is snow on the ground'), that is only by reference to conventions of sentence-formation in *our* language. One can readily imagine a language that consists only of such utterances.[7] Equally, we commonly use words outside any sentential context, for example in greetings ('Hello'), in exclamations ('Hurrah') and as expletives ('Damn'), on labels, in lists (e.g. of words beginning with 'z'), in crossword puzzles, in word-games, and so forth. One cannot say that names on a shopping list are meaningless, or that the words in the game of Scrabble have no meaning. Furthermore, it is obvious that there are many occasions on which we ask for the meaning of a word *outside* any sentential context.

The truth of the matter is different. A word is *a part of speech.* The sentence, *by and large*, is the minimal unit for the performance of a

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[6] The thought that a sentence must be complex, must have multiple constituents, goes back to Plato's *Sophist*, 262a–c.

[7] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* §§19–20. For a helpful discussion of the use of single words outside any sentential context, see H.-J. Glock, 'All kinds of nonsense', in E. Ammereller and E. Fischer, eds., *Wittgenstein at Work* (Routledge, London, 2004), pp. 221–45. For a detailed discussion of the context principle, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, 'Contextual dicta and contextual principles', in *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning*, 2nd extensively revised edition, Part 1: Essays (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford), 2009.

speech-act, although it is clear that one *can* perform speech-acts with single words that are obviously *not* one-word sentences ('Hurrah', 'Hello'). It is perfectly true that what is said by the use of a sentence, no matter whether declarative, interrogative, or imperative, depends on what the constituent words and phrases mean (and on the context of utterance). It does *not* follow that the meaning of a word consists in its contribution to *the truth-conditions* of any sentence in which it occurs. *That* is a theory-laden doctrine, which altogether disregards

(i) what *we call* 'an explanation of meaning'
(ii) what it is for an *explanans* to clarify or elucidate the meaning of an *explanandum*
(iii) when an explanation of meaning is called for and why
(iv) what the criteria of satisfactoriness of explanations of meaning actually are

Rather, the theory models its conception of explanation of word-meaning on the role of definitions in an axiomatic calculus.

A further commitment of the calculus conception of language and linguistic meaning is to the compositionality of language. In the hands of calculus theorists a platitude, namely, that the meaning of a sentence depends upon the meanings of its constituent expressions, is transformed into one or another theoretical claim. Some theorists claim that the meaning of a sentence is *composed* of the meanings of its constituent expressions. Others contend that the meaning of a sentence is (literally) a *function* of the meanings of its constituent expressions. Both claims should be challenged. The meaning of a word is its use, and it is given by an explanation of meaning. The meaning of a sentence, or of a sentence in use, is not the sort of thing that can intelligibly be said to be *composed* of anything. Nor can *uses* of words compose anything, least of all the meanings of sentences or what is said by their use. Similarly, although the meaning of sentence and what is said by the use of a sentence on an occasion (i.e. the statement made, or what is said by the utterance of the sentence) *depend* upon the meanings of the constituent words (as well as upon numerous other factors), they are not literally *functions* of word-meanings. The meaning of a sentence or of an utterance is not the value of a function for an argument. There is no serious analogy between the function $x^2$, the argument 25, and the value 625, on the one hand, and 'Snow is…', '*white*', and '*Snow is white*', on the other, let alone from *Snow is…*, *white*, and *Snow is white*. Among many other things, one *calculates* the value of a function for an argument, but there is no such thing as calculating the meaning of a sentence

from the meaning of a sentence that lacks a word, and the meaning of the word one inserts in it. A language is not a meaning calculus, and the meaning of a sentence or utterance is not the result of a calculation.

It should be evident why the moderns, no less than the ancients, craved for sharp definitions. Plato's demand for clear-cut analytic definitions was motivated by the quest for the disclosure of the real, language-independent essences of things (especially moral values), and was modelled on the Greek paradigm of knowledge, namely, the achievements of geometry. The moderns were motivated by the apparent exigencies of mathematical logic. Frege's demand for determinacy of sense, as he himself said, was another form of the requirement that must be met for the possibility of logic—namely, conformity with the law of excluded middle. Like Plato, Frege could hold that the real meanings of words (for example number words) might be hidden from the eyes of mankind for centuries, even though we use them everyday (FA p. vii). And he could also claim that words like 'Christian', not being sharply defined, do not express a concept at all (BLA ii, §56). For he conceived of a (first-level) concept as a function from objects to truth-values. This is, to be sure, absurd—by reference to *our concepts* of meaning and concept. For the idea that a word in use should be meaningful, even though no one knows what it means, makes no sense. The idea that there are rules for the correct use of words that need to be *discovered* makes no sense. And the idea that vague words, let alone words that *might* be vague in hitherto undreamt-of circumstances, are not really concept-words, makes no sense. Moreover, 'is true' does not mean 'is the True' or 'is identical with the True', for to say that something is true is not to say that it is identical with anything. Concepts, as we use the term, are not functions, but ways of using a certain range of words. Many of our concepts are indeed vague, and none the worse for that. Commonly, that is exactly what we want. The requirement for sharpness of definition is far removed from our practices of explanation of word-meaning and completely at odds with our communicative needs.

Finally, let me turn to the conception of communication and understanding associated with calculus conceptions of language. Investigation of communication was relegated to the sideshow of pragmatics. A full account of semantics prepares the way for pragmatics, but everything interesting about word-, sentence-, and utterance-meaning can allegedly be said independently of investigations into communication, as long as the sense/force distinction is in place. Broadly speaking, the conception of communication is telementational. All understanding of the utterances of others is interpretation. The process of understanding the utterance of

another is held to be computational. Meaning must be assigned to the sounds or words heard, and the meaning of the sentence uttered must be derived from the meanings of the words and from the deep structure of the sentence on analysis. We are held to have 'tacit knowledge' (Dummett) or to 'cognize' (Chomsky) the depth-grammatical forms required by the theory of meaning for a language, and similar non-conscious knowledge of the transformation rules that allegedly generate the surface structures of sentences from their depth structures.

So much for some of the salient commitments and principles, and consequent problems, of calculus conceptions of language and linguistic meaning.

## 4. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

The anthropological approach to the clarification of the field of semantic concepts does not give priority to the notions of truth, truth-condition, representation, and force, but rather to those of use, language-game, understanding, and communication. The endeavour is not to *construct a theory* of anything, but rather to *describe* accurately the existing web of words that are in play in our discourse about language, linguistic meaning, and understanding. This is of capital importance. The enterprise is, in Strawson's terminology, one of *connective analysis*.

We need to remind ourselves why we are engaged in these intellectual struggles. Contemporary calculus theorists aver that they are trying to construct a theory which will explain how we can understand sentences we have never heard before, or how, with the finite resources of a language, we can understand an infinity of sentences. Of course, this was not why Frege, Russell, the early Wittgenstein, Tarski, or Carnap were engaged in their philosophical investigations into language and the calculi of logic. What is true is that the early Wittgenstein raised the question, and also gave the now familiar answer to the problem of the productivity of language and thereby intimated the form of the now received answer to the problem of understanding new sentences (TLP 4.02–4.03).[8] The question moved

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[8] The point was first made in print by Wittgenstein in 1921 in the *Tractatus* 4.02–4.03 (derived from his 'Notes on Logic' of October 1913), followed by Frege's discussion of 'thought-building blocks' in his 1923 article 'Compound Thoughts' (*Collected Papers*, p. 390); the idea first appears in Frege's *Nachlass* in his 1914 'Logic in Mathematics', *Posthumous Writings*, p. 225, after lengthy conversations with the young Wittgenstein in December 1913.

to stage-centre as a result of Chomsky's writings, and became a central plank in philosophy of language only in the 1960s and 1970s. What is also true is that the problem is never mentioned in the post-1929 writings of Wittgenstein. My hunch is that he thought it a bogus problem, which he had misguidedly raised in the *Tractatus*. What is certain is that no one other than *later* calculus theorists held this apparent problem to be the drive shaft of philosophical enquiries into the nature of language.

So what are the problems? They are problems that unavoidably arise when we reflect on language and its nature, on our capacity to master a language, on our speech activities, on the relations between thought and language and between language and reality. They arise because of unclarities surrounding our familiar concepts of name, sentence, referring, describing, truth, sense and nonsense, the meaning of an expression, meaning something by an expression, what is said by the use of a sentence, and thought and understanding. These concepts are lacking in surveyability, and we are readily led astray in our reflections. So clarifying the web of linguistic, meta-linguistic, and associated cogitative concepts is necessary if we are to keep our reflections on language within the bounds of sense.

The anthropological approach does not advance an a priori *theory* of language, nor does it offer an *empirical theory* that might be confirmed or infirmed in experience. What it offers is an elucidation of concepts and conceptual connections. That does not mean that it is an assembly of piecemeal aperçus, for the web of linguistic and meta-linguistic concepts (some of which were originally terms of art of grammarians and logicians) is not a pile of snippets of thread, but a finely woven network. Its description, by connective analysis, can and should be as systematic as is necessary for the resolution of the problem at hand. It systematically traces the nodes and links in the relevant portion of the web. But a systematic, connective–analytic description is not a theory akin to the theory of relativity or of thermodynamics, only with a different subject matter.

Instead of placing the concept of truth at centre-stage, and with it the notion of representation and hence the notion of truth-condition, an anthropological conception of language places the notion of linguistic activity and interaction by means of language at centre-stage. That was why Wittgenstein felt that the idea of a language-game was so fruitful. For the elaboration of the idea of a language-game and of moves in a language-game integrates the use of words and sentences into human behaviour in the stream of

life. The conception is anthropological in as much as it conceives of
human language as an extension of human behaviour, and of human
speech as a form of behaviour. It is ethnological, in as much as it
conceives of human languages as features of human forms of life or
cultures.

## 5. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE: THE PRINCIPLES

The primary conceptual connections appertaining to word-meaning
that link the nodes at the centre of the web of semantic concepts are
the following:

  i.  The meaning of a word is (with qualifications) its use in the
      language.

 ii   The meaning of a word is what is given by an explanation of
      meaning.

iii.  An explanation of meaning provides a rule for the use of a
      word.

 iv.  The meaning of a word (or phrase) is what is known (or
      understood) when one knows (or understands) what the word
      (or phrase) means.

  v.  The meaning of a word is its place in the web of words.

 vi.  Knowing what a word means is being able to use it in accord-
      ance with accepted explanations of what it means, i.e. in
      accordance with the rules for its use. It is also being able to
      explain or recognize as correct an explanation of what it
      means.

vii.  One's understanding of an utterance is exhibited in one's
      own speech no less than in one's comprehension of the
      speech of others—in the aptness of one's words and one's
      explanations of what one meant no less than in the aptness
      of one's responses to the words of others and in one's
      explanations of what the utterances of others mean. There
      is no greater problem about understanding novel utter-
      ances of others than there is about understanding novel
      utterances of one's own. In fact, there is no deep problem
      about either, only the deep illusion of a problem.

I shall make a few comments on these conceptual nodes and connect-
ing strands.

The association of the meaning of a word with its rule-governed use is, of course, Wittgenstein's. But he did not advance this as a 'use-theory of meaning'. First of all, he recognized clearly that 'use of a word' and 'meaning of a word' are not exact synonyms, even though they are often interchangeable. What he suggested was that in many contexts and for many purposes, replacing philosophical questions about meaning by normative questions about use will be helpful. He emphasized that the notion of word-use does not carry in its wake the multitude of misleading danglers associated with the phrase 'the meaning of a word'. The word 'use' immediately draws our attention to what we do with words, to the role of a word in a language-game, and to the point and purpose of a word. This, he held, was what we constantly need to be reminded of—for 'words are deeds'. Secondly, irrespective of Wittgenstein, we should note the kinds of exceptions to this important link: proper names (such as personal names) have a use but not a meaning that is pertinent to their use; morphology is an aspect of use, but not of meaning; there are inessential features of use that are not pertinent to meaning.

Wittgenstein taught us to attend to our practices of explanation of word-meaning. The anthropological approach, unlike the calculus one, is not tied to a geometrical prototype in its overview of explanations of meaning. Rather, we should *look and see*!

Explanations of word-meaning are not demanded in a vacuum. They are called for when there is some misunderstanding or lack of understanding, and they presuppose that the recipient has a substantial degree of linguistic competence. Hence it is not necessary explicitly to lay down rules differentiating a number from Julius Caesar (as Frege did), since it is not possible to confuse them.

Explanations of meaning are not a magical draught that will secure understanding come what may. No explanation of meaning is immune to misunderstanding. If an explanation is misunderstood, one can explain it. But all explanations come to an end at some point—which is not to say that there is some point at which all explanations of meaning come to an end. (Language has no foundations.)

The criterion for a successful explanation is whether the hearer goes on to use the word correctly. The criterion for understanding an explanation of meaning is that the hearer not only goes on to use the explanandum correctly, but conceives of his subsequent use as being in accord with the explanation, and of himself as following the explanation.

There are multiple licit forms of explanation of word-meaning. None is monarch in the pedagogical realm (in particular analytic

definition is not). None 'link language to reality' (in particular osten-
sive explanations do not). Analytic definitions are the exception, not
the rule. Many words can be explained in more than one way. Words
cannot be grouped into definables and simple indefinables. There are
words indefinable by analytic definition, but there are no words that
cannot be explained in some way or other. For if there were, there
would be no standard of correctness for their use, and hence no dif-
ference between using them correctly and using them incorrectly.

Explanations of meaning are themselves rules. They furnish us
with standards for the correct use of the word explained. If the word
'vixen' is explained as meaning the same as the phrase 'a female fox',
then any female fox can correctly be said to be a vixen. If 'Oxford
blue' is explained as: *that* ☞ ■ colour, then anything which is *that* ☞
■ colour can correctly be said to be Oxford blue. If 'game' is explained
by saying that games are such things as cricket, soccer, bridge, poker,
chess, draughts, and other things like these, then darts can correctly
be said to be a game (although archery and war cannot).

I must pause here, and focus for a moment on normativity—on the
rule-governed nature of language. Explanations of meaning are rules
for the use of words. Linguists allocate them to what they call 'the
lexicon', reserving the term 'grammar' for syntactical rules. From a
philosophical point of view, that is, I think, of little importance save
for purposes of division of labour. What *is* important is that we rec-
ognize that speaking a language consists in following constitutive
rules of language, just as playing a game involves following the con-
stitutive rules of the game. Contrary to what is supposed by calculus
theorists, there is no such thing as *following* an unknown rule, or fol-
lowing a rule that one cannot understand in some form or other. A
rule is not an explanatory hypothesis, but (i) a guide to conduct, (ii)
a warrant for conduct, and (iii) a standard of correctness. But one
cannot be guided by what is unknown to one, cannot justify what
one does by reference to something one cannot understand, and can-
not consult a standard of correctness that is unintelligible to one.

Calculus conceptions and ethnological conceptions alike recognize
the normativity of language. They both accept that the meanings of
signs are determined by the rules for their use, that the combination
of signs in phrases and sentences is governed by formation rules, and
that the uses of significant sentences in communication are also gov-
erned, in various ways, by rules. The calculus conception, with axio-
matic systems before its eyes, tends to exaggerate the degree of
rule-governedness of language, on the one hand, and the sharpness of
the rules, on the other. The ethnological conception, with games in

mind, emphasizes the looseness of the rules and their contextualization. The great divide between the two conceptions is that according to calculus conceptions, rules of language may be unknown to all, awaiting discovery by linguists or philosophers, and may be 'deeply buried in the mind/brain' (Chomsky). According to anthropological conceptions the rules of language can no more be unknown to all than the rules of games could be unknown to all. There is an equally great divide over what either side recognizes *as* a rule. Distinctive of the ethnological conception of language is to take the notion of a rule in a homely fashion that is recognizable to any speaker who has ever been called upon to explain what he or someone else said, what a word he used means, or who has been called upon or seen fit to correct his children's or his students' misuse of words. 'Not "they was", but "they were"' is a perfectly decent rule; so is 'Oxford blue is *that* ☞ ■ colour'; and equally 'You have not *refuted* what he said, you have just *repudiated* it'.

This disagreement ramifies. Precisely because the calculus theorist holds, like Frege, that concepts and conceptual connections are stored in a Platonic heaven awaiting our discovery (FA p. vii) or, like the young Wittgenstein (TLP 4.002) and Chomsky, holds rules to be embedded in the mind/brain beyond the reach of consciousness, the requirements of normativity as such were not explored. That is, the question of what is requisite *for there to be* any such rules was not investigated. By contrast, clarification of precisely this point lies at the heart of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* §§143–242. Obviously, there can be no rules without regularities in the rule-governed behaviour (both sides could agree to this). But that does not suffice (since the rule is not an explanatory hypothesis, like a law of nature). The regularity must be *recognized* as such by the putative rule-follower, who must conceive or be able to conceive of the relevant conduct as exhibiting a uniformity. Moreover, he must view this uniformity *as a norm*, and *employ it* as such, i.e. as a standard of correctness. Rules can be said to obtain only *in the course of human practices*. For the internal relation between a rule and what counts as accord with it is *welded* in the practice of following the rule. Here lies another great divide.

Now, back to language-games. According to the ethnological conception of language, words are instruments for use in making moves in a language-game. *For the most part*, the minimal unit for making a move is the sentence. However, a sentence does not therefore have to be a complex of words (subject and predicate, or argument-name

and function-name). One can also perform speech-acts with single words that are not one-word sentences.

The sentence as such is not the bearer of truth-values at all. (Indeed, truth and falsehood are not truth-*values*, any more than beauty and ugliness are beauty-values, or good and evil are goodness-values. None of the three transcendentalia (*bonum*, *pulchrum*, *verum*) are values of functions for arguments.) We must distinguish, as Strawson emphasized, between sentence, the meaning of a sentence, the utterance of a sentence, and what is said by the use of a sentence on an occasion. It is what is said by the assertoric use of a sentence that can be true or false, or partly true and partly false, or roughly true.

Let me turn briefly to understanding and interpreting. According to the anthropological conceptions of language, understanding a word, sentence, or utterance is akin to an ability. It is not a mental state, since it lacks 'genuine duration': it does not lapse with distraction of attention, it does not cease on loss of consciousness. Sudden understanding is the dawning of a cluster of abilities. Understanding the words of others consists in the ability to explain what they said, to respond cogently to what was said, and to act reasonably on the basis of what was said. The criteria of understanding consist in the manifestation of these abilities in appropriate contexts.

Although what another says may *sometimes* need interpreting, it is incoherent to suppose that *all* understanding is interpretation. First, interpretation of an utterance presupposes understanding. One cannot interpret, but only translate, an utterance like 'Olug bashu inden'. Interpretation of an utterance, as opposed to translation, is called for when what is said can be taken to have more than one meaning or when there is some unclarity about its meaning.[9] Secondly, if every sentence needed an interpretation, one could never understand any sentence. Thirdly, while one criterion of understanding is giving a correct explanation (which may be an interpretation) of what was said, one normally understands the words of another without any interpretation at all. For interpretation is called for only where more than one way of understanding is possible. Moreover, one does not usually exhibit one's understanding in an explanation. One's understanding is manifest (if it is manifest at all) in what one does and says

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[9] Of course, there are many different kinds of interpretation. Laws of the land often need an interpretation, which is given by the courts. Legal documents commonly require an interpretation. Historical texts, especially if corrupted, need an interpretation, and so on. These are not in question here.

in response to the spoken words. One's understanding consists in a cluster of abilities, and is manifest in their exercise.

Finally, the very idea that understanding the words of another involves *calculation*, *computation*, or a process of *derivation* of any kind is chimerical. As remarked, it is striking that virtually nothing is said by calculus theorists about understanding *one's own words* when one speaks. To be sure, one speaks with understanding. But one does not interpret one's own words; and when one speaks, one normally knows what one is saying. But how is *that* possible? As far as I know, only Chomsky has commented on this question, which he dubbed 'Descartes's [production] problem'. Since he could not think of what to say about it, he declared that it was beyond the powers of the human mind to comprehend how we can intentionally speak and understand what we say.[10]

Although I cannot discuss here the bewilderment generated by the question of how we can understand sentences we have never heard before, it should be obvious that it is no more mysterious than our ability to utter, with understanding, sentences we have never uttered or heard before. And one thing should surely be clear about *this* ability—it is not the result of computing or deriving the meaning of the sentence we utter or the meaning of our utterance from the meanings of the words we utter and their mode of combination. Nor is it a question of *translating* non-linguistic thoughts into our language for the benefit of others.

## 6. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

All the problems for calculus theorists of language that I have brought upon the carpet are very general indeed. That is why they are rarely examined, let alone critically confronted. I have not even mentioned the host of problems *internal to the enterprise*, such as the calculus theorists' treatment of the logical connectives and the definite article

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[10] 'Descartes's problem' was held to be the problem of how we put our 'system of knowledge of a language' to use in speaking (by contrast with understanding the speech of another, which is to be explained computationally). Chomsky's answer was that a solution to Descartes's problem is probably beyond our reach: 'One possible reason for the lack of success in solving it or even presenting sensible ideas about it is that it is not within the range of human intellectual capacities…There is some reason to suspect that this may be so…', *Language and the Problems of Knowledge*, p. 151.

that were examined by Strawson, the characteristic uses of abstract nouns investigated by Bede Rundle, the well-known difficulties with adverbial modification that Anthony Kenny raised and Davidson tried unsuccessfully to tackle, and the defective account of quantifiers and of multiple reference that has been explored and criticized by Hanoch Ben-Yami. These are problems *within* the form of representation. The problems I have mentioned are primarily framework problems. The difficulties are deep and ramifying. If I have characterized them correctly, the prospects for the calculus conception are poor. Nevertheless, these problems are disregarded—as epicycle is added to epicycle in a never-ending endeavour to present language by means of this particular form of representation, and to elucidate features of natural language by reference to it. So I should like to end with a question. Is it not possible that the whole enterprise is misconceived? The New Way of Ideas mesmerized philosophers of the stature of Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Arnauld, and Hume. Their successors, for the most part, continued to cleave to it until the bottom finally dropped out of the enterprise in the nineteenth century. It bewitched these geniuses—although it is difficult for us today to even imagine being caught in this web of illusion. Is it not possible, indeed is it not likely, that philosophers of language of the past century have been and are similarly bewitched by what is no more than a form of representation?*

# 7

## Wittgenstein on Grammar, Theses, and Dogmatism

### 1. MISUNDERSTANDINGS

There are many misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and misinterpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Those that I shall address here concern:

First, the periodization of Wittgenstein's thought.

Secondly, the supposition that his conception of what he called 'grammar' in the *Philosophical Investigations* was fundamentally different from the conception he had when he was writing *The Big Typescript* and had a more limited role.

Thirdly, the suggestion that grammatical statements, such as 'there is no such thing as private ostensive definition', 'the meaning of a name is not its bearer', or 'arithmetical equations are rules of representation', are dogmatisms, theories, or doctrines and that these are inconsistent with Wittgenstein's meta-philosophical remarks in the *Investigations*.

A party game much indulged in by many philosophers studying Wittgenstein's works is 'Counting Wittgensteins'. The operative question is 'How many Wittgensteins are there?'—and the winner is the one who can find the most. This game should be shunned, for it breeds confusions. Wittgenstein wrote only two books—both masterpieces—which are fundamentally different from each other. All the other books published under his name are unfinished or discarded writings. One can speak of an early philosophy and of a later philosophy. There is no 'middle philosophy' or indeed 'last philosophy', since he produced no finished works between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, and none after the *Investigations*. What we can speak of are the indistinctly marked phases in the development of the ideas

of the *Investigations* between 1930 and 1946—*indistinctly* in as much as progress was not made on all fronts at the same time, and one has to trace the developments on each front separately (as is done in the four volumes of the *Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*). We can also speak (cautiously) of the unfinished projects, e.g. of a book on the philosophy of mathematics and another on the philosophy of psychology. And we can speak of the late notes on certainty, and explore the extent to which they modify conceptions advanced in the *Investigations*. None of these are finished works, but rather assemblages of provisional remarks many of which would have been discarded or redrafted had Wittgenstein lived to shape these collections into books.

After completing the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein gave up writing philosophy for ten years. When he returned to Cambridge in 1929, it was not part of his intention to overturn his first philosophy. On the contrary, his purpose was to turn from the treatise on logic—the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*—to what he called 'the application of logic' as envisaged in that book (TLP 5.557). But his tentative plans rapidly unravelled. He came to recognize what he called in the Preface to the *Investigations* 'grave mistakes' in what he had set out in his first book. He was helped to do this, he wrote, by the powerful and assured criticisms he received from Frank Ramsey between January 1929 and January 1930. So he embarked upon the writing of a second book that would stand in contrast to his 'older way of thinking' (PI Preface). This took sixteen years, in the course of which his ideas evolved and developed. In the early years he tried out various lines of thought, some of which proved to be dead-ends (e.g. the symptoms/hypothesis relation, the 'phenomenological' conception of material object statements as hypotheses, the notion of *Satzsysteme* ('propositional systems') of determinates of determinables, methodological solipsism, the 'I' as subject/'I' as object distinction). So too he tried out various forms of presentation, initially the conventional chapter structure of *The Big Typescript* (followed by the different form of the 'Umarbeitung' and 'Zweite Umarbeitung'), subsequently the sequential language-game formation of *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung* (the rewritten German version and extension of the *Brown Book*), before finally hitting upon the devices—the method of presentation—of the *Investigations* (initially composed as consecutive prose rather than as separate numbered remarks).

It is misleading to speak of 'the Middle Wittgenstein' or 'the second (third, fourth, or fifth) Wittgenstein'. There is only one Wittgenstein. What is true is that in the course of the sixteen years between his

return to Cambridge and his completion (more or less) of the *Investigations*, his thought evolved dramatically (especially between 1929 and 1933) as he repudiated much of his earlier philosophy and strove to formulate quite different solutions to the problems. His endeavours to write a book on the philosophy of mathematics were put aside in 1944 and never resumed, although it is clear from his notes that he hoped to complete the project (with the title 'Beginnings of Mathematics'). After 1946 most of his writings (1,900 pages) concern the philosophy of psychology. It seems that he intended to produce a book on this subject too. The remainder of his fragmentary writings are on colour and on knowledge and certainty. There is no reason to suppose that these were intended to form a book of any kind.

Thus far by way of reminders. It is by now well known that in 1929/30 Wittgenstein's thought underwent a dramatic transformation relative to the *Tractatus*. He described the methodological transformation in various ways: it was a transition from the method of truth to the method of sense (MS 106 (Vol. II), 46).[1] In his lectures, he declared that what he was introducing was in effect a new subject—with his work a 'kink' in the development of philosophy had occurred comparable to the introduction of Galileian kinematics into physics. A 'new method' had been found, he announced—a method that turned philosophy into a matter of skill (M 322).[2] In discussion with Desmond Lee in 1930 he remarked that 'in philosophy, all that is not gas is grammar' (LWL 112).

There can be no doubt that one of the important transformations in his thought in the early 1930s is the abandonment of the notion of

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[1] Some commentators have been puzzled about this remark, since it seems to them that Wittgenstein had already made this move in the *Tractatus*. However, it is arguable that what he had in mind is the abandonment of the conception of ineffable insights into the metaphysical structure of the world (illicitly expressed by the malformed sentences of the *Tractatus* and licitly *shown* by ordinary empirical sentences in use). It is of these that he wrote in the author's Preface 'the truth of the thoughts that are here set forth seems to me to be unassailable and definitive'. These insights into the essence of the world and into the nature of all possible representation are replaced by grammatical platitudes that are no more than rules for the use of words that determine what does and what does not make sense. So, for example, instead of the strictly ineffable insight that the world consists of facts not things, we have the strictly grammatical platitude that a description of (any part of) the world is what is called 'a statement of facts'. And this is no more than a rule for the use of the phrases 'a description of the world' and 'a statement of facts'.

[2] Rather than the *Wesensschau* of genius.

a hidden logical syntax of language as envisaged in the *Tractatus* in favour of the notion of grammar in which *nothing is hidden* (BT 418, PI §559). But although everything is *in view*, it is extraordinarily difficult to attain *an overview*. Philosophical investigation moves in the domain of grammar; philosophical problems are, at root, grammatical confusions and are to be resolved by grammatical clarification; grammatical clarification is to be achieved by marshalling an ordered array of familiar rules (grammatical rules) for the uses of words. *The Big Typescript* is the provisional ordering of Wittgenstein's attempts between 1929 and 1933 to develop his new conception of (among other things) grammar, grammatical confusion, grammatical problems, and grammatical propositions and remarks. For it was in the notebooks of these years that he developed his new philosophical *Weltanschauung*.

What I aim to do is to give an overview of his remarks on grammar in *The Big Typescript* and then to examine whether the conception of grammar in the *Philosophical Investigations* differs from, or conflicts in any significant way with, that which had been hammered out by 1933. Subsequently I shall explain how the conception of grammar and of grammatical propositions is perfectly consistent with the meta-philosophical remarks of *The Big Typescript* that are retained in the *Investigations* and with the new ones there. Any appearance of inconsistency is the product of misunderstanding.

## 2. GRAMMAR 1929–33

There are 1,837 occurrences of the expression 'Grammatik' and its cognates in Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*, as recorded in the Bergen edition. Among the manuscripts the use of the term peaks in MSS 108–16 (Volumes IV–XII), and among the typescripts in TSS 211–13, i.e. in the work done between 1930 and 1933 culminating with *The Big Typescript* (217 occurrences). This should be altogether unsurprising, since it is here that he evolved his new ideas. In the *Investigations*, 'grammar' and its cognates occurs 35 times and in *Philosophy of Psychology—a Fragment* (previously denominated Part 2 of the *Investigations*) it occurs 20 times. Among the remarks on grammar in the *Investigations*, 9 are derived from *The Big Typescript* and a further 4 are similar to remarks there, 4 remarks are from earlier MSS not incorporated into *The Big Typescript*, and 4 from MSS 114–15 (*Eine Philosophische Betrachtung*; in effect, from the *Brown Book*). The rest date from manuscripts written after 1937.

The general conception of grammar, as Wittgenstein used the term in *The Big Typescript*, can be articulated by the following interconnected elucidations:

   i.  Grammar, *qua discipline*, is a normative description (and investigation) of language (BT 191v, 192v)—in the sense in which jurisprudence is (among other things) the normative description of the laws of the land. A normative description is a statement of, and a clarification of, rules. It no more *lays down* rules that determine what makes sense than jurisprudence lays down laws determining what is legal. It is a *descriptive activity* (hence unlike *prescriptive* jurisprudence). Grammar, *qua object* of grammatical investigations, consists of sense-determining rules of a language. What belongs to grammar in this sense is everything required for determination of meaning, for comparing a proposition with reality—hence for understanding (BT 42). (Compare: 'What belongs to chess is everything that has to be settled before the game can commence.')

   ii.  Like the traditional grammarian, Wittgenstein investigates rules of language. But the rules the grammarian neglects are precisely those that are of philosophical interest, and the differentiation between kinds of words that is of philosophical concern is irrelevant to the grammarian's enterprise. It would be misleading to say that what Wittgenstein deals with is what is *essential* whereas what the grammarian is concerned with is what is *inessential*. But one might come closer to the truth by saying that what he, Wittgenstein, means by 'grammar' differs from what the grammarian means (BT 413).

In his lectures at the time, Wittgenstein insisted that 'Of course, there isn't a philosophical grammar and an ordinary English grammar, the former being more complete than the latter' (AWL 31). Both investigate grammar, but for quite different purposes and with quite different interests, although the philosopher will occasionally leave 'the realm of what is generally called grammar' (AWL 31). Waismann attempted to reconcile the tension here (PLP 66f., 135ff.).[3]

   iii.  Just as certain laws only become interesting when they are transgressed, so too certain grammatical rules only become interesting when philosophers want to transgress them (BT 425). For philosophical problems and confusions are rooted in the urge to push up against

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[3] For detailed examination of this issue, see 'Rules and Grammar', in G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, Vol. 2 of *An Analytical Commentary of the Philosophical Investigations*, 2nd extensively revised edition (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009), pp. 41–67.

the limits of language (the bounds of sense[4]). The result of succumbing to this urge is nonsense—i.e. combinations of words that lack sense.

To be sure, we need to bear in mind how we actually talk about rules in philosophy, that is—when we are clarifying grammatical questions—so that we keep our feet on the ground and don't construct castles in the air. For example, one gives rules such as '$\sim\sim p = p$'; or one says that '$a = a$' makes no sense and one then describes a notation (as in the *Tractatus*) in which this formulation (as well as '$(\exists x) (x = x)$') is avoided; or one says that it makes no sense to say that something 'seems to seem red' (BT 243).

　　iv. The meaning of a word is determined by its grammar, i.e. by the familiar, accepted rules for its use. Grammar is the account-books of language (BT 58)—it explains the meaning of words (BT 37). Just as one can read off the state of a business from its account-books, 'everything that's "business" in logic' has to be stated in grammar (BT 526). The location of a word in grammar is its meaning—its position in grammatical space (BT 30). The meaning of a word is what we explain when we explain its meaning (BT 37). An explanation of meaning is a rule for the use of the expression explained. The meaning of a word is laid down in the grammar of the word (BT 58)—in the rules for its use.

　　v. Categorial expressions (e.g. 'shape', 'colour', 'number') indicate grammatical rules that apply to different kinds of words (BT 32). Hence explanations of meaning such as 'Red is *this* ☞ colour' can be understood only by someone who already knows his way around in grammar (BT 36). Such expressions show the post where the new word is stationed (BT 209v)—they indicate a range of grammatical rules that apply to the word in question.

　　vi. There is no semantic (meaning-endowing) connection between language and reality or metalogical connection between propositions and the facts that make them true. This has two aspects:

　　(a) Ostensive explanation remains within language and belongs to grammar (BT section 12, title). It does not make a 'connection' between language and reality. It is a preparation for the application of language, but is not itself an application (BT 42v–43).

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[4] The expression 'bounds of sense' is not Wittgenstein's, but Strawson's Kantian phrase. Nevertheless, it is apt for Wittgenstein's conception of the limits of language, since the limits of language are precisely the bounds of sense, and transgressing the limits of language, like transgressing the bounds of sense, does not yield a description of impossible possibilities, but nonsensical forms of words.

(b) Although intentionality (the pictoriality of the proposition) seems to demand a connection between language and reality (e.g. between the expectation that *p* and its satisfaction, or the proposition that *p* and the fact that makes it true), the 'connection between language and reality' is made through explanations of words, which in turn belong to grammar—so language remains self-contained, autonomous (BT section 43, title).

Like everything metaphysical, the (pre-established) harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language (BT 188).

vii. What *a proposition* is (i.e. what *counts* as a proposition) is determined in grammar (BT section 18, title). Furthermore, the description of how a proposition is verified is a contribution to its grammar—it is only a particular form of the question 'What does one do with this proposition?' (BT 265).

viii. A proposition is completely logically analysed when its grammar has been completely clarified (BT 417). Whether one proposition follows from another must emerge from the grammar of the latter and from that grammar alone. This can't be the result of an insight into a new sense, but only of an insight into an old sense (BT 310). There can be no surprises in grammar (BT 62).

ix. Grammatical rules determine the sense of a sentence: and whether a combination of words makes sense (BT 79, section 19, title). Hence they also determine when a form of words makes *no sense*. The question 'How do you know you can't *divide red*?' (or 'How do you know that nothing can *simultaneously be red and green all over*?') is itself nonsense, since the form of words 'divide red' (or 'is red and green all over') makes no sense. The sentence 'You *can't* divide red' is a grammatical proposition (a rule) that excludes a form of words from use (not a possibility from reality (BT section 19)). Such propositions draw a boundary between sense and non-sense (BT 80).

x. The rules of grammar are, in a sense, arbitrary (BT 99). They are arbitrary in the sense in which the choice of a unit of measurement is arbitrary (and they are non-arbitrary in the sense in which it isn't). That is, they may be practical or impractical, useful or useless, *but not true or false* (BT 236–236v). Grammar is not *accountable* to any reality, for the rules of grammar determine meaning and are not answerable to any meaning (BT section 56, title). Means–ends rules (e.g. rules for cooking) are non-arbitrary, since the activ-

ity they regulate is defined by its end—specifiable independently of the rules for achieving it (BT 236–7). Rules of grammar, by contrast, are not determined by reference to an independently identifiable end. The purpose of grammar is nothing other than the purpose of language (BT 194).

xi. Rules of grammar *cannot be justified* by reference to reality (i.e. *there is no such thing* as justifying rules of grammar by reference to 'necessary facts' that correspond to them—since there are no such things). It makes no sense to attempt to justify the rule that nothing can be red and green all over at the same time by reference to the 'fact' (the 'necessity in nature') that nothing can be red and green all over at the same time (BT 193v, 236–9). For the appearance of an objective necessity is no more than the shadow cast by grammar upon the world.

xii. *Grammatical propositions* or *remarks* are expressions of rules for the use of the constituent words, often in the misleading guise of a description of reality. Logico-grammatical 'must-s' and 'can't-s' indicate norms of representation (BT 17).

xiii. The essence or nature (*Wesen*) of things is to be clarified by making the grammar of their verbal expression explicit. For example, the nature of thought is elucidated by describing the grammar of 'think' (BT section 54).

xiv. Our grammar is deficient in surveyability (BT 417). Logically different expressions often look alike and logically similar expressions often appear to be quite different. Hence the method of philosophy is the surveyable representation of grammar (BT section 89, title). It dissolves philosophical problems by bringing to mind and ordering familiar grammatical rules for the use of words that shed light on the conceptual, grammatical, problems. The work of the philosopher consists in marshalling recollections (of the familiar uses of words) for the purpose of resolving philosophical problems (BT 415, 419). Philosophy does not explain things in the sense in which physics does, it only describes the grammar of problematic words and propositions. It leaves grammar as it is, for it is not its task to produce a different, let alone a better, grammar, but only to lay bare the confusions generated by existing grammar (BT 417–19). The results of philosophy are the discovery of some plain piece of nonsense and the bumps that the understanding has got by running up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of that discovery (BT 425).

I have passed over various inconsistencies in *The Big Typescript* and disregarded those remarks that are no more than the decaying corpse of Wittgenstein's phenomenological reflections in 1929/30. For these rapidly disappear from his thought after *The Big Typescript*, long before the composition of the first draft of the *Investigations* in 1936/7. I have also not paused to examine Wittgenstein's hesitations with the emerging ideas and struggles with the residues of old ones— that would be too lengthy a task and to little present purpose. Rather, I have focused on those elements of his reflections on grammar and meaning, and on his new method of philosophical investigation that, as I shall now show, remain constant. It is these that are of pivotal importance for the understanding of the *Philosophical Investigations* and for his later work on the philosophy of mathematics (between 1937 and 1944).

## 3.  GRAMMAR IN THE *INVESTIGATIONS*

The question we are addressing is whether Wittgenstein's conception of grammar and of the role of grammatical investigations in philosophy underwent any radical change once he began work on the early draft of the *Investigations* in November 1936. More specifically, did he repudiate any of the points just specified?

We can distinguish the following array of observations:

1.  Grammar, qua object of grammatical investigation, consists of rules for the use of signs that determine their meaning (PI brf §108, §558, and *passim*). Grammar, qua investigation, *only describes*, but does not explain, the use of words (PI §496, cf. BT 191v). This parallels (i) above.

2.  The meaning of a word is what an explanation of its meaning explains (PI §560; cf. BT 34). Explanations of meaning (e.g. definitions, ostensive explanations, explanations by examples) are rules for the use of words (PI 28–33; cf. BT section 12). This is parallel to (iv).

3.  Categorial expressions such as 'number', length', or 'colour' show the place in grammar that we assign to an explanandum (PI §29; cf. BT 32). Hence an explanation of the form 'This ☞ number (length, colour) is called...' can be understood only by someone who already knows the role of the word in the language (PI §30). This is parallel to (v).

4. There is no semantic, meaning-endowing connection between language and reality. (a) Ostensive definitions do not connect words to world, language to reality. Samples are instruments of language and belong to the means of representation not to what is represented (PI §16, §50). (b) The resolution (and dissolution) of the problems of intentionality do not (and cannot) demand a metalogical connection between words and world to explain the pre-established harmony between language and reality. Rather 'It is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact' (PI §445; cf. BT 371). This is parallel to (vi).

5. Asking whether and how a proposition is verified is only a special form of the question 'How do you mean?' The answer is a contribution to the grammar of the proposition (PI §353; cf. BT 265). This is parallel to (vii). Note that nothing stronger than this remains of Wittgenstein's brief flirtation with verificationism in 1929–30.

6. The rules of grammar are arbitrary in the sense that the purpose of grammar is nothing but that of language, so grammatical rules are not means–ends rules that determine how a language must be if it is to achieve its end (PI §497; cf. BT 194). This is parallel to (x).

7. There is no reality lying behind a notation (e.g. the use of 'is') to which its grammar conforms (PI §562; cf. Vol. XI, 68 (this part of the MS dates from 1933)). This is parallel to (xi).

8. Grammatical propositions or remarks are expressions of rules for the use of words, often in the misleading guise of descriptions. 'An order orders its own execution' is a grammatical proposition correlating 'the order to V' with 'executing the order to V' (PI §458; cf. BT 90v). This is parallel to (xii).

9. Essence or nature (*Wesen*) is expressed in grammar. Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is (PI §§371, 373). This is manifest in grammatical propositions: Understanding is not a mental state but akin to an ability (PI brf §149); meaning something is not a mental activity (PI §693); 'inner processes' stand in need of outer criteria (PI §598); I can know that you are in pain, but not that I am in pain (PI §246), and, in PPF §315: 'I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking'—which is a cloud of philosophy condensed into a drop of grammar. This is parallel to (xiii).

10. Wittgenstein's philosophical enquiry into logic, language, meaning, etc. is a grammatical one. It sheds light on the problem by clearing away misunderstandings concerning the use of words (PI §90; brf §108; §124). Our grammar is deficient in surveyability. 'To mean something' looks like 'to think something', but it isn't; 'to understand' appears to signify a state one is in, but it doesn't; the

contrast between conscious and unconscious looks like the contrast between visible and not visible, but it isn't; and so forth. A main source of our misunderstandings is that we lack an overview of our use of words (PI §122; cf. BT 417). Those misunderstandings are brought about, among other things, by misleading analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of our language (PI §90). These lead us to run up against the limits of language (PI §119). Clarity comes from grammatical investigation, from a surveyable representation of the grammatical rules that shed light upon the puzzles and confusions at hand. This is parallel to (xiv).

Three points are noteworthy. First, by contrast with *The Big Typescript*, far more about the conception of grammar is taken for granted in the *Investigations* and not explained. This is evident in the relative paucity of remarks corresponding to (i) to (iii), even though everything said *is perfectly consistent with them*, and indeed *is elucidated by them*. The most obvious explanation of this is that in *The Big Typescript* (and the antecedent writings which it collates), Wittgenstein was clarifying for himself the scope and nature of grammar as he used the term. So, by the time he came to write the *Investigations* he took all that for granted.[5]

Secondly, the concept of grammar is little invoked in the clarification of the nature of necessity. For this topic, by and large, was hived off to be examined in the projected book on the philosophy of mathematics.[6] It is important to note a couple of the most important of the remarks on grammar and necessity in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. To accept a proposition as unshakeably certain, he observed, means to use it as a grammatical rule—it is this that removes the uncertainty of it (RFM 170).[7] In mathematics we are convinced (by proofs) of grammatical propositions—for the propositions of arithmetic are the grammar of number, and the propositions

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[5] Note that in RPP I, §1050 Wittgenstein observes that grammar is 'the logic of our language', that grammar consists of conventions (RPP I, §550). Many other remarks on grammar, reiterating conceptions formulated in the period of *The Big Typescript*, occur in Wittgenstein's later writings and compilations. For example: Z §§55, 208, 320, 331, 437, 491, 590, 717; RPP I, §§1, 46, 472, 550, 693, 1085.

[6] For detailed examination of Wittgenstein's clarification of the nature of necessity, see Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar, and Necessity*, pp. 241–370.

[7] It is noteworthy that when he started reflecting on Moore's peculiar propositions, he noted that it is not only grammatical propositions (rules for the uses of words) that are thus removed from possible doubt, but also empirical propositions of the world picture. Hence the problems of *On Certainty*.

of a geometry are a grammar for spatial relations. So the result of our being convinced is that we *accept a rule* (RFM 162). The connection which is much stricter and harder than a causal, experiential one, is always a connection in grammar (RFM 88). The *must* corresponds to a track that we lay down in language. In short, Wittgenstein's conception of mathematics is crucially interwoven with his normative conception of grammar. For his conception of mathematics *is* a normative one, and cannot be understood independently of the fundamental idea that propositions of mathematics are norms of representation.

Thirdly, far from abandoning the salient features of the concept of grammar that he hammered out in the early 1930s, Wittgenstein elaborated it further. (i) He clarified his ideas on concept-identity and meaning-change (an issue raised but not resolved in *The Big Typescript*). Not every grammatical difference implies a difference in meaning. We must distinguish between what is essential and what is inessential (PI §§561–8). (ii) He introduced the now-famous distinction between depth grammar and surface grammar (PI §664 (derived from Vol. XII, 132), 1936). This is, incidentally, one of the least helpful of Wittgenstein's figures of speech, since the geological metaphor, apt for the *Tractatus*, is inappropriate for the conception of the *Investigations*, which demands a topographical metaphor. The intended contrast is between what one notices on superficial glance, and what one discerns when one looks carefully around. So, for example, '*to mean* something by a word' looks at first glance like a verb of action, but when one examines its use, it is evident that it is not. (iii) Grammatical investigations can be made by means of 'exercises', for example, by comparing the grammar of 'understand' with that of expressions for mental states such as 'feeling dejected', 'being excited the whole day', 'being in pain uninterruptedly' (PI brf §149). This will make clear how misleading it is to think of understanding as a mental state. For one may feel dejected all day and mercifully cease to feel so when one falls asleep—but one doesn't cease to understand something when one falls asleep. One's dejection may be broken off by the visit of a jovial friend, but flood back when he leaves. By contrast, one's understanding of something cannot be broken off by distraction of attention and later resumed. And so forth. So too one should undertake the exercise of comparing the grammars of 'to understand', 'to know', 'to fit', and 'to be able to' in order to shed light on the grammar, and hence the nature, of powers (PI §182). Or, again, in order to get clear about what it is to mean something by a word or utterance, one should compare the grammar of 'to mean' with that of 'to think'—one can think quickly or slowly, but not mean

something quickly or slowly, one can be interrupted in the middle of thinking, but not in the middle of meaning, one can try to think of something, but one cannot try to mean something; and so on (PI §§660–93 *passim*). One might also add a further important observation: (iv) There is a fluctuation in grammar between criteria and symptoms (PI §354). (But note that this is not a new addition from 1937. It is derived from Vol. XI, 72ff., written in 1933–4.)

We may conclude that there is no *fundamental* change in 1937, or indeed later, in the salient features of Wittgenstein's conception of grammar, of philosophy as a grammatical investigation, or of philosophical problems as *au fond* grammatical ones. There are obvious changes: in *The Big Typescript* he was still occasionally prone to conceive of language as a calculus of rules, and hence of grammar as rules of a calculus—but that had virtually disappeared long before he wrote the *Investigations* (it was no more than some of the eggshells of his old views still clinging to his ideas in 1931). There are far more interesting developments concerning the relationship between a rule and what counts as accord with it, and between following a rule and a practice—which is pivotal to his elucidation of necessity. But it does not alter the correctness of the above itemized insights.[8]


## 4. NO THEORIES! NO THESES! NO OPINIONS! NO DOGMATISM!—A QUESTION OF CONSISTENCY

In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein makes a variety of observations about the nature of philosophy. These include the following assertions: (a) 'If someone were to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree with them' (PI §128). (b) There should be no theories, and nothing hypothetical, in philosophy (PI §109). (c) One must avoid dogmatism in philosophy—which consists in supposing that reality *must* conform to a model ('Vorbild') which we employ as an object of comparison— a sort of yardstick (PI §131). Similarly, in his 1939 lectures he

[8]  It is, however, noteworthy that Wittgenstein became increasingly sensitive to the contextualization of questions concerning meaning and understanding, and hence too to those concerning sense and nonsense. A sentence may accord with the rules of grammar and yet its utterance may still be nonsense if the context is inappropriate. Conversely, a sentence may flout combinatorial rules (e.g. 'Architecture is frozen music') and make sense in context (metaphor, poetry, jokes).  But this too does not imply the *repudiation* of any of the insights we have elaborated above.

remarked that what he was doing in his lectures was *not*: advancing *opinions*. Nor was he trying to get his pupils to change *their* opinions (LFM 103). Indeed, he went so far as to say that in his lectures he won't say anything that anyone can dispute—or, if anyone does dispute it, he will let that point drop and pass on to something else (LFM 22). What he was trying to do was to get them to engage in a certain kind of investigation.

These methodological remarks have led some interpreters to suppose that Wittgenstein's observations on grammar in *The Big Typescript*, and his grammatical remarks (e.g. that grammar cannot be justified by reference to reality; that grammar is arbitrary; that grammar determines sense and is antecedent to truth) are theses, theories, opinions, and dogmatisms, which he cannot, on pain of inconsistency, have continued to hold when he wrote the *Investigations* (the 'third' (or, on some counts, the 'fourth') Wittgenstein). For these assertions are 'substantial'. They are 'views' or 'opinions' or 'philosophical doctrines'. This is an egregious misinterpretation of Wittgenstein, coupled with incomprehension of what he meant by 'thesis', 'theory', 'dogmatism', and 'opinion'.

If there is any methodological inconsistency between Wittgenstein's remarks on the nature of philosophy, on the one hand, and his remarks on grammar (as well as his grammatical remarks (propositions, statements)), on the other, it is already present in 1933–4. His unqualified objection to viewing philosophical questions as akin to scientific ones and to viewing philosophical clarifications as akin to scientific theories or hypotheses long antedates the composition of the *Investigations*. Indeed, he thought that these misconceptions were the main source of metaphysics in the modern era (BB 18, 35). The conception of philosophy that he advances in the *Investigations* does not differ in this respect from what he wrote in 1933–4. *Investigations* §128 on theses in philosophy goes back to MS 110 (Vol. VI), 259 and to conversations with Waismann in 1931 (WWK 183f.). Indeed, it was in those very conversations that he had already endorsed what he called 'a non-dogmatic procedure' in philosophy—long before he compiled *The Big Typescript*, which, to the blinkered eye, seems full of dogmatism. As regards his remarks in 1939 eschewing opinions in philosophy (LFM 103), these are already to be found in his 1934 lectures (AWL 97).

There is no textual evidence whatsoever to indicate any change in his conception of grammar or his conception of philosophy in 1933–4 and the writing of the *Investigations*. It is implausible to suppose that such a blatant inconsistency as that proposed should not have been

noticed by Wittgenstein. It is even more implausible to suppose that he *did notice* it but *didn't note* it. And it is no less implausible to suppose that he noticed it, but made no adjustments whatsoever to his remarks to eradicate these alleged theses, theories, dogmatisms, and opinions. In fact, there is no inconsistency whatsoever. To grasp this requires a correct interpretation of what Wittgenstein meant by 'thesis', 'theory', 'dogmatism', 'hypothesis', and 'opinion'. Once that has been clarified it is evident that grammatical propositions, observations, and remarks are not (i) theses, (ii) theories or hypotheses, or (iii) opinions, and (iv) that there is nothing dogmatic about them.

i.  Wittgenstein's remark about theses (2 July 1931) was directed at Waismann's *Thesen*, circulated to members of the Vienna Circle in 1930 and again in 1931. These *Thesen* were a simplified re-presentation of the propositions of the *Tractatus* (e.g. 'Reality consists of facts not of things', 'Every state of affairs is complex', 'Only a fact can express a sense'). Wittgenstein discussed the issue with Waismann (WWK 183f.). Such a rehash of theses, he said, is no longer justified. His point is that *if* there were any theses, they would be grammatical propositions that everyone would agree with (e.g. red is a colour, 2 is a number)—and, of course, *these are not theses*, but rules for the use of words (e.g. from 'A is red' one may infer 'A is coloured'). What he did not say (but could have said) was that most of Waismann's theses were in fact confused (it is misguided to say that reality consists of facts; rather: a description of reality consists of a statement of facts—and that is not a thesis, but a grammatical proposition). To be sure, not all grammatical propositions are immediately obvious (e.g. that—as he later elucidated—there is no such thing as transparent white glass; that arithmetical propositions are norms of representation; that there cannot be a private ostensive definition; and so forth). That is why one must make the grammar clear to oneself, proceed by very short steps in such a way that every single step becomes perfectly obvious and natural, and then no dispute whatsoever can arise (WWK 183).[9]

A grammatical proposition is no more a thesis than is the proposition that the chess king is the piece that gets checked. That is a rule of chess, not a thesis. So too, it is not a thesis that red is darker than pink,

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[9]  Of course, that is wildly optimistic. It presupposes that one can always get people to see what is obvious—and that is obviously untrue (see the controversies about private ostensive definition, or about the standard metre).

or that nothing can be red and green all over. Nor is it a thesis that knowledge is not a mental state, that meaning something is not an activity of the mind, or that understanding is akin to an ability. These are grammatical remarks.

ii. In general, Wittgenstein associated the term 'theory' with the hypo-thetico-deductive theories of the natural sciences. Theories in philosophy were misguided attempts to mimic theory-construction in science. They parodied scientific theories in attempting to *explain*, by means of explan-atory *hypotheses*, involving *assumptions*, *idealizations*, and *suppositions* (e.g. the explanatory role allocated to Platonic Ideas, Cartesian simple natures, Leibnizian monads, or *Tractatus* objects and simple names), rather than giving descriptions of grammar. Such theories strove, like theories in the natural sciences, for *complete generality*, they were held to be *refutable* by a single counter-example, and they aimed to explain why reality *must* be thus or so. This, he held, is the source of metaphys-ics. But philosophy is purely descriptive—it describes the grammar of our language in order to clear up conceptual confusions and unclarity.

Clearly, it is not a theory, let alone a hypothesis, that red is a colour, that red is darker than pink, or that nothing can be red and green all over—any more than it is a theory, let alone a hypothesis, that bach-elors are unmarried. Nor is it a theory or hypothesis that there can be no such thing as a private language or a private ostensive definition—even though it is not immediately obvious (just as it is not immedi-ately obvious that one cannot trisect an angle with a pair of compasses and rule). These are exclusionary *rules*—and what they exclude is a meaningless form of words. But of course, it has to be shown, step by step, *why* such forms of words are meaningless—for they don't *look* meaningless. They are constructed on the model of perfectly mean-ingful forms of words—and that is why they take us in. They can be shown to be meaningless by assembling and marshalling a select array of familiar rules for the use of words.

iii. When Wittgenstein emphasized that he was not advancing *opinions*, and was not trying to get his students to adopt opinions, he meant exactly what he said. It was not *their opinion* that red is a colour, nor was it *his opinion* that $\text{Aleph}_0$ is not an enormous number (LFM 32), or that the connection between a mathematical proposi-tion and its application is roughly[10] that between a rule of expression

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[10]  The qualification is because of the apparent application of mathematical propo-sitions to mathematics itself.

and the expression itself in use, which is what he tried to show his students (LFM 47). What he was trying to do was to get his students to engage in grammatical investigations, and the upshot of grammatical investigations is not the acquisition of new opinions. As he put the matter in 1934, 'We constantly move in a realm where we all have the same opinions' (AWL 97), and that realm is the realm of grammar. For in as much as we agree in the language we use, the only disagreements will not be of opinions but of misunderstandings.

iv.  From time to time Wittgenstein worried about whether he was not being dogmatic, and in his notebooks he made some remarks about what he meant by 'dogmatism'. He gave various related explanations. Dogmatism consists of ascribing to an object represented features of the prototype in terms of which one represents it (BT 260). This is manifest outside philosophy in Spengler (BT 260), who insisted that cultures *must* have features of the prototype in terms of which he described them (namely, that of a life cycle). In particular, it is characteristic of misguided philosophy to insist that things *must* be thus-and-so, because this is how one has resolved to represent them. Indeed, the *Tractatus* was guilty of this sin, for he had argued that there *must* be independent elementary propositions, even though he had not yet found any; or that every proposition *must* have a determinate sense, no matter how vague it was, since he had committed himself to representing vague propositions by means of disjunctions of propositions with a determinate sense. What is the nature of a dogma in philosophy?—he queried in *The Big Typescript*. Is it not the assertion that there is an objective necessity in nature for every possible rule (BT 196)?—that rules of grammar (e.g. that nothing can be red and green all over) are answerable to necessities in reality—as he had once thought (RLF 168f.).

Of course, there is nothing dogmatic about asserting grammatical propositions—which, to be sure, are merely norms of representation, not descriptions of reality. There is nothing dogmatic about the grammatical proposition that red is darker than pink, or that pain is a sensation. Nor indeed is there anything dogmatic about the grammatical proposition that there is no such thing as a private ostensive definition, or that the meaning of a word is not the object it stands for, or that for the most part, the meaning of a word is its use. Rules of grammar, in Wittgenstein's sense of the term, do not describe necessities in the world, they are expressions of rules for the use of words. But philosophers commonly take their shadows to be *de re* necessities—and so fall into confusion and misconceived mythologizing.

One may safely conclude that Wittgenstein's above observations on the nature of grammar (as he used the expression) in *The Big Typescript* are not repudiated or abandoned in the *Philosophical Investigations*. It is patent that the conception of philosophy he advanced in the *Investigations* is, in all respects pertinent to his grammatical investigations, perfectly consistent with that proposed in *The Big Typescript*. And it is obvious that his diverse grammatical remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations* are no more theses, doctrines, theories, hypotheses, or opinions than is the proposition 'a bachelor is an unmarried man'.[11]

# 8

# Intentionality and the Harmony between Thought and Reality

## 1. INTENTIONALITY

Wittgenstein's discussion of the subject of intentionality is difficult to understand. It is of capital importance for the understanding of his philosophy and its development. The picture theory of thought and proposition in the *Tractatus* is an elaborate metaphysical explanation of their intentionality. The later discussions of intentionality in *Philosophical Remarks*, *The Big Typescript*, *The Blue and Brown Books*, culminating in *Philosophical Investigations* §§428–65, are Wittgenstein's most fundamental criticism of the picture theory.[1] The centrality of the subject in Wittgenstein's writings is insufficiently appreciated. Few make it clear that the 'mystery of negation' in Wittgenstein's early *Notebooks 1914–16* is the problem of the intentionality of thought and language. Even fewer realize that the discussions of expectation and its fulfilment throughout the 1930s are criticisms of the picture theory and therewith of the earlier account of intentionality. However, Wittgenstein's investigations are not only crucial for understanding what was mistaken about the picture theory, they are equally important for grasping what is awry among many current explanations and theories of intentionality.[2] For much contemporary

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[1] It was surely a flaw in the overall design of the *Investigations* to locate this brilliant discussion of intentionality and of the deepest flaws of the picture theory of the *Tractatus* in the 400-s, rather than in the earlier part of the book (among the first hundred remarks).

[2] Including John Searle's renowned and ingenious *Intentionality* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983). Searle's theory of intentionality is in effect a rerun of the *Tractatus* account, without the logical atomism. But it is conducted in ignorance of Wittgenstein's detailed and elaborate criticisms of that account. For detailed anatomization of Searle's theory, see P. M. S. Hacker, 'Malcolm and Searle on "Intentional Mental States"', *Philosophical Investigations* 15 (1992), 245–75.

writing on this ramifying subject exhibits an inadequate grasp of its nature.[3]

Of course, the word 'intentionality' is not used in Wittgenstein's writings. Since Wittgenstein wrote in German, that is not surprising. But his German term of art 'Intention' (which does not mean the same as 'Absicht') is Wittgenstein's expression for the Latin *intentio*, from which our 'intentionality' and Brentano's 'Intentionalität' are derived.[4] According to the Bergen transcription, this term occurs 224 times in Wittgenstein's writings, most of which concern the intentionality of thought and language. There is an explicit discussion of Brentano on intentionality in one of Wittgenstein's dictations to Friedrich Waismann, although it is doubtful whether Wittgenstein had actually read Brentano.[5]

Wittgenstein sometimes characterized the core problem of intentionality as the problem of the 'harmony between thought and reality' (e.g. PI §428). Wittgenstein also characterized it, with a deliberately Leibnizian allusion, as the '*pre-established* harmony between thought and reality' (e.g. BT 189). The moot question is what he meant by this enigmatic phrase. It would be mistaken to suppose that it refers to the observations that the wish for it to be the case that *p* is the wish that is fulfilled by its being the case that *p*, that the thought that *p* is the thought that is made true by the fact that *p*, or that the order to V is the order that is obeyed by V-ing.[6] These are indeed internal relations. They spell out what it is for a wish to be fulfilled, for a thought to be true, and for an order to be obeyed. But the mysterious harmony between thought and reality is not captured by citing these internal relations. Wittgenstein himself explained:

The agreement, the harmony, between thought and reality consists in this: that if I say falsely that something is *red*, then all the same, it is *red* that it isn't. And in this: that if I want to explain the word 'red' to someone, in the

[3] Including Daniel Dennett's *The Intentional Stance* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1987). For detailed criticism of Dennett's theory, see M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), pp. 421–7.

[4] The term 'intentio' first occurs in a Latin translation of Avicenna's explanation of Aristotle's account of thought. It was a rendering of Al-farabi's and Avicenna's terms *ma'na* and *ma'qul*.

[5] Gordon Baker, ed., *The Voices of Wittgenstein* (Routledge, London, 2003), dictation entitled 'Brentano', pp. 443–51.

[6] As is mistakenly suggested, for example, by Professor T. Crane in 'Wittgenstein and Intentionality', in *The Harvard Journal of Philosophy* 17 (2010), 88–104.

sentence 'That is not red', I should do so by pointing to something that *is* red.   (PI §429)

The agreement or harmony between thought and reality is not an agreement of truth (satisfaction, obedience). It is an agreement that necessarily obtains (is pre-established) between thought and reality *no matter whether the thought is true or false*, *the wish fulfilled or not fulfilled*, *the order obeyed or disobeyed*. What did Wittgenstein have in mind? Again, he explained quite clearly in *The Big Typescript* (p. 188v): it is the *pictoriality* of thought (and language). This takes us back to the *Tractatus* account of representation. It is there (and in the antecedent *Notebooks 1914–16*) that Wittgenstein first grappled with the problems of the intentionality of thought and language, and offered his first solution to the problems as he saw them. The so-called picture theory of representation was an attempt to give a sublime metaphysical explanation of the pictoriality of thought and proposition.

## 2. THE *TRACTATUS* ACCOUNT OF INTENTIONALITY

Three great problems dominate the *Tractatus*: the nature of representation; the nature of logical necessity; and the nature of what cannot be said but is shown by what can be said. The nature of representation is delineated in the picture theory (note that this is *not* Wittgenstein's nomenclature). *One* way in which the problem of representation presented itself to Wittgenstein was by means of the following three irresistible ideas:

i. When one thinks truly that things are so, then what one thinks is what is the case.
ii. When one thinks falsely that things are so, then what one thinks is not what is the case.
iii. What one thinks when one thinks truly that *p* and what one thinks when one thinks falsely that *p* are the same—for in both cases what one thinks is that *p*.

Each of these seems right, and yet it seems they *cannot* all be right. (This, as Wittgenstein observed, is the general form of all deep philosophical predicaments: *it cannot be so, and yet it must be so*!)

   We can put the same problem slightly differently: how can one think what is *not* the case? As Wittgenstein put it in his *Notebooks 1914–16*:

If a picture presents what-is-not-the-case…this only happens through its presenting *that* which *is* not the case.

For the picture says, as it were, '*This* is how it is *not*' and to the question '*How* is it not?' just the positive proposition is the answer.   (NB 25)

This strange puzzle, which is repeated in *Investigations* §429 (quoted above), lies at the heart of the picture theory of the proposition:

That shadow which the picture as it were casts upon the world: How am I to get an exact grasp of it?

Here is a deep mystery.

It is the mystery of negation: This is not how things are, and yet we can say *how* things are *not*.   (NB 30)

It is not surprising that Wittgenstein later (BT 217; PI §518) associated the problem with Plato's discussion of false thought in the *Theaetetus*:

SOCRATES:   And if he thinks, he thinks something, doesn't he?
THEAETETUS:   Necessarily.
SOCRATES:   And when he thinks something, he thinks a thing that is?
THEAETETUS:   I agree.
SOCRATES:    So to think what is not is to think nothing.
THEAETETUS:   Clearly.
SOCRATES:   But surely to think nothing is the same as not to think at all.
THEAETETUS:   That seems plain.
SOCRATES:    If so, it is impossible to think what is not…(*Theaetetus* 189a)

Of course, this is absurd. We *can* think what is not the case. But if what we think when we think truly is what is the case—then it seems that there is nothing to think when we think falsely. For what we think is *not* the case—so there isn't anything there for us to think!!

Frege handled the problem in a very simple way. Thinking, he supposed, is a dual relation between a thinker and a thought. What we think is a thought or proposition. So when we think falsely, we think a thought that is false, and when we think truly we think a thought that is true—so there is something to think no matter whether we think truly or falsely. But this simple solution is purchased at an intolerable price. For on Frege's account, what we think is never what is the case. But that seems absurd: for when we think truly that it is raining, then what we think is what is in fact the case, namely, *that it is raining*. Thought must be capable of reaching right up to reality. It must not fall short of it (as it does on Frege's account). Might one not argue that what we think when we think truly is what is the case, but what we think when we think falsely is a false proposition? No,

for then what we think when we think truly would differ from what we think when we think falsely. Moreover, when we think falsely that things are so, what we think is *not* what is the case. We do not think a false proposition, which stands in some relation to what is not the case. As Arthur Prior was later to put it in his criticism of Frege: 'we must resist above all things the madness which insulates what we think from any possibility of directly clashing with what is so'.[7]

To put matters in the terms of the 1910s (when the term 'internal relation' was common currency), the thought that *p* is *internally related* to the fact that *p* that makes it true. That is: the thought that *p would not be* the thought that *p* were it not the thought that is made true by the fact that *p*. The thought that *p* is also internally related to the fact that not-*p* that makes it false. For the thought that *p* would not be the thought it is, were it not the thought that it is made false by its not being the case that *p*, i.e. by the negative fact that not *p*.

Russell, like Moore, was initially tempted to think that what we think when we think truly is a fact 'in the world' (which he called 'a true proposition'—such propositions or facts consisting of non-linguistic entities constituting reality). But the consequence of this was that what we think when we think truly that *p* is distinct from what we think when we think falsely that *p*. And that seemed absurd. Russell abandoned this dual relation conception in favour of a 'multiple relation theory of belief'.[8] On that account, Othello's belief that Desdemona loves Cassio binds together the terms Othello, loving, Desdemona, Cassio in the following order: Believes (Othello, loving, Desdemona, Cassio). If it is a fact that Desdemona loves Cassio (Loves (Desdemona, Cassio)), then the belief is true. Otherwise it is false. On this account belief is a multiple relation between a believer and the constituents of belief. The young Wittgenstein blew a hole right through this account with his observation that nothing in Russell's theory excluded the intelligibility of believing a nonsense.[9] Russell

[7] Arthur Prior, *Objects of Thought* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971), p. 52.

[8] Bertrand Russell, *Problems of Philosophy* [1912], (Oxford University Press, London, 1967), chap. 12.

[9] Wittgenstein: 'Notes on Logic', in *Notebooks 1914–1916* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1961), p. 96, repeated in the *Tractatus* 5.5422: 'The correct explanation of the form of the proposition "A judges that *p*" must show that it is impossible to judge a nonsense. Russell's theory does not satisfy this requirement.' For discussion of the matter, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996), pp. 13f., 26f.

was devastated and abandoned his work on the 1913 *Theory of Knowledge* manuscript.

How did young Wittgenstein propose to handle the problem that had defeated his two great predecessors? How can one square the three seemingly irresistible propositions

(i) that what we think when we think truly is what is the case (and not some third thing that stands between our thought and what is the case);

(ii) that what we think when we think falsely is not what is the case;

(iii) that what we think when we think truly that *p* does not differ from what we think when we think falsely that *p*?

His answer was complex. On the one hand, it is obvious that what we think when we think truly is not *identical* with the fact that makes our thought true. A thought or proposition, Wittgenstein then held, is indeed a fact (TLP 2.141)—it is *a representing fact*, which is, of course, distinct from the *represented fact* that makes it true. According to Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, *only* a fact can express a sense (TLP 3.142), and *only* a fact can represent a fact. (Similarly, according to the metaphysics of symbolism of the *Tractatus*, only a simple name can represent a simple object and only a relation can represent a relation.) *Obviously* the representing fact is distinct from the represented fact even if the thought is true, a fortiori if it is false—for then *there is* no represented fact. But even then, *something* is represented. How can that be? Wittgenstein's solution was to construct a metaphysics of modal realism (realism concerning metaphysical possibilities). What a thought or proposition represents *is a possibility*—a state of affairs—that may or may not be actualized. In order for a thought or proposition to be capable of depicting such a possibility, there must be *something* identical common to the representing fact (the thought or proposition) and the state of affairs represented:

If a fact is to be a picture, it must have something in common with what it depicts.

There must be something identical in a picture and what it depicts, to enable one to be a picture of the other at all.

What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it—correctly or incorrectly—in the way it does, is its pictorial form. (TLP 2.16–2.17)

So the agreement between thought and reality *is an agreement of form*. What makes it possible for a proposition, indeed for any repre-

sentation, to constitute a picture is that it shares a common form with what it depicts. What it depicts is a possibility, which may or may not be actualized in reality. If it is actualized, then the proposition is true, for things are as the proposition depicts them as being. (Note that Wittgenstein was not advancing a correspondence theory of truth, but a deflationary one.) If the possibility depicted is not actualized then the proposition is false, for things are not as the proposition depicts them as being.

Every picture is at the same time a logical picture. Thoughts are purely logical pictures. Logical pictures can depict the world. A picture has logico-pictorial form in common with what it depicts—what represents and what is represented are *isomorphic*. A picture depicts reality by representing *the possibility* of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs (TLP 2.151, 2.201).

This solves the problem as Wittgenstein then understood it. What we think when we think truly that *p* and what we think when we think falsely that *p* are indeed the same possibility—the same state of affairs, but when we think truly that very state of affairs happens to be realized. But the price of this elegant solution was high, for it forced Wittgenstein down the road of logical atomism. It involved a metaphysics of sempiternal simple objects constituting the substance of the world; it involved the thought of objects belonging to sharply determinate metaphysical categories; it involved the idea that the world consists of positive and negative facts, and the supposition that facts consist of objects in concatenation. On the representing side, it involved the thought that a language (including the language of thought) consists of simple names (or simple thought-constituents) the meanings of which are simple objects in reality, that simple names combine to form elementary propositions which are logically independent of each other, that simple names belong to determinate logico-syntactical categories with fixed combinatorial possibilities, and that all logical necessity is to be explained in terms of truth-functional combinations of elementary propositions. *Above all*, it involved the thought that the intentionality (pictoriality) of thought and proposition involved a *metalogical* relation between what represents (thoughts, propositions, etc.) and what is represented. A metalogical relation, in Wittgenstein's idiosyncratic use of this expression (before it acquired its current sense), was conceived to be a relation that is presupposed by the very possibility of thought, language, and logic. The pre-established harmony between thought and reality was conceived to be, in this sense, metalogical. It is constitutive of representation. All this Wittgenstein later repudiated.

It is important to have a correct grasp of the concept of a fact. For failure to subject this concept to philosophical scrutiny was one of the roots of the errors of the *Tractatus*. Conceptual confusions about facts ramify. One might suppose that

Of course, 'fact' can mean a number of different things. In one usage, a fact is just a truth—a fact is 'a thought [*Gedanke*] that is true' as Frege puts it. On another usage, a fact is something in the world, something on an ontological level with objects and properties, something that makes truths true.[10]

This is confused. These are not usages, but *misuses*—the first being the misuse of Frege (repeated by Strawson), the second a misuse of the young Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* (repeated by Austin and Searle). These are philosophical blunders, not alternative usages.

Facts are not true propositions or true thoughts. It makes no sense to say 'One fact about Jack is the true proposition (thought) that he went up the hill', when one can say 'One fact about Jack is that he went up the hill', and also 'One true proposition (thought) about Jack is that he went up the hill'.[11] A true proposition may be detailed, but a fact cannot be. The fact that Jack went up the hill, but not the true proposition that Jack went up the hill, may be deplorable, regrettable, or unfortunate, it may be a miracle or only natural. The sentence 'Jack went up the hill' may be used to *express* a true proposition, but to *state* a fact. The violent death of Archimedes at Syracuse is a fact, but not a true proposition. Facts, but not true propositions, are said to be hard or stubborn, to speak for themselves. We admire those who face the facts (but not the true propositions) undaunted. Jack may have gone up the hill, despite the fact that he was ill, but not despite the true proposition that he was ill.

Similarly, facts are not 'things in the world' on the same 'ontological level' as objects and properties. It is a fact that Harold died at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, but that fact is neither in Hastings nor in 1066. It did not come into existence in Hastings in 1066. It did not cease to be a fact in 1067, or in London. Facts have no spatio-temporal location. Contrary to the *Tractatus*, as Wittgenstein himself later came to realize, *the world does NOT consist of facts*. Rather, a description of (some features of) the world consists of a statement of facts. That is not an 'ontological' or 'metaphysical'

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[10] Crane, 'Wittgenstein and Intentionality', p. 91.
[11] See Bede Rundle, *Facts* (Duckworth, London, 1993), chap. 1, and *Grammar in Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979), chaps. 7–8.

truth, but a humble grammatical statement that licenses the inter-substitutability of expressions, namely, 'a description of how things are' and 'a statement of the facts'.

One might suggest that some facts, like the fact that Magellan circumnavigated the globe, 'take place' or 'go on' in the world, and that some facts are parts of 'what happened'.[12] But it is events that take place or go on—not facts. Facts obtain, but they do not go on, occur, or happen. While events have a temporal and usually also a spatial location—facts have neither. Events commonly begin, go on for a while, may have different phases that are indeed part of what happened, and then come to an end. Facts neither begin nor go on, they do not have parts or phases, and they do not come to an end.

So much for the core ideas of pictoriality or intentionality as conceived in the *Tractatus*. I have not touched on the account of what, in the *Tractatus*, makes a representing fact represent the state of affairs it represents. To this Wittgenstein gave a brief answer—which he later came to see was quite wrong. His answer was: by *being projected* on to what it represents. The method of projection, he wrote, is *thinking the sense of the sentence* (TLP 3.11)[13]—i.e. *meaning* by the sentence '*p*' the state of affairs the obtaining of which will make it true and the non-obtaining of which will make it false. As he later wrote (before he saw through the confusion): intention (i.e. meaning (*meinen*)) is the method of projection (MS 108, 219). Thinking, meaning, are intrinsically intentional—and it is, he then held, the *intrinsic intentionality of thought* that breathes life into otherwise dead signs. This conception, without the associated logical atomism, was to be ingeniously revived by John Searle in his book *Intentionality* (1983), fifty years after Wittgenstein had definitively refuted and repudiated it.

## 3. WITTGENSTEIN'S LATER ACCOUNT OF INTENTIONALITY

In his later philosophy (that finds its most complete expression in the *Investigations*), Wittgenstein abandoned the very idea *of metalogical* investigations into the foundations of logic and language. Neither logic nor language *has* foundations. Just as there is no metaphysics,

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[12] Crane, 'Wittgenstein and Intentionality', p. 91.
[13] I have here corrected the translation of this passage. It could also be rendered 'thinking the sense of the proposition', but *not* 'thinking *of* the sense of the proposition'.

he wrote, so too there is no metalogic (MS 110, 189). The word 'fundamental' cannot signify anything metalogical (MS 110, 194). The expression 'agreement with reality' is not a metalogical one, but rather a part of ordinary language (MS 113, 49v; cf. MS 115, 85). Contrary to what he had earlier thought, such words as 'understanding' and 'meaning (*meinen*)' are not metalogical (MS 114, 2 & 27; MS 140, 8). What is needed is not *Wesensschau*—metaphysical insight into the ultimate nature of things, nor metalogical investigations into the foundations of representation, but rather a patient sifting of grammatical facts—of the ways in which we use words. What we need is a perspicuous representation of the use of our words (PI §122). For this will shed light on our bewilderment, show us where we went astray and why.

So, for example, it is perfectly correct to say that what one thinks, when one thinks truly, is what is the case. As the *Tractatus* put it, what one thinks must not fall short of what is the case. But, as we have seen, it *cannot* be identical with what is the case on pain (i) of one's thinking nothing when one thinks falsely, or (ii) of thinking something different when one thinks truly that *p* from what one thinks when one thinks falsely that *p*, or (iii) supposing absurdly that the representing fact is identical with the represented fact. The *Tractatus* solution was that there must be something different (the representing fact differs from the represented one) and there must be something the same (logico-pictorial form). Thought and proposition alike can reach right up to reality because their psychic constituents and their logically simple names respectively have as their meanings the objects that are constituents of possibilities (of states of affairs). That is how language is *pinned* to reality, and how thought reaches right up to it. Now Wittgenstein brushed all that aside as a mythology of symbolism.

What had looked like an identity but obviously could not be one, namely, that what one thinks when one thinks truly *is* what is the case, has a very simple grammatical elucidation. In 'what one thinks' and in 'what is the case', the Wh-pronoun is not a relative one. If A expects Jill to come, and Jill comes, then that was precisely what A expected. But it was not *the same* as A expected (cf. PR 68f.). If A thought that *p*, and it was the case that *p*, then what A thought was indeed what was the case. But it was not *the same* as what was the case (of course, it was not *different either*). We are barking up the wrong tree—mesmerized by the 'what-s'! If A ordered both Jack and Jill to go up the hill, and both obeyed, then what Jack did was the same as what Jill did. Same *what*? Why, same *act* of course! But if

A orders Jack to do something, and Jack obeys him, Jack does *what* A ordered. But he does not do *the same* as A ordered—and one cannot ask 'Same what?' *It is perfectly correct* that if A thinks that *p*, and it is the case that *p*, then what A thinks is what is the case. What that means is that *the questions* 'What did A think?' and 'What was the case?' here *receive the same answer*! Moreover, if A thinks that *p*, and it is not the case that *p*, then it follows that what A thinks is *not* what is the case (and not something else, such as *q*, *r*, or *s*). How can this be? *It is all done in language* (PI §445)—not between language and reality. The harmony between thought and reality is orchestrated *in grammar*—not between mind and world; nor between word and world. How can that be?

What appeared to be a metalogical agreement between thought, language, and reality is no more than a grammatical nexus between expressions:

> 'the thought that *p*' = 'the thought made true by the fact that *p*' = 'the thought made false by the fact that not-*p*'.
>
> 'the proposition that *p*' = 'the proposition made true by the fact that *p*' = 'the proposition made false by the fact that not-*p*'.
>
> 'the expectation that event *e* will occur' = 'the expectation fulfilled by the occurrence of *e*' = 'the expectation disappointed by the non-occurrence of *e*'.
>
> 'the order to V' = 'the order obeyed by V-ing' = 'the order disobeyed by not-V-ing'.

These are no more than rules for the uses of correlative expressions. These rules are not *reflections* of *de re* internal relations constituting the metaphysical forms of the world. On the contrary, internal relations are the *shadows* of these rules of representation. Instead of speaking of the thought that *p*, we can equally well speak of the thought that is made true by the fact that *p*. Rather than speaking of the expectation that Jill will come, we can equally well speak of the expectation that will be fulfilled by Jill's coming. These are no more than different ways of speaking of one and the same thought or expectation.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had explained how thought can 'reach right up to reality' by reference to the idea that the constituents of thought, that correspond to the simple names in language, have as their meanings the simple objects in reality that are constituents of states of affairs (and hence too of facts). In the *Investigations* he saw that this too is illusion. Language is not 'pinned' to reality at all—it is, in a sense, free-floating and autonomous. Ostensive definitions do not

link words and world—they remain within grammar. The sample at which one points in an ostensive definition belongs (at least *pro tempore*) to the means of representation, not to what is represented. The world does not consist of facts, and facts are not concatenations of sempiternal objects. Indeed, the postulation of objects (the substance of the world) was misconceived. It is not the task of philosophy to *postulate* anything. But what was licit in the role allocated to the postulated objects of the *Tractatus* is satisfactorily fulfilled by samples belonging to the means of representation.

It is important to realize, because it is currently often obscured, that the grammatical proposition that the thought (or proposition) that *p* is made true by the fact that *p* is not an endorsement of the modern metaphysics of truth-makers. Facts don't make thoughts true in the manner in which killing men makes widows, but rather in the manner in which being an unmarried man makes one a bachelor. Facts are no more 'in the world' than thoughts are 'in the head'. 'The thought that *p*' and 'The thought made true by the fact that *p*' are just two different ways of referring to the same thought, just as '*The vixen* barked' and '*The female fox* barked' involve two different ways of referring to the same animal. Being a female fox is not a vixen-maker (foxes and vixens make little vixens).

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein thought that the method of projection that links a picture to what it is a picture of is *thinking the sense of the sentence*—which is *meaning by the sentence the state of affairs it describes* (and so too, meaning by the constituent names of the sentence the objects that are, according to the *Tractatus*, their meanings). It was mental acts of *meaning* that were conceived to breathe life into language. Later he realized that meaning something by a word or sentence is not a mental act at all, for meaning something by a word is not something one does. One cannot mean something quickly or slowly, one cannot be interrupted in the middle of meaning something, and one cannot forget to mean something by one's words. Moreover, he realized that there are constraints on what one *can* mean by a conventional sign one uses. Contrary to what Humpty Dumpty claimed, one cannot mean by 'There's glory for you' 'There's a nice knock-down argument'. Finally, Wittgenstein now admitted (in a discussion with Rush Rhees), that in the *Tractatus* he had confused the lines of projection with the method of projection.

The intentionality of language is not derived from the intrinsic intentionality of thought. Nor is it produced by some hocus-pocus *in the mind*—namely, imaginary mental acts of meaning or intending. That we can think of the non-existent, that we can believe something

that is not the case, that we can say *what* we expect even though *what we expect* has not yet eventuated, all this (and much more) is rendered intelligible by careful investigations of the grammar of our language and our linguistic practices.

## 4. AN OBJECTION ANSWERED

Professor Crane, in the above-mentioned paper, advances what he takes to be a crushing objection to Wittgenstein's elucidation of the core problem of the intentionality of thought and language. The objection is simple: the thought that *p* can be made true by the fact that *q*, for example: the thought (proposition, or expectation) that the postman will deliver the mail tomorrow may in fact be satisfied by Mr Smith's delivering a Christmas card on Christmas Eve. I may have expected the postman to deliver the mail tomorrow, but I did not expect Mr Smith (I did not know that Mr Smith is the postman) to deliver a Christmas card (I was expecting the mail) on Christmas Eve (I didn't know that tomorrow is Christmas Eve). This, Professor Crane avers, shows that Wittgenstein's account is sorely incomplete. Moreover, it shows that a full account of the logic of expectation and its fulfilment would not be grammatical at all. We must reject Wittgenstein's claim that 'it is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact'. For what we know when we know that the fact that *q* may satisfy the expectation that *p* is not a matter of grammar. So, Professor Crane concludes, 'there is more to the relation between expectation and its fulfilment than grammar'.

This is confused. The problem Wittgenstein addressed is set by *an undeniable internal relation* between thought (expectation, wish) or language (proposition, order), on the one hand, and something 'outside it', on the other, namely, a fact, an event, an act—which may or may not obtain, occur, be performed, and indeed may *never* obtain, occur, or be performed. How can there be an internal relation between something that occurs or obtains *now*, and something else, which if it is to obtain at all, will obtain only later? How can one *read off* one's current thought, wish, or expectation what will subsequently make it true, fulfil it, or satisfy it? Does one's thought, wish, or expectation *contain* what will make it true, fulfil it, or satisfy it? That is absurd—but unless it were so, how could one say what one thought, wished for, or expected in advance of its fulfilment? Or does it contain a *logical picture* (the *Tractatus*), *image* (classical empiricism), or

*representation* (contemporary representationalism) of what will make it true, fulfil it, or satisfy it?

This then is one of the cluster of problems surrounding the intentionality of thought and language that Wittgenstein was addressing. But *there is no internal relation* between the thought that *p* and the fact that *q*, or between the wish to have *w* and being given *x*, or between the expectation that *e* will happen, and *f*'s happening. It is not possible to read off the thought that *p* the fact that *q* that non-logically makes it true. One cannot read off the wish to be given a good book tomorrow the event of being given a copy of *War and Peace* on Christmas Day. And one cannot read off the expectation that the postman will deliver the mail tomorrow the event of Mr Smith's delivering a Christmas card on Christmas Eve. So the problems of intentionality simply do not arise when we are not dealing with an internal relation. Nevertheless, it is common for the thought, expectation, or wish that *p* to be satisfied or fulfilled by the fact or event that *q*, or for the command to V to be obeyed by doing W. This is not the problem of intentionality, precisely because one cannot read off the thought, expectation, wish, or command, that *q* or W will satisfy them. But the question does arise, why *do* these facts, events, or acts, which are *not* internally related to the relevant thoughts, expectations, etc., nevertheless satisfy or fulfil them?

Wittgenstein was well aware of this issue. He mentions it *en passant* in *Investigations* §441. In our language-games with expressions of wishes, the question of whether I know what I wish before my wish is fulfilled cannot arise. It would be absurd to suppose (as Russell did in *Analysis of Mind*) that I don't know what I wish until something puts paid to it. For if it were true, then it might turn out that my wish for an apple is satisfied by a punch in the stomach that makes the wish disappear (PR 64). On the other hand, Wittgenstein notes, 'the word "wish" is also used in this way: "I don't know myself what I wish for".' He does not comment on this, but the required elaboration is obvious: this is not a case of *ignorance* (of my having a wish but not knowing what it is), but of *indecision* (I need to make up my mind, not peer into it). Wittgenstein then adds a further parenthesis directly pertinent to Professor Crane's objection: '("For wishes themselves are a veil between us and the things wished for.")' This is a quotation from Goethe's *Herman und Dorothea*, Canto V, line 69, where the pastor pleads with Herman's father to permit the young couple's marriage, even though Dorothea seems to fall short of the father's expectations:

Be not surprised nor embarrassed that now a sudden fulfilment
Of your most cherished wish has arrived; to be sure its appearance
Does not agree with exactness with what you always imagined
Wishes obscure their objective; fulfilment is not as expected.
That which is given comes down from above, in a form which is proper.

This too is obviously no objection to Wittgenstein's account of inten-
tionality. Wittgenstein mentioned the very same point in *The Big
Typescript*:

Expectation and event make contact *in language*.
  'I said, "Leave the room" and he left the room.'
  'I said "Leave the room" and he left the room slowly.'
  'I said "Leave the room" and he jumped out of the window.'
  A justification is possible here, even when the description of the action
isn't the same as that given by the command.   (BT 371)

What 'justification' did Wittgenstein have in mind? Obviously this:
the order to leave the room is obeyed by jumping out of the window
*since jumping out of the window is (one way of) leaving the room*!
But one cannot read off the order to leave the room that it will be
obeyed by jumping out of the window—there is here no 'intentional
connection', *unless one supplies the further 'justification'*. But once
this *is* supplied, there is an internal relation and an intentional
connection.

   Professor Crane concludes that the problem of the relationship
between thought and reality is not solved by grammatical investiga-
tions. So he suggests that we should reconsider the idea that there
might be something else that explains the connection, or apparent
connection, between an expectation and what fulfils it, a proposition
and what makes it true, etc. This 'something else', he suggests, is the
idea of representation. 'It is hard to see how we can make any progress
in even describing the phenomena', Professor Crane writes, 'if we
cannot help ourselves to the concept of representation.'[14] This is
bizarre, since we have been talking about representations—symbolic
representations—all the time. What Professor Crane has in mind, as
he then explains, is *mental representation*. Of course, that was what
the young Wittgenstein advocated too. He too held that thoughts are
mental representations. The older, and wiser, Wittgenstein explained
in detail why that is incoherent—for the intentionality of thought is

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[14]  Crane, 'Wittgenstein and Intentionality', p. 102.

parasitic on the intentionality of language and linguistic representation, and *thoughts are not representations*.

We have spelled out why thoughts are not representations in previous chapters. Briefly, they are all message and no medium. But there is an internal relation between a representation and the medium in which it is expressed or exhibited, and the medium must have non-representative features in virtue of which it can be apprehended. Representations can be misunderstood or not understood, and may require an interpretation. But one cannot in the relevant sense have a thought and not understand it or misunderstand it. For oneself, thought is the last interpretation.

# Part III

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# Context

# Passing by the Naturalistic Turn: on Quine's cul-de-sac

## 1. NATURALISM

Naturalism, it has been said, is *the* distinctive development in philosophy over the last thirty years. There has been a *naturalistic turn* away from the a priori methods of traditional philosophy to a conception of philosophy as continuous with natural science. The doctrine has been extensively discussed and has won considerable following in the USA. This is, on the whole, not true of Britain and continental Europe, where the pragmatist tradition never took root, and the temptations of scientism in philosophy were less alluring.

Contemporary American naturalism originates in the writings of Quine, the metaphysician of twentieth-century science. With extraordinary panache, he painted a large-scale picture of human nature, of language, and of the web of belief. I believe that in almost every major respect, it is, like the picture painted by Descartes, the great metaphysician of seventeenth-century science, mistaken. But it evidently appeals to the spirit of the times. So it is worthy of critical examination and careful refutation. I shall argue that the naturalistic turn is a cul-de-sac—a turn that is to be passed by if we are to keep to the high road of good sense.

Naturalism, like so many of Quine's doctrines, was propounded in response to Carnap. As Quine understood matters, Carnap had been persuaded by Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* that it is the task of philosophy to demonstrate that our knowledge of the external world is a logical construction out of, and hence can be reduced to, elementary experiences. Quine rejected the reductionism of Carnap's *Logischer Aufbau*, and found the idealist basis uncongenial to his own dogmatic realist behaviourism, inspired by Watson and later reinforced by Skinner. The rejection of reductionism and of

'unregenerate realism', Quine averred, were the sources of his naturalism (FME 72). What exactly was this?

We can distinguish in Quine between three different but interrelated programmes for future philosophy: epistemological, ontological, and philosophical naturalism.

*Naturalized epistemology* is to displace traditional epistemology, transforming the investigation into 'an enterprise within natural science' (NNK 68)—a psychological enterprise of investigating how the 'input' of radiation, etc., impinging on the nerve endings of human beings can 'ultimately' result in an 'output' of our theoretical descriptions of the external world. I shall argue that the failure of the Russell–Carnap programme in no way implies that epistemology should be naturalized; that the project of naturalized epistemology contributes nothing to the solution or dissolution of the problems traditional epistemology struggled with; that Quine's few forays into genuinely epistemological questions are failures; and that Quine's imaginary science of naturalized epistemology is of questionable intelligibility and of no philosophical utility.

*Ontological naturalism* is the doctrine that 'it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described' (TTPT 21). It is up to science to tell us what there is, and it offers the best theory of what exists and of how we come to know what exists. The only difference between the ontological philosopher and the scientist, according to Quine, lies in the breadth of concern: the former being concerned, for example, with the existence of material objects or classes and the latter with wombats or unicorns. I shall not discuss this here in detail. But it should be noted that it is far from clear what it is to 'identify and describe reality'. If I identify a dandelion on the lawn, Beethoven's Opus 132 on the radio, a smell of onions in the kitchen, am I identifying 'reality'? And have I done so 'within science'?

In no ordinary sense of 'science' is science the sole and final arbiter on what exists (e.g. Russell's childhood diaries, the pain in my leg, the Romantic movement, Mannerist style, international law, a plot to depose the king). There is no specific science that offers us the best theory of what exists, nor do the sciences collectively do so, for there is no such thing as a theory of everything that exists.

Philosophical ontology is not concerned with determining what exists in the sense in which biological taxonomy is concerned with determining, tabulating, and classifying what living things exist. Nor is it differentiated from a science, e.g. physics, by generality of catego-

ries. It is not as if physics is concerned to establish that mesons or quarks exist, whereas philosophy is concerned to establish that material objects or events exist (*pace* Davidson). The task of ontology is to clarify, from one domain to another, *what it means to say* that such-and-such exists (e.g. a substance, a property, a possibility, a number, a concept, the meaning of a word, a law or legal system).[1]

*Philosophical naturalism* is the view that philosophy is 'not…an a priori propaedeutic or groundwork for science, but [is]…continuous with science' (NNK 126). Quine claimed to have blurred the boundary lines between philosophy and science (NLWM 256). Although he elaborated little on this, his followers have shown no such reticence. In the USA it is widely held that with Quine's rejection of 'the' analytic/synthetic distinction, the possibility of philosophical or conceptual analysis collapses, the possibility of resolving philosophical questions by a priori argument and elucidation is foreclosed, and all *good* philosophers turn out to be closet scientists. This too cannot be discussed here in detail, but I shall make a few observations.

Attacks on the idea of analyticity could show that philosophy is continuous with science only if (i) they were successful, (ii) philosophy consists of statements, and (iii) these contrast with scientific statements by virtue of their analyticity. It is questionable whether Quine did successfully show that Carnap's distinction is untenable. Carnap did not think so, and explained why he did not.[2] Grice and Strawson did not either.[3] Quine never gave a satisfactory reply to these objections. Even in 'Two Dogmas' he did not deny synonymy, and hence analyticity, in cases of stipulation, but only in the cases of ordinary terms not thus introduced. In *Roots of Reference*, he himself offered an account of analytic truths. They are those truths everyone learns merely by learning to understand them (RR 79).

Even if Quine had successfully demolished Carnap's distinction between empirical truths and truths in virtue of meaning, it would not be true that he had shown the analytic/synthetic distinction to be untenable, for there is not one such distinction. There is Locke's distinction between 'trifling' or 'barely verbal' propositions, on the one

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[1] For elaboration of this claim, see P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996), pp. 121f., 223–6.

[2] See R. Carnap, 'W. V. Quine on Logical Truth', in P. A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of Rudolph Carnap* (Open Court, La Salle, Ill., 1963), pp. 915–22, and 'Quine on Analyticity', in R. Creath, ed., *Dear Carnap, Dear Van* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990), pp. 427–32.

[3] H. P. Grice and P. F. Strawson, 'In Defence of a Dogma', *Philosophical Review* 65 (1956), 141–58.

hand, and non-trifling ones, on the other, as well as Kant's, Bolzano's, Frege's, and Carnap's different distinctions between analytic and synthetic truths. Their extensions are not equivalent (Kant, for example, held truths of arithmetic to be synthetic a priori, whereas Frege held them to be analytic).[4] Some of these are epistemological distinctions, others are purely logical. But even if someone were to demonstrate that no distinction similar to *any* of these is tenable, that would not show that philosophy is 'continuous with science'. Nor would it show that philosophy is not an a priori discipline. And it certainly would not show that conceptual analysis is impossible.[5]

If all distinctions between analytic and synthetic propositions are untenable, it does not follow that there is no distinction between a priori and empirical propositions. Even if mathematics is not analytic, it does not follow that it is not a priori. According to Quine, 'maths and logic are supported by observation only in the indirect way that those aspects [the most general and systematic] of natural science are supported by observation; namely, as participating in an organized whole which, way up at its empirical edges, squares with observation' (PL 100). But this is misconceived. Propositions of mathematics and logic are not 'supported by observation'. They are demonstrated by deductive proofs. It is not as if confirmation of Newtonian mechanics by celestial observations made the theorems of the calculus better supported than before.[6] And in respect of a priority, what goes for mathematics and logic goes too for such propositions as 'red is more like orange than like yellow' or 'red is darker than pink'. As long as we can distinguish between a tautology and a non-tautologous

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[4] Quine explicitly assimilated Frege's and Carnap's views (RR 78). But while Carnap held that the laws of logic were optional conventions and that analytic truths in general held in virtue of meaning (see, e.g. 'Meaning Postulates', repr. in *Meaning and Necessity* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956), pp. 222–9), Frege held that the laws of logic 'are boundary stones set in eternal foundations, which our thought can overflow, but never displace' (*Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, vol. i, Introduction, p. xvi), and his heroic attempt to prove the analyticity of arithmetic was certainly not an attempt to prove it to be true by linguistic convention.

[5] Wittgenstein too rejected the Carnapian idea that there can be truths in virtue of meanings, characterizing it as the conception of 'a meaning-body' (*Bedeutungskörper*). It is noteworthy that there is virtually no invocation of the concept of analyticity in his later writings. But he certainly thought that the problems of philosophy and the methods of their resolution are a priori and categorially distinct from the problems and methods of the sciences.

[6] See D. Isaacson, 'Quine and Logical Positivism', in R. F. Gibson, Jr., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Quine* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004), p. 254.

proposition, and between the specification of a measure and the statement of a measurement—the statement of a rule and the application of a rule—we can readily distinguish between what is a priori and what is empirical.

The thought that if there is no distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, then philosophy must be 'continuous' with science rests on the false supposition that what was thought to distinguish philosophical propositions from scientific ones was their analyticity. That supposition can be challenged in two ways. First, by showing that characteristic propositions that philosophers have advanced are neither analytic nor empirical (the claim of the older Wittgenstein as well as of the young Quine that there are no propositions that are true in virtue of their meanings may serve here as an example). Secondly, by denying that there are any philosophical propositions at all.

Strikingly, the Manifesto of the Vienna Circle, of which Carnap was both an author and signatory, pronounced that 'the essence of *the new scientific world-conception* in contrast with traditional philosophy [is that] no special "philosophic assertions" are established, assertions are merely clarified'.[7] According to this view, the result of good philosophizing is not the production of analytic propositions peculiar to philosophy. Rather it is the clarification of conceptually problematic propositions and the elimination of pseudo-propositions.

The later Wittgenstein too held that there are no philosophical propositions. The task of philosophy is to resolve or dissolve philosophical problems. These are a priori conceptual problems. They are to be tackled by the elucidation of propositions, not by their analysis into more basic ones. This requires a perspicuous representation of the problematic concepts that illuminates the problems at hand. The resultant overview does not consist of analytic propositions. This conception of conceptual analysis informed Ryle's 'logical geography' of concepts and Strawson's 'connective analysis', both of which were less therapeutically oriented than Wittgenstein's philosophy. None of the many philosophers who pursued conceptual analysis in this vein produced (or purported to produce) sets of analytic propositions that belong to philosophy, any more than Quine produced sets of propositions that belong to science.

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[7] *The Scientific Conception of the World: The Vienna Circle* (Reidel, Dordrecht, 1973), p. 18.

Whether or not Quine's criticism of Carnap's distinction hits its target, the possibility of conceptual analysis thus understood is in no way impaired. Philosophy has not lost its proper vocation—which is not armchair science. It is categorially distinct from science, both in its methods and its results. The a priori methods of respectable philosophy are wholly distinct from the experimental and hypo-thetico-deductive methods of the natural sciences, and the results of philosophy logically antecede the empirical discoveries of science. They cannot licitly conflict with the truth of scientific theories—but they may, and sometimes should, demonstrate their lack of sense. *One* task of philosophy is to set straight the conceptual confusions and incoherences of scientific theories. For philosophy is neither the queen of the sciences nor their conceptual scullery-maid, but rather a tribunal before which scientific theory may be arraigned when it tres-passes beyond the bounds of sense.

## 2. EPISTEMOLOGY NATURALIZED

Quine held that the central problem of epistemology throughout the ages was to explain the relationship between evidence, traditionally understood as sensory experience, and knowledge of the world, which he idiosyncratically termed 'scientific knowledge'. He ascribed to Carnap an enterprise of constructing a 'first-philosophy', i.e. a form of Cartesian foundationalism, that purported to provide extra-scientific foundations for science. *Foundationalism* is the epistemo-logical doctrine that all empirical knowledge rests ultimately on our knowledge of how things sensibly appear to us to be. Such know-ledge does not itself stand in need of evidential support, but it is held to provide the evidence for all other judgements. Carnapian founda-tionalism was *reductive*, i.e. it alleged that statements concerning material things are translatable into statements concerning bare experiences, so statements about material things can be eliminated in favour of statements about sensible experiences. The failure of the Carnapian enterprise seemed to Quine to warrant the naturalization of epistemology.

The importance of Carnap's *Logischer Aufbau* was, according to Quine, akin to that of Russell's *Principia*. It showed, by its failure, that a particular conception of knowledge of the external world—namely, the reductivist one—is mistaken. Unlike Austin, Ryle, and Wittgenstein, Quine did not think that the enterprise of 'bridging the

gap between sense-data and bodies' was a pseudo-problem (RR 2; cf. TTPT 22). The problem was real, but the purported solution hopeless, since verification is holistic. Strict reduction and consequent eliminability of material object statements failed, according to Quine, because a 'typical statement about bodies has no fund of experiential implications it can call its own. A substantial mass of theory, taken together' is required (EN 79). So there is no need to posit sense-data to account for illusions, etc., or to posit such intermediary sensory objects of apprehension in order to account for our knowledge of material objects. The 'relevance of sensory stimulation to sentences about physical objects', he declared in good behaviourist fashion, 'can as well (and better) be explored and explained in terms directly of the conditioning of such sentences and their parts to physical irritations of the subject's surfaces' (WO 235).

Carnap's subsequent compromise of non-eliminative reduction-sentences (Ramsey-sentences) seemed to Quine pointless, renouncing the last remaining advantage of rational reconstruction over straight psychology, namely, translational reduction (EN 78). 'Why all this creative reconstruction, all this make-believe', he remonstrated. 'The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anyone has to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world. Why not just see how this construction really proceeds? Why not settle for psychology?' (EN 75).

What does 'settling for psychology' amount to? First, we abandon the goal of a first philosophy prior to natural science (FME 67). Our investigation, we are told, is itself part of and continuous with natural science. Secondly, we are called on to recognize that the sceptical challenges that epistemology has always been concerned with spring from 'rudimentary science'. The argument from illusion, according to Quine, owes its force to our knowledge that sticks do not bend by immersion, and examples of mirages, after-images, dreams, and the rest are, he claimed, 'simply parasitic upon positive science, however primitive' (NNK 68). Consequently, in coping with these scientific problems of scepticism, we are free to use data from science and scientific knowledge (RR 3). So scientific discoveries can, without circularity or question-begging, be invoked in resolving sceptical worries. Thirdly, epistemology thus naturalized is a branch of psychology: it studies human beings and their acquisition of knowledge or, as he put it, of 'theory', investigating the relation between neural input and cognitive output (EN 83). Hence, fourthly, naturalized epistemology, like traditional epistemology, is concerned with the relation of evidence to theory. Science, Quine averred, 'tells us that our information about

the world is limited to irritations of our surfaces' and the task of the scientific epistemologist is to explain how we 'can have managed to arrive at science from such limited information' (FME 72).

Before commenting on this new conception of epistemology, some of Quine's idiosyncratic usages are worth mentioning. For when one places pressure upon them, they become problematic.

First of all, he used the term 'science' with the promiscuity characteristic of members of the Vienna Circle. Sometimes 'science' means the totality of a person's knowledge of the external world; sometimes it means the totality of 'our' knowledge of the external world; sometimes it means natural science, with especial emphasis on physics, and at others it means all natural sciences; and occasionally it means all academic disciplines concerned with truth about the world, including social sciences and history. It is very important, from context to context, to be clear what sense of 'science' he had in mind. When Quine claimed that 'epistemology is concerned with the foundations of science' (EN 69), there is a presumption that he meant empirical knowledge in general. When he claimed rhetorically that 'science is the highest path to truth' (NLWM 261), he obviously did not. This equivocation is a source of confusion. My knowledge that there is a red book on the table over there, that my name is PMSH, or that I had a headache last night, is not part of science, of any particular science or of my knowledge of science. Furthermore, there is no such homogeneous discipline as 'science'—only a multitude of different empirical cognitive pursuits (physical sciences, life sciences, social sciences, history, psychology, etc.) with widely different methods and canons of evidence. Quine, perhaps because of his Viennese methodological monism, deplored the (Aristotelian) artificiality of dividing the sciences into separate disciplines: 'Names of disciplines', he wrote, 'should be seen only as technical aids in the organisation of curricula and libraries' (AM 88). That explains but does not warrant the view that the segregation of the different sciences does not mark fundamental differences of method and forms of explanation that merit investigation (contrast physics with the life sciences, the natural sciences with history and the social sciences). So too, extending the term 'science' to match the German 'Wissenschaft' will not make history and the social sciences any more like physics and chemistry than they are, i.e. not very—and mere assertion of the Viennese doctrine of the unity of science is no argument for its truth.

Secondly, Quine used the expression 'the external world' quite literally to mean the totality of things or states of affairs external to a person's skin. This stands in contrast with the traditional abuse of the

term to mean 'extra-mental'. But this laudable literalness involves a cost. For our knowledge of our bodily state, of whether we are disposed thus or thus, are in movement or at rest, breathless or tranquil, rested or weary, sober or drunk, hot or cold, this, and much more, is, presumably part of our knowledge of what Quine called 'the world', even if it is not knowledge of the *external* world. This apparent triviality has non-trivial consequences. For according to Quine, naturalized epistemology studies how a human being '*posits* bodies and projects his physics from his data' (NE 83; my italics). All statements concerning external bodies are *assumptions* in his view (TTPT 2, 8).[8] Indeed, he contended, 'all objects are theoretical' (TTPT 20). So the question arises whether my statements about my body and its parts are assumptions or posits too.

   Given Quine's willingness to talk about the body, we may confront him with a dilemma here. Either my body is a posit of mine, or it is not. If it is not, then I know of the existence of at least one material object and of some of its parts without positing anything. And if my foot is not a posit or assumption of mine, it is unclear why my sock and shoe must be. If my body and its parts are posits of mine, then what of me? Either I posit my own existence, or I know that I exist without positing or assuming it. For Augustinian and Cartesian reasons, it is not open to Quine to argue that my own existence is a posit or assumption, let alone that I am a 'theoretical object' in my 'theory of the world'. So, I know that I exist without positing or assuming my existence.[9] If so, and if my body does require positing, if it is a theoretical object, *what am I*? Do I know of my own existence without knowing what I am? That is not an option Quine could welcome

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[8]  Quine claimed that all 'external objects' are 'assumed', but that 'the assuming of objects is a mental act, and mental acts are notoriously difficult to pin down...Little can be done in the way of tracking thought-processes except where we can put words to them...If we turn our attention to the words, then what had been a question of assuming objects becomes a question of *verbal reference* to objects. To ask what the *assuming* of an object consists in is to ask what *referring* to the object consists in' (TTPT 2). But this is mistaken. To assume that the bridge is safe when one steps onto it is not to perform a mental act—it is to take something for granted (and so to *fail* to perform a mental act of reflecting on the matter). To ask what my assuming that the bridge was safe consisted in is certainly not to ask what my referring to the bridge consisted in. For I normally assume the safety of the bridge without referring to it, and I can refer to a bridge when I raise the question of whether it is safe without assuming that it is.

[9]  I shall not challenge here the intelligibility of speaking of knowing that one exists (*a fortiori* of positing one's own existence). This Wittgensteinian route is not one Quine would have been willing to take.

('no entity without identity'). Am I then a *res cogitans*? This too is not a route Quine would wish to go down. Incoherence lurks in these Cartesian shadows, and it is not evident how to extricate Quine from them.

Thirdly, Quine used the term 'theory' in an extended manner, and supposed that human beings have something called a 'theory of the world' (TTPT 21) or a 'scientific system of the world' (FME 71). It is unclear what a *theory or scientific system of the world* might be. What are the criteria of identity for such entities? Is a scientific system of the world the sum of the theories of the natural sciences at any given time? Is a theory of the world the sum total of empirical truths a person may know, or think he knows, at a given time? Why should such an undifferentiated mass of information count as a single theory of anything? Why should the indefinitely many scraps of information that we all pick up count as part of any theory? If this is a theory, then we need a different word to refer to what used to be called 'theories', such as Newton's theory of gravity or Maxwell's electromagnetic theory. Quine's use of 'theory' creates a mere semblance of uniformity between the clutter of beliefs of Everyman and scientific theories, and wrongly suggests that the sum of our common or garden knowledge, as well as our commonsensical beliefs, constitute a theory.

## 3. EPISTEMOLOGY DENATURALIZED

Quine held Carnap's Russellian attempt to reduce our knowledge of physical objects and of other people's states of mind to the 'unowned data' of elementary experience to be the culmination of traditional epistemology (FSS 13). Its failure, in his view, invited the abandonment of traditional epistemology. But no such conclusion follows. There were more variants of foundationalism than Carnap's reductivism, and *contra* Quine, there was more to traditional epistemology than foundationalism.

First, I doubt whether Carnap would have accepted Quine's description of his enterprise as an attempt to establish a 'first philosophy' that is extra-scientific and that provides a philosophical foundation of science. I suspect that he would be right. Moreover, one main reason Quine gave for the failure of Carnap's enterprise was that Carnap assumed propositional as opposed to holistic verification. But in fact Carnap quite explicitly cleaved to a holistic view of theory

verification and falsification, and that in a manner far closer to Duhem's modest holism than Quine's.[10]

Secondly, it is true that Descartes, who used the Aristotelian term 'first philosophy', was proposing a metaphysical, extra-scientific, foundation for science. The foundation he proposed involved not only our knowledge of our own thoughts (*cogitationes*) regarding how things sensibly appear to us to be, but also truths of reason known by the natural light, knowledge of simple natures and a proof of the existence of God. But Descartes's foundationalism was in no sense reductive, and the failure of Carnapian reductivism is irrelevant to Cartesian foundationalism. Lockean foundationalism is different again, and is akin to inference from the data of sense, i.e. ideas, to the best explanation for such data. This too was not reductive, and its latter-day heirs (e.g. J. L. Mackie's account) are untouched by the failure of Carnapian reductivism. So the failure of Carnapian reductivist foundationalism in itself does not even imply the bankruptcy of other foundationalist enterprises, let alone the abandonment of traditional epistemology.

What *was* wrong with Cartesian and Lockean foundationalism was not reductivism (since they were not reductive), but the foundationalist base. This objection applies equally to Carnapian reductivism. The thought that the foundations of our knowledge of the external world lie in our knowledge of our own subjective experience, in how things subjectively seem to us to be or in the ideas with which the mind is furnished by experience, is misconceived. For the attempted philosophical justifications of 'our knowledge of the external world' in the foundationalist tradition involved radical misuses of a wide range of verbs of sensation, perception, and observation, and their manifold cognates. Foundationalism presupposes the intelligibility of a logically private language. Moreover, it misconstrues the actual role of sentences of the form 'It seems to me just as if things are so' or 'It appears to be a so and so' and of the sentence-forming operators 'It seems that…', 'It appears

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[10]  Duhem's holism was confined to scientific theory properly speaking, and unlike Quine, he did not hold that 'most sentences apart from observation sentences, are theoretical' (EN 80). In his view, it is only sentences containing theoretical terms (e.g. 'voltage', 'electromotive force', 'atmospheric pressure') that face the tribunal of experience together with the whole theory to which they belong. He did not think that external objects are theoretical entities or that names of common or garden objects and properties are theoretical terms (see P. Duhem, *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1954), pp. 147f.). Carnap's holism regarding falsification of theory is patent in *The Logical Syntax of Language* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1937), p. 318.

to be…', and 'It looks as if…'. Finally, the reductive base presupposes objective spatio-temporal reference and simultaneously makes it impossible. Foundationalism (reductive and non-reductive alike) is not, as Quine asserted, an intelligible failure for holistic reasons, it is an unintelligible endeavour rooted in Cartesian misconceptions about knowledge, doubt, and certainty, and in mistaken Cartesian strategies of combating scepticism on ground of its own choosing—namely, the quest for certainty.

So, foundationalism is to be rejected. But why should the naturalization of epistemology follow? The only reasons Quine gave are inadequate.

(1) Admitting that naturalized epistemology is 'a far cry from old epistemology', he held that it is an 'enlightened persistence' in the original problem (RR 3). The original problem was: how can we justify our claims to know anything extra-mental? The allegedly enlightened transform is: how does it come about that we know anything extra-somatic? That question, Quine held, is a question for psychology, which will explain how sundry irritations of our surfaces ultimately result in true statements of science. While Carnap attempted to show a complex pattern of *logical* relations between basic statements concerning the given ('unowned data'), 'autopsychological' statements, statements about material objects, and 'heteropsychological' statements, naturalized epistemology will be concerned with elaborating *causal links* between the 'input' of sensory stimuli and the output of statements describing the external world. The proper task of scientific epistemology must perforce be allocated to future neuropsychology. Quine himself sketched the bare behaviourist outline of what he took to be input and output, in what must be the most scintillating display of armchair learning-theory bereft of empirical evidence since Locke—but that was no contribution to naturalized epistemology.

It is mistaken to suppose that there is anything enlightened about substituting a causal question about the ontogeny of human knowledge for conceptual questions concerning the general categories of knowledge and the kind of warrant or justification that non-evident beliefs may require. The question of what *warrants* a claim to knowledge concerning objective particulars is not resolved by an explanation of what are the causal processes necessary for attaining any such knowledge. Indeed, the causal investigation *presupposes* that sceptical qualms can be laid to rest, but are no substitute for laying them to rest.

   The sceptical qualms that, in Quine's view, are the source of tradi-
tional epistemology, arise, according to him, from 'science' (empirical
knowledge), and in answering them, he claims, we are free to appeal
to scientifically established fact (agreed empirical knowledge) with-
out circularity (RR 3). That is mistaken. One may grant that Carte-
sian *methodological* scepticism, in at least some of its stages in which
it is merely local, presupposes that we do have empirical knowledge
(e.g. that square towers in the distance appear round, or that we
sometimes dream). But global scepticism (e.g. Academic scepticism)
that denies that we can attain objective knowledge springs from the
thought that we have no criterion of truth to judge between sensible
appearances. Citing a further appearance, even one apparently rati-
fied by 'science', i.e. common experience, will not resolve the puzzle-
ment. Similarly, we have no criterion to judge whether we are awake
or asleep, since anything we may come up with as a criterion may
itself be part of the content of a dream. So the true sceptic holds that
we cannot know whether we are awake or asleep. We are called upon
to show *that* he is wrong and *where* he has gone wrong. To this enter-
prise neither common sense nor the sciences can contribute anything.
No sceptical qualm can be resolved by adducing scientific knowledge
or fragments of common knowledge—since anything we may adduce
will call forth the response that it could, for all we know, be part of
the content of a dream. What we have to do is to show that the scep-
tic's arguments and presuppositions are awry.
   Quine rarely ventured into the territory of epistemological scepti-
cism, but when he did, his forays lacked penetration. To scepticism
about dreaming, he responded: 'I am ruling the dream hypothesis out
in the sense that I dismiss it as very unlikely.'[11] To the updated variant
of dream-scepticism that one may be a brain in a vat, Quine responded:
'I would think in terms of naturalistic plausibility. What we know, or
what we believe…is that it would really be an implausible achieve-
ment, at this stage anyway, to rig up such a brain. And so I don't think
I am one.'[12] I don't think that Quine quite understood the point. Scepti-
cism is not a challenge to one of the planks in Neurath's boat. It is a
challenge to the logical possibility of seafaring. And it cannot be
answered by invoking 'scientific' facts or common sense, or by pointing
out that boats do actually go to sea. (One cannot resolve Zeno's para-

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[11] See R. J. Fogelin, 'Aspects of Quine's Naturalized Epistemology', in Gibson, Jr.,
ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Quine*, p. 43.
[12] Fogelin, 'Aspects of Quine's Naturalized Epistemology', p. 44.

dox by observing that Achilles can overtake the tortoise by putting one foot down after another.) The problems it raises are purely conceptual ones, and they are to be answered by purely conceptual means—by clarification of the relevant elements of our conceptual scheme. This will show what is awry with the sceptical challenge itself.

(2) The second reason Quine gave for opting for naturalized epistemology is that 'If all we hope for is a reconstruction that links science to experience in explicit ways short of translation, then it would seem more sensible to settle for psychology. Better to discover how science is in fact developed and learned than to fabricate a fictitious structure to a similar effect' (EN 78). But the failure of Carnapian reductive foundationalism has no such implication. If the reductive enterprise of displaying our knowledge of objects to be a logical construction out of our knowledge of our subjective experiences fails, the first thing that is called for is a *philosophical* investigation into the question addressed. (The deepest problems of philosophy are buried in the presuppositions of the questions. The greatest mistake in philosophy is commonly the attempt to answer, rather than to challenge, the question.) We need to probe the reasons for undertaking the foundationalist project in the first place. This investigation may reveal that the questions were based on fundamental misconceptions. Kant declared it a 'scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us…must be accepted merely on faith', and accordingly offered a proof of 'the objective reality of outer intuition'.[13] Quine held that the question of whether there is an external world is a bad question.[14] But, like Hume, he claimed that the question that replaces it is 'whence the strength of our notion that there is an external world?' (SLS 217). In his view, the existence of external objects in the physical world is an efficient posit. 'In a contest for sheer systematic utility for science', he wrote, 'the notion of physical object still leads the field' (WO 238). The epistemological enterprise of trying to justify our knowledge of the external world in the face of sceptical challenges is to be replaced by a

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[13] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xl, fn. *a*.

[14] The existence of the external world, or 'that there is evidence of external objects in the testimony of our senses', cannot significantly be denied, according to Quine. The reason he gave for this claim was that 'to do so is simply to dissociate the terms "reality" and "evidence" from the very applications which originally did most to invest those terms with whatever intelligibility they may have for us' (SLS 216). Elaboration of the latter argument would, I think, lead Quine straight down the road of a priori conceptual analysis.

scientific explanation of the causal processes that lead to our positing objects and acquiring our 'theory of the world'. That, I have suggested, is mistaken: we do not 'posit' objects, and we do not have a 'theory of the world'. Other philosophers have argued sapiently that it is the sceptic's demand for justification of 'our knowledge of the external world' that needs to be scrutinized and its presuppositions exposed. Its cogency will then be shown to be defective.[15]

It *is* correct that foundationalism, in its various forms, is misconceived. But it is incorrect to suppose that once it is rejected, there is nothing left for epistemology to do than become scientifically naturalized. It would be a mistake to suppose that the sole driving force behind traditional epistemology was scepticism. Indeed, ancient epistemology did not centre on scepticism until the emergence of the Academic scepticism of Archesilaus and Carneades. Aquinas, one of the greatest of medieval writers on epistemology, had no interest in sceptical questions. There is a great deal more to epistemology than answering the sceptic. Contrary to what Quine asserted, what prompted epistemology was not to see how evidence relates to theory. It was, above all, to explain what knowledge is, what its characteristic marks are and what difference there is between knowledge and opinion. It was to investigate the scope and limits of knowledge; to determine whether humanity can achieve any absolute knowledge or whether all knowledge is relative; to discover whether pure reason alone can attain any knowledge of the world; to decide whether absolute certainty is obtainable in any of the forms of knowledge attainable by us; to show whether moral knowledge is attainable, whether mathematical knowledge is more certain than perceptual knowledge, whether we can know that God exists or whether the soul is immortal. And so on.

Early epistemology focused on the different sources of knowledge and on the different kinds of knowledge that we can attain. Despite Quine's avowals to the contrary, there are radical differences between mathematical knowledge and empirical knowledge, between self-knowledge and knowledge of others, between knowledge of objects and knowledge of scientific theory (e.g. of electricity, magnetism, ionic theory), between the natural and the social sciences, and so forth. It would be a mistake to suppose that one can glibly say, knowledge

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[15]  See, for example, P. F. Strawson, *Individuals* (Methuen, London, 1959), chap. 1. Carnap, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, for various reasons, held related views on the question of validating our knowledge of the 'external world'.

is knowledge—it merely has different objects. Knowledge that Jack is taller than Jill is *categorially* unlike knowledge that red is darker than pink. To know the difference between right and wrong is *radically* unlike knowing the difference between Coxes and Bramleys. To know what I want is *epistemologically* unlike knowing what you want, and to know what I think about a given question is not akin to knowing what you think. Could naturalized epistemology contribute to the clarification of such conceptual differences? I think not—any more than mathematics naturalized could explain the differences between natural numbers and signed integers, or between rationals and irrationals.

Traditional epistemologists want to know whether knowledge is true belief and a further condition (as was supposed in the mid-twentieth century), or whether knowledge does not even imply belief (as was previously held). We want to know when knowledge does and when it does not require justification. We need to be clear what is ascribed to a person when it is said that he knows something. Is it a distinctive mental state, an achievement, a performance, a disposition, or an ability? Could knowing or believing that *p* be identical with a state of the brain? Why can one say 'he believes that *p*, but it is not the case that *p*', whereas one cannot say 'I believe that *p*, but it is not the case that *p*'? Why are there ways, methods, and means of achieving, attaining, or receiving knowledge, but not belief (as opposed to faith)? Why can one know, but not believe who, what, which, when, whether, and how? Why can one believe, but not know, wholeheartedly, passionately, hesitantly, foolishly, thoughtlessly, fanatically, dogmatically, or reasonably? Why can one know, but not believe, something perfectly well, thoroughly, or in detail? And so on—through many hundreds of similar questions pertaining not only to knowledge and belief, but also to doubt, certainty, remembering, forgetting, observing, noticing, recognizing, attending, being aware of, being conscious of, not to mention the numerous verbs of perception and their cognates. What needs to be clarified if these questions are to be answered is *the web of our epistemic concepts*, the ways in which the various concepts hang together, the various forms of their compatibilities and incompatibilities, their point and purpose, their presuppositions and different forms of context dependency. To this venerable exercise in connective analysis, scientific knowledge, psychology, neuroscience, and self-styled cognitive science can contribute nothing whatsoever.

Quine rarely paid attention to such questions. But when he did his answers were *not* essays in naturalized epistemology, i.e. parts of

empirically testable theories, but patently traditional philosophical claims. They were, equally patently, inadequate. I shall give three examples.

'Knowledge', Quine wrote, 'connotes certainty' (Q 109), and rightly hesitated before limiting knowledge to the absolutely certain. But knowledge does not connote certainty at all. Rather, it is improper to *claim to know* something if one has *doubts*. A legitimate claim to knowledge presupposes absence of doubt (not presence of certainty), but knowledge as such does not (we do not fail doctoral students in their oral examinations because of their uncertainty).

Faced with the Gettier counter-examples to the definition of 'knowledge' as justified true belief, Quine did not even try to show how they can be accommodated within an alternative account of knowledge,[16] but rather concluded: 'I think that for scientific or philosophical purposes the best we can do is give up the notion of knowledge as a bad job and make do with its separate ingredients. We can still speak of belief as being true, and of one belief as firmer or more certain, to the believer's mind, than another' (Q 109). One wonders what philosophical or scientific purposes Quine had in mind. In truth, the concept of knowledge is not an isolated dangler in our epistemic conceptual scheme that can be excised without collateral damage. Did Quine also want to give up the notion of memory (knowledge retained) as a bad job? Are neuroscientists investigating clinical aphasic syndromes following lesions to Wernicke's and Broca's areas in the cortex not investigating aspects of memory? Did Quine also wish to give up the notions of perceiving that *p* (in its various forms), being aware, being conscious, recognizing, noticing that *p*—all of which imply knowing that *p*? These cognitive concepts too are integral to cognitive neuroscience and experimental psychology.

If we are to give up the notion of knowing, at least we retain that of believing. What, according to Quine, is that? 'Belief', he claimed, 'is a disposition' (Q 18). The dispositions of which he holds the mind to consist 'are dispositions to behave, and those are physiological states'. Hence he ended up, he said, 'with the so-called identity theory of the mind: mental states are states of the body' (MVD 94). But this too is mistaken. Beliefs (i.e. believings) are not dispositions to behave. Dispositions are essentially characterized by what they are dispositions to do; beliefs are essentially characterized by reference to what

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[16] One way in which this can be done is displayed in O. Hanfling's *Philosophy and Ordinary Language* (Routledge, London, 2000), chap. 6.

is believed to be so. To explain human voluntary behaviour by reference to a disposition is to explain it by reference to the nature, temperament or personal traits of a person. To explain A's voluntary V-ing by reference to his belief that $p$ is not to explain it by reference to his traits of character; but nor is it to explain it by reference to his behavioural habits, tendencies, or pronenesses (which is what Quine meant by 'disposition'). It is to explain it in terms of what A took as his reason for V-ing. To know that A has a certain disposition (in Quine's sense) is to know that he is prone or liable to act or react in certain ways in response to certain circumstances. But one can know that A believes that $p$ without knowing what, if anything, A is prone or liable to do. The utterance 'I believe that $p$ but it is not the case that $p$' is a kind of contradiction. But 'I have a disposition (I tend, am inclined or prone) to V, but it is not the case that $p$' is not a contradiction of any kind. If A believes that $p$, then it follows that A is right if $p$ and wrong if not-$p$, but no such thing follows from A's having a behavioural disposition, tendency, or proneness.

Quine compounds his errors by identifying a disposition with its vehicle, claiming that the human dispositions are physiological states of the body or brain. But a disposition, no matter whether an inanimate one or a human one, is never identical with its vehicle, any more than an ability is identical with the structures that make it possible.[17] The horsepower of the car is not beneath its bonnet, the intoxicative power of whisky is neither lighter nor heavier than the constituent alcohol that is its vehicle, but it is not the same weight either; and the ability of a round peg to fit into a round hole is not round. So even if it were true that believing that $p$ is a disposition, proneness, or tendency, it would not follow that it is identical with a neural state. Maybe some specific neural state is a necessary condition for someone's believing that $p$, but his believing that $p$ could not be identical with that neural state. Otherwise, *inter alia*, one would be able to say 'I believe that $p$ (referring thus to one's neural state), but it is not the case that $p$'.

In short, the alternative to Carnapian reductionism is not naturalized epistemology. Naturalized epistemology does not answer the great questions of epistemology and is no substitute for their answers. However, the question remains: does Quine's project make sense?

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[17] See A. J. P. Kenny, *Will, Freedom and Power* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1975), pp. 10f., and *The Metaphysics of Mind* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989), pp. 72f.

## 4.  QUINE'S PROJECT

Having rejected Carnap's project, Quine declared that epistemology simply becomes a chapter of psychology that studies knowledge acquisition:

epistemology still goes on, though in a new setting and a clarified status. Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz. a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input—certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance—and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the 3 dimensional external world and its history. The relationship between the meagre input and the torrential output is a relationship that we are prompted to study for somewhat the same reasons that always prompted epistemology; namely, in order to see how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one's theory of nature transcends any available evidence.   (EN 83)

This passage purports to be a fanfare for the new subject of naturalized epistemology. But in fact it is no more than another song of the sirens.

   Quine saw a continuity between the traditional question of how we can attain knowledge of the 'external world' and naturalized epistemology because, in his view, 'the stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anyone has to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world' (EN 75). He explained that his concern was 'with the relation of scientific theory to its sensory evidence', that by 'sensory evidence' he meant 'stimulation of sensory receptors' (EC 24), and that he was concerned with 'how this sensory input *supports…physical theory*' (EC 24, emphasis added). In general, he contended, 'It is our understanding, such as it is, of what lies beyond our surfaces, that shows our evidence for that understanding to be limited to our surfaces' (SLS 216). But this is mistaken. The stimulation of sensory receptors is not evidence that a person employs in his judgements concerning his extra-somatic environment, let alone in his scientific judgements. My evidence that there was bread on the table *is that there are crumbs left there*. That there are crumbs on the table is something I see to be so. But that I see the crumbs is not my evidence that there are crumbs there. Since I can see them, I need no evidence for their presence—it is evident to my senses. That the cones and rods of my retinae fired in a certain pattern is not my

evidence for anything—neither for my seeing what I see, nor for what I see, since it is not something of which I normally have any knowledge. For *that something* is so can be someone's evidence for something else only if he knows it.

Quine contends that 'science itself tells us that our information about the world is limited to irritations of our surfaces, and then the epistemological question is in turn a question within science: the question how we human animals can have managed to arrive at science from such limited information' (FME 72). But itches and tickles apart, neither the 'irritations of our surfaces' nor that they occur are the *information* we have to go on in making judgements about our surroundings; they are at most causal conditions for making such judgements. That something plays some causal role in belief formation does not make it evidence for the belief formed. Light waves impinging on our retinae and sound waves agitating our eardrums are mischaracterized as 'unprocessed information', since they are not information at all. What you tell me when you tell me that *p*, what I read when I read that *p*, may be information, but the stream of photons and sound waves are not. The proposition that *p* may then be a premise in my reasoning inductively to the conclusion that *q*, but neither the stream of photons involved in my reading that *p* nor a proposition describing this stream of photons could be my evidence that *q*. Science does *not* tell us that all our information about the world is limited to irritations of our surfaces. What science (neuroscience) may tell us is that, were there no 'irritations', we should acquire no information.

Since Quine described the input in terms of irradiations, etc., the output (i.e. the output that interests him—expressions of what he called 'theory') should be characterized in terms of sound waves. If the output is to be described in terms of intelligible verbal assertions and theorizings, the input should be described in terms of intelligible perceptions of our environment and the intelligible utterances of our teachers and fellow human beings. Otherwise it would make no sense to claim, either truly or falsely, that the resultant 'theory' *outstrips* the evidence.

The patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies to which we are subject are not *meagre* at all. What would Quine want to make them less meagre—more noise and flashing of lights? More heat and less cold? Would that make our acquisition of knowledge and its verbal expression more intelligible or less surprising to Quine? Similarly, the 'output' is not *torrential*—save in the case of compulsive chatterboxes. Any appearance of paucity in input relative to output

is generated by describing the input in terms of radiation and then describing the output in terms of descriptive utterance rather than in terms of sound waves. For only thus described will any *disparity* strike one. The questionable claim that theory must be underdetermined by evidence should not be confused with the quite different and patently false claim that the evidential basis for theory is stimulation of sensory receptors.

The psychology of learning studies how children acquire knowledge in response to what they see and hear; it studies the *practices* they are taught and their consequent responses in *acting* on their environment—not how they make assertions in response to irritations of their nerve endings. Quine's behaviourist conception of input of irradiation (stimulus) and output of descriptive, theoretical, utterances (response) is cousin to the classical empiricist conception of corpuscularian input and output of judgements about the world—for it remains a picture of knowledge *receptivity*, not of knowledge *acquisition*. But the child is not merely an observer, he is also an *actor*. He is not only a spectator, receiving neural stimuli and emitting sound waves, perceiving his environment and describing it, but also an inveterate and incurable *experimenter*—acting upon the objects he finds around him in order to discover what they do when pushed or pulled, dropped, or thrown. From very early on, the child not only perceives his own body, but also controls it, moves, and moves his limbs, at will. In touching, handling, and manipulating things, perception and *action* are united. The child learns to see himself as an active self-moving agent in a world of intentional agents—and that is neither a theory nor a posit.[18] These features are absent from Quine's tale—to its detriment.

Quine's envisaged discipline is supposed to track the neural stimuli of irradiations of our surfaces, through the brain, to the point of the verbal expression of judgements concerning reality, ranging from such utterances as 'The cat is on the mat' to 'The DNA molecule is a double helix'. Such a science does not exist. Whether or not it is conceivable, it is not necessary for the purposes of explaining the genesis and development of theory. What renders the discovery of the structure of DNA intelligible is *not* and *could not* be a description of the irradiation of the surfaces of Crick and Watson and the consequent neural events in their brains, no matter how necessary these may

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[18] This theme was explored by Stuart Hampshire in his *Thought and Action* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1959). See P. M. S. Hacker, 'Thought and Action: A Tribute to Stuart Hampshire', *Philosophy* 80 (2005), 175–97.

have been to their triumphant insights. But one can read the well-documented accounts of the *history* of the actual discoveries and so find out how they came about.

Even if such an imaginary science were to come into existence, it would not be able to shed any light on the evidential support for theories. If one wants to understand the relation between evidence and theory in this case, one had better study the papers disclosing the discovery of the structure of DNA and providing the evidential grounds for it. No description of irradiations of nerve endings *could* shed light on the evidential reasoning that *warranted* Crick and Watson's theory.

This imaginary science is no substitute for epistemology—it is a philosophical cul-de-sac. It could shed no light on the nature of knowledge, its possible extent, its categorially distinct kinds, its relation to belief and justification, and its forms of certainty. Nor is the investigation of the relationship between irradiations and cognitive utterances a subject for philosophers. For philosophy is neither continuous with existing science, nor continuous with an imaginary future science. Whatever the post-Quinean status of analyticity may be, the status of philosophy as an a priori conceptual discipline concerned with the elucidation of our conceptual scheme and the resolution of conceptual confusions is in no way affected by Quine's philosophy.[*]

# Analytic Philosophy: What, Whence, and Whither?

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Analytic philosophy was the predominant philosophical movement of the twentieth century. Almost from its inception, it was allied with the spirit of rationality and science, and was dedicated to the overthrow of speculative metaphysics and the eradication of philosophical mystification. Methodologically it was associated with the employment of the new logic as a source of philosophical insight and, somewhat later—after the linguistic turn in philosophy—with a principled and meticulous attention to language and its use. Analytic philosophy flourished in various forms from the 1910s until the 1970s. In the last quarter of the century, however, it lost its distinctive profile, retaining the name of analytic philosophy largely through its genealogy, the foci of concern which it shares with the antecedent tradition, and its contrastive juxtaposition with certain forms of continental philosophy.

It is surprising to discover that although the terms 'analysis', 'logical analysis', and 'conceptual analysis' were widely used from the inception of the movement to characterize the methods of philosophy advocated, the name 'analytic philosophy' became current relatively late. It was used in the 1930s,[1] but does not seem to have caught on. Von Wright[2] has conjectured that it entered currency partly through the post-war writings of Arthur Pap, who published his *Elements of Analytic Philosophy* in 1949, *Analytische Erkenntnistheorie* in 1955,

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[1] For example, Ernest Nagel, 'Impressions and Appraisals of Analytic Philosophy in Europe', *Journal of Philosophy* 33 (1936), 29–53.

[2] G. H. von Wright, 'Analytic Philosophy: A Historico-Critical Survey', in *The Tree of Knowledge and Other Essays* (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1993), p. 41 n. 35. I am much indebted to this insightful essay.

and *Semantics and Necessary Truth: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* in 1958. Certainly it is striking that the two most influential post-war anthologies of writings in early analytic philosophy, Feigl and Sellars's *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* in America (1949) and Flew's *Logic and Language* in Britain (1951), did not invoke the name 'analytic philosophy' in either their titles or introductions. The purported successor to Flew's anthology, published in 1962, was Butler's *Analytic Philosophy*.

There is little consensus on how to characterize analytic philosophy. There are numerous books and essays identifying the basic principles and doctrines of logical atomism and Cambridge analysis of the inter-war years. There was a veritable flood of publications, including a manifesto, specifying and defending the principles and doctrines of logical positivism. And there was no shortage of writings emanating from Oxford in the post-war years explaining and defending the methods of what Strawson called 'logico-linguistic' or 'connective' analysis.[3] But a short persuasive answer to the question 'What is analytic philosophy?' is hard to find. There is a broad consensus, but not a uniform agreement, on who are to be deemed analytic philosophers. Moore and Russell, the young Wittgenstein, Broad, Ramsey, Braithwaite, early Wisdom, and Stebbing from the Cambridge school of analysis can surely not be excluded from the list, nor can the leading members of the Vienna Circle, such as Schlick, Hahn, Carnap, Neurath, Feigl, Waismann, and affiliates such as Reichenbach or Hempel from the Berlin Society for Scientific Philosophy. In a narrow sense of 'analytic philosophy' one might draw the line here. The rationale for this would be the general commitment to analysis, reduction, and logical construction. But it would, I think, be ill-advised for two reasons. First, there are more important continuities than differences between the latter two phases and post-war philosophy.[4] Secondly, most of the post-war philosophers at Oxford, such as Ryle, Ayer, Kneale, Austin, Grice, Strawson, Hart, Hampshire, Pears, Quinton, Urmson, and Warnock thought of themselves as analytic

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[3] P. F. Strawson introduced the term 'connective analysis' in *Scepticism and Naturalism: Some Varieties* (Methuen, London, 1985), p. 25 and elaborated further in *Analysis and Metaphysics: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992), chap. 2.

[4] This, to be sure, is a matter of judgement. As Wittgenstein observed, 'When white changes to black some people say, "It is essentially still the same." And others, when the colour darkens the slightest bit, say, "It has changed completely"' (MS 125, under 18/5/1942; my translation).

philosophers and characterized their work as conceptual or linguistic analysis and, later, as analytic philosophy. So too did many other philosophers working in what they conceived of as a similar tradition. Many of Wittgenstein's pupils, such as von Wright, Malcolm, and Black would rightly be characterized as analytic philosophers, even though they differed in important respects both among themselves and relative to many of the Oxford figures. And if they are to be included, then so is the later Wittgenstein, whose influence upon Oxford analytical philosophy was second to none.[5] Nevertheless, there is disagreement on how analytic philosophy is most illuminatingly to be characterized. And there has been surprisingly little written on the phenomenon of analytic philosophy as a whole, by contrast with the extensive publications on constituent streams within the flood-waters of this philosophical movement.[6]

## 2. CHARACTERISTIC MARKS OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

An analytic account of analytic philosophy will try to elaborate a list of characteristic marks. The starting points are readily identifiable: however it is to be characterized, the notion of analysis must find a place in the description. So too must the ideas of *logical* and of *linguistic* analysis. But what these amount to is problematic, and

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[5]  Von Wright remarks that 'No one could deny that Wittgenstein has been of decisive importance to the development of analytic philosophy, both as author of the *Tractatus* and as author of the *Investigations*. Whether Wittgenstein himself can rightly be called an analytic philosopher is quite another question. Of the *Investigations* one might say that its spirit is alien and even hostile to the typically "analytic" approach. The *Tractatus*, on the other hand, may in some ways be regarded as a paragon of the analytic trend in philosophy, especially in the form this trend had assumed with Russell and was later carried forward by the members of the Vienna Circle. The later Wittgenstein exhibits some affinities to Moore' (von Wright, 'Analytic Philosophy: A Historico-Critical Survey', p. 32). It is true that between 1929 and 1932 Wittgenstein came to repudiate classical analysis altogether. But it is noteworthy that in *The Big Typescript* he wrote: 'A sentence is completely logically analyzed when its grammar is laid out completely clearly' (BT 417). Accordingly, 'analysis' in philosophy now means giving the grammatical rules for the use of the expression in question, clarifying its manifold connections with related concepts and its differences in respect of others. With this shift, the turn from classical to 'connective' analysis was effected (see below).

[6]  I have tried to fill this lacuna, with special reference to Wittgenstein's contribution to analytic philosophy, in P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996). The present essay draws extensively upon this source.

whether they suffice, on any single interpretation and in any form of combination, to encompass the analytic movement in twentieth-century philosophy in all its diversity is debatable. It may be that no set of features constitutes characteristic marks of analytic philosophy. For it may be that it is best viewed as a family-resemblance concept. It is also possible that a *purely* analytic account is not the most fruitful way to look at the analytic movement' — that it must be conceived both analytically, as a family-resemblance concept, and historically, as a distinctive twentieth-century stream of ideas.

## (a) Analysis

As its name betokens, analytic philosophy is concerned with the analysis of complexes into their constituents. But different forms of analytic philosophy were produced according to the different conceptions of the complexes which were to be the subject of such analysis. For on some conceptions, it was reality, or the facts of which it was thought to consist, that was to be subjected to philosophical analysis. Accordingly, analysis was thought to disclose the ultimate constituents of the world and the most general forms of the facts of which it consists (Russell); alternatively it was held to reveal the composition of mind-independent concepts and propositions which constitute objective reality (Moore). On other conceptions, it was human thought and language that was the matter of analysis, the upshot of which was supposed to reveal the isomorphism of thought, language, and reality (the *Tractatus*). On yet others, it was language alone that was to be subjected to analysis, either the logical syntax of the language of science (Carnap) or, in a very different sense of 'analysis', ordinary (natural) language (Oxford analytic philosophy). Moreover, different kinds of analysis emerged, depending upon whether analysis was conceived to terminate in simple unanalysable constituents or not. Accordingly, atomistic ontological analysis characteristic of logical atomism with its reductive and constructive aspirations—which aspirations it shared with many of the logical positivists—may be contrasted with the more holistic 'connective' linguistic analysis after 1945, which eschewed reduction and logical construction.

It would be absurd to sever the notion of analytic philosophy from the conception of analysis that gives it its name. But the mere concept of analysis characterizes Descartes's metaphysics, with its commitment to the analysis of objects in reality into simple natures, no less than classical British empiricism, with its commitment to the analysis of complex ideas into simple ideas derived from experience. If the

idea of atomistic or reductive analysis is the net with which to capture analytic philosophers, it will, to be sure, catch Moore and Russell, but it will also collect philosophers of the heroic age of modern philosophy whom one would not obviously wish to classify as analytic philosophers. And it will exclude the later Wittgenstein and his followers, as well as post-war analytic philosophers in Oxford and elsewhere. Alternatively, one may stretch the notion of analysis to the point of including connective analysis characteristic of post-war analytic philosophy. That may legitimately be done, but only at the cost of robbing the conception of analysis of early twentieth-century philosophy of its distinctive content. The idea of analysis alone is too elastic, capable of too many divergent, indeed conflicting, interpretations to be a useful litmus test by itself.

## (b) Anti-psychologism in logic

Analytic philosophy is sometimes characterized by reference to anti-psychologism. What analytic philosophy achieved was the severance of logic from psychology and epistemology. Thus Kenny, following Dummett, has argued that

Frege disentangled logic from psychology, and gave it the place in the forefront of philosophy which had hitherto been occupied by epistemology. It is this fact which, more than any other, allows Frege to be regarded as the founding father of modern analytic philosophy.[7]

It is true that Frege waged a successful campaign against the infection of logic with psychology. He was not the first in Germany to do so, having been anticipated by Krug, Bolzano, and Lotze. And in Britain, Spencer and Jevons pursued a similarly anti-psychologist line, as did the absolute idealists, from whom the early Moore and Russell derived their anti-psychologism. Indeed, the absolute idealists had been sufficiently successful in disinfecting logic that Moore and Russell felt no need to press the point, and could take it for granted that logic was not a branch of psychology and that the laws of logic are not descriptions of regularities of human thinking. A further aspect of anti-psychologism was the repudiation of genetic analysis as pursued by the British empiricists' investigations of the origins of ideas. This campaign had been initiated by Kant, and it purged philosophy of the futile debate about innate ideas that characterized seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century empiricism and rationalism.

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[7] A. J. P. Kenny, *Frege* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1995), p. 210.

It is true that anti-psychologism in logic has been a feature of much of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, one should be cautious. It is noteworthy that the later Wittgenstein remarked that 'The opinion that the laws of logic are the expression of "thinking habits" is not as absurd as it seems' (MS 120, Vol. XIV: 12). Erdmann was wrong to think that, *even though it is unintelligible to us*, there might be beings who reason according to a rule of affirming the consequent or who reject the law of identity. But then so too was Frege wrong to concede this ('This impossibility of our rejecting the law in question hinders us not at all in supposing beings who do reject it') and equally wrong to suppose that if there are such beings, then we know that they are wrong and that we are right.[8] Both psychologicians and anti-psychologicians such as Frege failed to appreciate that the laws of thought partly *define* what counts as thinking, reasoning, and inferring. One cannot mean what we do by 'not', 'if…, then…', 'the same' and also repudiate the law of non-contradiction or of identity, or also accept affirming the consequent as a rule of inference. One cannot *reject* the inference rule of *modus ponens* and still be held to be reasoning and thinking. Indeed it is far from obvious whether anything would count as a principled *rejection* of this inference rule. Psychologism failed to do justice to the internal relations between logical truths, rules of inference ('laws of thought'), and thinking, reasoning, and inferring on the one hand and the meanings of the logical connectives on the other. But Fregean and Russellian anti-psychologism suffered from the same flaw. Moreover, psychologism, Wittgenstein argued, was not so far from a truth as it seems:

The laws of logic are indeed the expression of 'thinking habits' but also of the habit of *thinking*. That is to say they can be said to show: how human beings think, and also *what* human beings call 'thinking'…

The propositions of logic are 'laws of thought' 'because they bring out the essence of human thinking'—to put it more correctly: because they bring out, or show, the essence, the technique, of thinking. They show what thinking is and also show kinds of thinking. (RFM 89f.)[9]

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[8] G. Frege, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic* [1893], trans. M. Furth (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964).

[9] For a more detailed discussion of Wittgenstein's account of logical necessity in general and his attitude to psychologism and to Frege's anti-psychologism in particular, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, 2nd revised edition (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009), pp. 241–370, from which the above remarks are derived.

Erdmann was in a sense right to claim that the laws of logic are an expression of how we think, as the rules of chess might be said to be an expression of how we play chess. But he failed to see that they are also partly constitutive of what we call 'thinking', as the rules of chess are constitutive of the practice of playing chess (that playing in accordance with *these* rules is what is *called* 'playing chess'). And Frege's Platonist conception of the laws of logic as descriptions of relations between abstract objects likewise failed to grasp this.

So over-hasty characterization of analytic philosophy in terms of early anti-psychologism may be precipitate. It distorts or even screens out the later Wittgenstein, who had little sympathy with either protagonist. To be sure, he did not conceive of the laws of logic as mere descriptions of how people think and reason. He thought that there was a grain of truth in *both* Fregean anti-psychologism and in Erdmann's psychologism, as well as a heap of falsehood and confusion. But he seems to have viewed the familiar Fregean form of anti-psychologism (with its Platonist alternative to Erdmann's conception) as the more dangerous or deceptive, presumably because its flaws are less obvious.

Be that as it may, anti-psychologism in logic is both too thin and too negative a characterization of analytic philosophy. And when we turn to the positive conception of logic propounded in this century, we find a proliferation of conflicting views. Frege and Russell (prior to *The Analysis of Mind*), to be sure, eschewed psychologism in logic. Both conceived of the propositions of logic as *generalizations* (neither thought that a proposition of the form '$p$ v $\sim p$' is a proposition of logic; rather it is '$(p)$ $(p$ v $\sim p)$' that is a proposition of logic). Frege espoused an extreme Platonism, conceiving of the laws of logic as descriptions of sempiternal relations between abstract entities, namely, thoughts. Russell thought of them as the most general truths about the universe, a priori in as much as they are known independently of knowledge of any particular empirical facts, yet presupposing 'logical experience' or 'acquaintance with logical objects'. The *Tractatus* argued that the propositions of logic are senseless—limiting cases of propositions with a sense, which present (show) the logical scaffolding of the world (TLP 6.124). Logic, the young Wittgenstein argued, is transcendental (TLP 6.13). Members of the Vienna Circle conceived of the propositions of logic as vacuous tautologies, but unlike Wittgenstein, they thought of them as consequences of arbitrary conventions for the use of the logical operators. In short, there is no positive characterization of the propositions of logic which

would have commanded the assent of all analytic philosophers—and that is not surprising, for a large part of the endeavour of analytic philosophy in the first half of the century was to explain the nature of the necessary truths of logic and its laws, and the decades-long debate that ensued experimented with many different solutions to the problem.

## (c) Logical analysis

A corollary of (b) was that analytic philosophy is characterized by displacing epistemology by logic as the foundation of philosophy. Accordingly analytic philosophy is distinguished by the fact that it overthrew the Cartesian model of philosophy which gave epistemology primacy over all other branches of philosophy. This characterization is unsatisfactory. On the Cartesian model, it is metaphysics rather than epistemology which is the foundation of philosophy and thereby also of all knowledge. Cartesian *method* gave epistemic considerations primacy, since the Cartesian objective was the reconstruction of all knowledge upon secure foundations of resistance to hyperbolic doubt. But that motive was likewise the moving force behind Russell's philosophical thought in all phases of his philosophical career, and he similarly invoked the Cartesian method of doubt. Moreover, it cannot be said that members of the Vienna Circle held that logic, in some reasonably narrowly defined sense, is the foundation of philosophy, let alone of all knowledge (since, *inter alia*, they denied that philosophy yields any *knowledge* at all). It was not a tenet of philosophers at Oxford after the Second World War, whose interest in logic was limited and who, like the later Wittgenstein, denied that philosophy is a cognitive discipline and that philosophy has a hierarchical structure.

It is, however, true that from its inception twentieth-century analytic philosophy differed from its classical seventeenth-century forebears in eschewing psychological analysis and replacing it with logical analysis. The invention of the new logic by Frege, Russell, and Whitehead both set an agenda for analytic philosophy in the first decades of the century and supplied a method. The agenda was to clarify the nature and status of the propositions and laws of logic, to elucidate the relations between Frege's concept-script or Russell's logical language of *Principia* and natural languages, and to cast light upon the relation of both natural language and the logical calculus to thought and reality. This task was pursued through subsequent decades, and divergent solutions to the questions were offered. The questions pre-

occupied many (but not all) philosophers of the analytic movement. But their answers are various and conflicting. The method (exemplified by Russell's theory of descriptions) consisted in invoking the apparatus of the propositional and predicate calculi in the endeavour to analyse the subject matter at hand. But, as we have seen, that subject matter was differently conceived by different philosophers at different times, varying from the facts and forms, thought, the language of science, to natural language. And logical analysis thus conceived certainly did not play any role in the work of most Oxford analytic philosophers or of the later Wittgenstein, who held that '"mathematical logic" has completely deformed the thinking of mathematicians and philosophers, by setting up a superficial interpretation of the forms of our everyday language as an analysis of the structures of facts' (RFM 300). On the other hand, it continued to play a prominent role in the work of Quine, who conceived of the symbolism of modern logic as a canonical notation which will perspicuously disclose our ontological commitments. But Quine, as I shall later argue, was the primary subverter of analytic philosophy.

### (d)  A philosophical account of thought by means of a philosophical account of language

It is indeed no coincidence that German philosophers commonly refer to analytic philosophy as 'sprach-analytische Philosophie'. It is evident that analytic philosophy has been bound up with a sharpened awareness of the relevance to philosophy of close attention to language and its use. That much is platitudinous, and does not distinguish analytic philosophy from Socrates' Way of Words or from Aristotle's methodical attention to 'what is said'. Attempts to go further, however, are perilous. One such attempt was made by Dummett, who claimed that there are three tenets 'common to the entire analytic school'.[10] First, that the goal of philosophy is the analysis of the structure of thought; secondly, that the study of thought is to be sharply distinguished from the study of thinking; thirdly, that the only proper method of analysing thought consists in the analysis of language.

   The claim that the goal of philosophy is the analysis of the structure of thought is unclear. Presumably what is intended is that the aim of philosophy is the investigation of the inner structure of, and the logical relations between, thoughts. Assuming that 'thoughts' signify

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[10]  M. A. E. Dummett, 'Can Analytic Philosophy be Systematic, and Ought it to Be?', in *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Duckworth, London, 1978), p. 458.

what we think when we think that things are thus-and-so, it is far from obvious that what we think *has* a structure (save metonymically), any more than what we fear, expect, suspect, or suppose when we fear, expect, suspect, or suppose that things are thus-and-so has a structure. It is the *expression* of thoughts (fears, expectations, suspicions, or suppositions) that can be said to have a structure.

Even if these qualms are disregarded, further worries remain. The fundamental questions of axiology are such as 'What is the nature of goodness?', 'What are the different kinds or varieties of goodness and how are they related?', or 'What distinguishes ethical goodness and how is it related to moral reasons for action?' The fundamental questions in the philosophy of mathematics are such as 'What are numbers?', 'What is the nature of the necessity which we associate with mathematical truth?', or 'What is the relation of mathematical truth to proof?' Such questions, which could be multiplied within axiology or the philosophy of mathematics and similarly exemplified for any other branch of philosophy, cannot be subsumed (by analytic philosophers alone) non-trivially under the heading of 'the philosophy of thought' or be said to be uniquely answered according to analytic philosophy by the analysis of thought.

The thesis that the only proper way to analyse the structure of thought is to analyse language would not have commanded the assent of either Moore or the early Russell.[11] And the later Wittgenstein would surely have denied any sense to the idea that thoughts have a structure. The sentences that are used to express thoughts do, to be sure, have a structure. But a cardinal principle of the later Wittgenstein was to dismiss sentential forms or structures, including the forms and structures of the predicate calculus, as misleading. Forms of words are not misleading because the surface structure conceals something that can be called the deep structure given by the predicate calculus (with further improvements), as he had argued in the *Tractatus*, but rather because the surface form does not reveal the use, because sentences with totally different uses may have exactly the same form or structure.[12] The forms of the predicate calculus are no less misleading than the forms of natural language.

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[11] Although I take it, on authority, that it would have gained the assent of Hamann and Nietzsche (see H. Philipse, 'Husserl and the Origins of Analytical Philosophy', *European Journal of Philosophy* 2 (1992), 167).

[12] True, in the *Investigations* §664 Wittgenstein introduced the contrast between surface and depth grammar. But the metaphor of depth grammar, which was subsequently to be taken up by generative grammarians, was singularly inappropriate for

### (e) The linguistic turn

A different characterization of analytic philosophy is also to be found in Kenny and Dummett. Kenny suggests that

If analytic philosophy was born when the 'linguistic turn' was taken, its birthday must be dated to the publication of *The Foundations of Arithmetic* in 1884 when Frege decided that the way to investigate the nature of number was to analyze sentences in which numerals occurred.[13]

This suggestion too does not seem helpful. If the context principle signals the linguistic turn in philosophy, then that turn was taken by Bentham in 1816, when he wrote in *Chrestomathia*

By anything less than an entire proposition, i.e. the import of an entire proposition, no communication can have place. In language, therefore, the *integer* to be looked for is an entire proposition—that which Logicians mean by the term logical proposition. Of this integer, no one part of speech, not even that which is most significant, is anything more than a fragment; and in this respect, in the many worded appellative, part of speech, the word *part* is instructive. By it, an intimation to look out for the integer, of which it is a part, may be considered as conveyed.[14]

This states clearly what is commonly taken to have first been stated by Frege's dictum that 'A word has a meaning only in the context of a sentence'. Bentham's analysis of fictions, in particular of legal fictions, is, in this sense, an exemplary case of analytic philosophy. For Bentham decided that the way to investigate the nature of obligations, duties, and rights was to analyse or, more perspicuously, to find paraphrastic equivalents of, sentences in which the words 'obligation', 'duty', or 'a right' occur. To this end he devised his methods of phraseoplerosis, paraphrasis, and archetypation. But it would be

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Wittgenstein's purposes. What he meant thereby was the diametrical opposite of what Chomsky had in mind. The depth grammar of an expression is not something hidden from view to be dug up by analysis (as in the *Tractatus*), but rather something in full view—if one will but look around and remind oneself of the general pattern of use of the expression. A topographical metaphor here would have been more appropriate than the geological one.

[13] Kenny, *Frege*, p. 211. Here, Kenny is following M. A. E. Dummett, *Origins of Analytic Philosophy* (Duckworth, London, 1993), p. 5. The expression 'the linguistic turn' was made popular by an eponymous anthology on linguistic philosophy edited by Richard Rorty (*The Linguistic Turn* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967)), who attributes the phrase to Gustav Bergmann's *Logic and Reality* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964). It has assumed a significance that goes beyond its originators' intentions.

[14] J. Bentham, *Chrestomathia* [1816] (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983), p. 400.

eccentric to date the birth of analytic philosophy to the publication of *Chrestomathia*.

   There is no doubt that the context principle is of great importance in the history of analytic philosophy, as is Russell's theory of incomplete symbols (which was likewise anticipated by Bentham's theory of fictions). By itself, however, it signifies merely one analytic method among others. Moreover, there is no good reason to associate the context principle with the so-called 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. I shall argue below that the linguistic turn postdates the rise of analytic philosophy, and is to be associated with the *Tractatus* and subsequent developments of analytic philosophy under its influence.

## (f)  The primacy of the philosophy of language

Rightly convinced that a distinctive feature of much twentieth-century analytic philosophy is its preoccupation with language and linguistic meaning, and, I hope, persuaded that analytic philosophy cannot be fruitfully identified by reference to (d) or (e), one might try a further gambit. One might suggest, as Sluga does, that the characteristic tenet of analytic philosophy is 'that the philosophy of language is the foundation of all the rest of philosophy'.[15] But this too is unacceptable. On the one hand, Mauthner, whom one would hardly count as an analytic philosopher, argued that all philosophy is a critique of language. On the other hand, both Moore and Russell explicitly denied that their forms of analysis were concerned with analysis of language, let alone with a subject called 'the philosophy of language'. We have already noted that the later Wittgenstein held philosophy to be 'flat' and denied that any part of philosophy has a primacy relative to any other part. A brief glance at the post-war Oxford philosophers reveals no commitment to the thesis of the primacy of philosophy of language. If Ryle counts as an analytic philosopher of psychology, if Hart counts as an analytic philosopher of law, if Austin, in his investigations of speech-acts, counts as an analytic philosopher of language and, in his investigations of perception or of other minds, as an analytic epistemologist, then it cannot be

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[15]  H. Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980), p. 2. Like Kenny, Sluga, too, is following in Dummett's footsteps. Dummett claimed that 'we may characterize analytic philosophy as that which follows Frege in accepting that the philosophy of language is the foundation of the rest of the subject' ('Can Analytic Philosophy be Systematic, and Ought it to Be?', p. 441).

argued that analytic philosophers in general hold that philosophy of language is the foundation of the rest of the subject.

## (g)  The rejection of metaphysics

It might be suggested that analytic philosophy is characterized by its repudiation of metaphysics. It rejected the intelligibility of synthetic a priori truth, and denied that pure reason alone can attain any knowledge of reality. It is true that the repudiation of speculative metaphysics played a role in some of the phases of analytic philosophy. This was certainly true of the Cambridge analysts of the inter-war years, of the Vienna Circle, and of most, if not all, of the Oxford analytic philosophers. But this does not distinguish analytic philosophy from other forms. First, as Wittgenstein remonstrated to Schlick apropos the Manifesto of the Vienna Circle, there was nothing new about 'abolishing metaphysics': Hume had waved that banner vigorously; so too had Kant (as far as transcendent metaphysics is concerned) and Comte. Secondly, analytic philosophy in its early phases, viz. the pluralist Platonism of the early Moore and Russell, logical atomism of middle Russell and the *Tractatus*, and Cambridge analysis of the inter-war years were surely committed to metaphysical theses concerning the ultimate nature of reality and the logical structure of the world. They rejected the speculative metaphysics of absolute idealism, only to replace it by various forms of putatively analytic metaphysics of facts and their constituents. The *Tractatus* denied that there can be any metaphysical propositions, insisting that any attempt to state metaphysical truths would necessarily result in nonsense. But this was not because Wittgenstein thought that there are no metaphysical truths; on the contrary— most of the propositions of the *Tractatus* are self-consciously futile attempts to state such truths, even though *stricto sensu* they can only be shown. Just as Kant had drawn the bounds of knowledge in order to make room for faith, so too the young Wittgenstein drew the limits of language in order to make room for ineffable metaphysics.

Repudiation, indeed passionate repudiation, of metaphysics characterizes above all the Vienna Circle. Young Oxford before and mature Oxford after the war had no more sympathy for metaphysics than the Circle,[16] but did not share its crusading zeal. As Ryle

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[16]  P. F. Strawson, in *Individuals* (Methuen, London, 1959), obviously had sympathy for the metaphysical endeavour in a Kantian spirit, and revived the idiom of metaphysics in an analytic mode. But it is merely the letter and not the spirit of metaphysics as traditionally conceived that is here revived. See below, p. 233.

remarked, 'Most of us took fairly untragically its demolition of Metaphysics. After all we never met anyone engaged in committing any metaphysics; our copies of *Appearance and Reality* were dusty; and most of us had never seen a copy of *Sein und Zeit*.'[17] The later Wittgenstein rejected the aspirations of all forms of metaphysics, though not on the grounds that there are no synthetic a priori propositions or that all necessary truths are analytic.

If the above list of philosophers of the analytic movement is reasonable, then it seems clear that none of the seven features serves to capture all in the net save at the cost of distortion. Nor will any combination of these features into a set of conditions individually necessary and jointly sufficient do the trick. It might be argued that the concept of analytic philosophy should be viewed as a family-resemblance concept.[18] What unites philosophers of the analytic school would accordingly be an array of overlapping similarities of method and doctrine, none of which is individually necessary for being an analytic philosopher. This may be defensible. But first, one would capture in one's net a whole host of philosophers, from Aristotle to Hume and Bentham, in addition to participants in the twentieth-century analytic movement. That may be an acceptable price to pay. Pap certainly thought so, remarking that

A history of analytic philosophy, if it should ever be written, would not have to begin with the twentieth century. It could go all the way back to Socrates, since the Socratic 'dialectic' is nothing else but a method of clarifying meanings, applied primarily to moral terms. Again, much of Aristotle's writings consists of logical analysis.…It is especially the so-called British empiricists, Locke, Hume, Berkeley and their descendants, who practiced philosophy primarily as an analytic method. To be sure, much of what they wrote belongs to psychology, but if that is deducted there still remains a conscientious preoccupation with questions of meaning full of lasting contributions to analytic philosophy.[19]

Secondly, family-resemblance concepts typically evolve over time, new fibres being added to the rope in response to new discoveries or inventions, to the shifting pattern of concepts and conceptual relations, to perceived analogies and similarities of novel phenomena to

[17] G. Ryle, 'Autobiographical', in O. P. Wood and G. Pitcher, eds., *Ryle: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Doubleday, New York, 1970), p. 10.

[18] See Philipse, 'Husserl and the Origins of Analytical Philosophy', p. 168.

[19] Arthur Pap, *Elements of Analytic Philosophy* (Macmillan, New York, 1949), pp. vii–viii.

the familiar, to new ways of looking at things, and to human needs. The term 'analytic philosophy' is a fairly new one. It is a philosopher's term of art. There is no point in trying to follow Wittgenstein's advice apropos family-resemblance: 'look and see!' (PI §66), i.e. examine how the expression in question is in fact used. For the term does not have a well-established use that commands general consensus. Here we are free to mould the concept as we please; indeed, arguably not free, but required to do so. The moot question is: for what purpose do we need the notion of analytic philosophy? If its primary use is to characterize a movement and its methods in twentieth-century philosophy, then construing it *simply* as a family resemblance concept will arguably rob it of its primary usefulness as a historical category in as much as it would collect much more in its net than the analytic movement of our century. Moreover, if we were deliberately to mould it in the form of a family-resemblance concept, it would be incumbent upon us to determine reasons why these and these features characterize the family and not those. And that would be no easy task, nor one with respect to which one could hope to attain a ready consensus.

## 3. A HISTORICAL CATEGORY: A SYNOPTIC VIEW OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Analytic philosophy in the twentieth century had numerous precursors, from Socrates and Aristotle, to Descartes and Leibniz, from Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, to Kant, Bentham, and Frege.[20] Most

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[20] Frege did indeed invent the new logic, defended a Platonist form of anti-psychologism, and practised the logical analysis of arithmetic. In this sense he was a precursor of the analytic school, as Russell acknowledged. But he did not influence Moore and had little influence on Russell save in respect of his definition of the ancestral relation (Russell remarked that the definition of numbers to which he was led 'had been formulated by Frege sixteen years earlier, but I did not know this until a year or so after I had re-discovered it' (Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1959), p. 70)). Frege did not take the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy and he did not extend logical analysis beyond the confines of the philosophy of mathematics to epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, etc. as Russell did. He patently did not think that the philosophy of language is the foundation of the whole of philosophy (including philosophical psychology, ethics, political and legal philosophy, aesthetics, and the philosophy of religion—about which he wrote nothing). On the contrary, he insisted that 'It is the business of the logician to conduct a ceaseless struggle against…those parts of language and grammar which fail to give untrammelled expression to what is logical' (Frege, 'Logic', in *Posthu-*

(but not all) of the threads out of which the tapestry of analytic philosophy was woven can be traced back into the more or less remote past. What is most distinctive about the tapestry are the ways in which the various threads are interwoven and the character of the designs. These altered over time, some threads being either abandoned and replaced by new ones or differently used, and others becoming more prominent in the weave than hitherto, some patterns dominating one period, but sinking into the background or disappearing altogether in later periods. It is, I suggest, as a dynamic historical movement that analytic philosophy is best understood.[21]

It was born in Cambridge at the turn of the century with the revolt against absolute idealism. Moore and Russell took anti-psychologism for granted—in this respect they had no quarrel with their idealist teachers. The main bones of contention were the dependence of the object of knowledge upon the knower, the monism of the Absolute, the coherence theory of truth, the unreality of relations, and the doctrine of internal relations. Moore and Russell repudiated idealism— both Berkeleian and Kantian—insisted upon the independence of the object of knowledge from the knower, defended a correspondence theory of truth, rejected the doctrine of the internality of all relations, and affirmed the reality and objectivity of relations. Their criticism of the absolute idealists was not based upon empiricist principles, and their methodology was not inspired by fidelity to ordinary language. On the contrary, they embraced an exuberantly pluralist, Platonist realism. In place of the synthesis characteristic of neo-Hegelian idealism they espoused analysis. Moore conceived of himself as engaged in the analysis of mind-independent concepts, which, when held before the mind, could be seen to be either composite or simple. If composite, the task of the philosopher was to specify the constituent concepts into which the complex concept can be analysed, and to

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*mous Writings* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979), p. 6). The logician must try to liberate us from the fetters of language ('Logic', p. 143), to break the power of the word over the human mind, to free thought 'from that which only the nature of the linguistic means of expression attaches to it' (Frege, *Conceptual Notation* [1879] (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972), Preface), for 'It cannot be the task of logic to investigate language and determine what is contained in a linguistic expression. Someone who wants to learn logic from language is like an adult who wants to learn how to think from a child…Languages are not made to match logic's ruler' (Frege, *Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1980), pp. 67f.). It is not natural language which, according to Frege, gives us the key to the analysis of propositions (thoughts) but rather his invented conceptual notation.

[21] A similar point could be made about another great movement in European culture, namely, romanticism.

elucidate how it is related to and differentiated from other concepts. He distinguished between knowing the meaning of an expression, knowing its verbal definition and knowing its use on the one hand, and knowing the analysis of its meaning on the other. He construed knowing the meaning of an expression as having the concept before one's mind, and distinguished that from being able to analyse the meaning, i.e. being able to say what its constituents are and how it is distinguished from other related concepts. According to his official doctrine, it is possible to analyse a concept (or the meaning of a term) without attending to its linguistic expression.

Russell's conception of analysis differed in certain respects. It was rooted in the work of nineteenth-century mathematicians such as Weierstrass, Dedekind, and Cantor, whose writings on concepts pertaining to the calculus, such as continuity and limit, were a model for Russell. Like Moore, he conceived of the matter of analysis as objective and non-linguistic. As his work on the foundations of mathematics proceeded, his conception of analysis became increasingly logical, without however being conceived to be linguistic. The logical language of *Principia* became the primary tool to penetrate the misleading forms of natural language and to disclose the true logical forms of the facts. But the theory of descriptions and theory of types exerted pressure, to which Russell only reluctantly and slowly succumbed, to concede greater importance than he had hitherto done to the investigation of language. The method of analysis of incomplete symbols, of which definite descriptions were one kind, was, like Bentham's theory of fictions, in effect a method of sentential paraphrase. And the theory of types lent itself readily to transformation into a fragment of a theory of logical syntax that owes no homage to reality.

The differences between Russell and Moore were deeper than this. Moore was convinced that we do know innumerable facts with absolute certainty. Any philosophy that challenges these is to be rejected as false, for our certainty regarding such facts far outweighs the certainty of any philosophical argument. We know that the world has existed for a long time, that we have a body, that there exist material things which are independent of our mind, that we often could have acted differently from the way we actually acted, that we do really know many truths, etc. What we do not know is the *analysis* of such facts. We know what these propositions mean, and we know them to be true, but we do not know the analysis of their meanings. The task of philosophy is the analysis of meanings (meanings being conceived to be mind-independent and language-independent entities). Russell's philosophy, by contrast, was a Cartesian quest for certainty. We do

not know in advance where that quest will lead us, and there is no reason to suppose that it will leave intact the humdrum certainties that Moore cited. Indeed, he remarked impishly, 'The point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as to not seem worth stating and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it.'[22] Mathematics was Russell's paradigm of certain knowledge, and his investigation into the foundations of mathematics was motivated by the need to vindicate the truth and indubitability of the Peano axioms for arithmetic by deriving them from pure logic. Having executed that task to his satisfaction in *Principia*, Russell turned to the analysis of our knowledge of the external world, hoping to do for empirical knowledge in general what he conceived himself to have done for arithmetic, i.e. set it upon secure foundations. Hence his espousal of Ockham's razor: not to multiply entities beyond necessity (in order to avoid giving hostages to fortune) and his advocacy of the 'supreme principle of scientific philosophy': wherever possible to substitute logical constructions for inferred entities. Reduction and logical construction were the hallmarks of his two post-war works, *The Analysis of Mind* and *The Analysis of Matter*. He conceived of philosophy as a form of scientific knowledge, differing from the special sciences only in its greater generality. Its task is the search for truth. To ensure that what is disclosed is true, Cartesian doubt is a primary tool.

The differences between Russell and Moore, as von Wright points out,[23] represent a duality at the roots of analytic philosophy. That duality later becomes a polarity within analytic philosophy in general, manifest in the differences within the Vienna Circle between Carnap and Schlick, and among Oxford philosophers between Ayer and Austin. These poles can even be held to represent, as Waismann argued,[24] two fundamentally different attitudes of the human mind. The one is primarily concerned with truth, the other with meaning; the one with the enlargement of knowledge, the other with the deepening of understanding; the one with establishing certainty in the face of sceptical fears, the other holding sceptical challenges to pre-existing

[22] Bertrand Russell, 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', in John G. Slater, ed., *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 8 (Allen & Unwin, London, 1986), p. 172.

[23] Von Wright, 'Analytic Philosophy: A Historico-Critical Survey', pp. 26–30.

[24] F. Waismann, 'Was ist logische Analyse?', *Erkenntnis* 8 (1939–40), 265; von Wright, 'Analytic Philosophy: A Historico-Critical Survey', p. 26.

certainties as definitely rejectable (as Moore argued) or indeed incoherent (as Wittgenstein argued); the one with emulating the achievements, progress, and theory construction of the sciences, the other with the pursuit of clarity as an end in itself.[25]

The first phase of analytic philosophy evolved from the exuberant pluralist Platonism of the turn of the century to the emergence of the logical atomism (which constitutes its second phase) of the 1910s. This was in part owing to Russell's attempt to apply the methods of analysis of *Principia* to empirical knowledge in general, and in part to the young Wittgenstein—whose impact upon Russell was both devastating and inspiring—and to the masterpiece he wrote between 1913 and 1919: the *Tractatus*. Four features of the *Tractatus* are noteworthy for present purposes.

First, it brought to its culmination the analytic, decompositional drive in modern European philosophy which originated with Descartes and Leibniz no less than with Locke and Hume. This conception dominated Cambridge analysis of the inter-war years, and, in a modified fashion (without the metaphysics of facts and simple objects, and without the independence thesis for atomic propositions), it moulded the logical positivist conception of analysis. It also brought to full fruition the metaphysics of logic that had flowered at the hands of Frege and Russell. Within the framework of its metaphysical system, the picture theory of thought and proposition provided the most powerful resolution thus far offered to the problems of the intentionality of the proposition which had dominated philosophical thought since Descartes. It gave a metaphysical explanation of how it is possible for a mental phenomenon, namely, thinking a thought, to have a content which is what is the case if it is true, but still to have a content if it is false. Corresponding to this, it explained how a proposition can be false yet meaningful. In general, it explained the intentionality of signs by reference to the intrinsic intentionality of mental acts of thinking and meaning, and by reference to the isomorphism of thought and what it depicts.

Secondly, it definitively destroyed the Fregean and Russellian conceptions of logic and replaced them with a quite different one. The *Grundgedanke* of the *Tractatus* is that there are no logical constants.[26]

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[25] See Wittgenstein's 'Sketch for a Foreword', probably written for the *The Big Typescript* (CV 6f.).

[26] This thesis has two aspects, only one of which, i.e. the denial that the logical operators are names of logical entities, is touched upon here. The other is that formal concepts (also denominated 'logical constants' by Russell) such as fact, object,

The logical connectives are not names, neither of logical objects nor of special logical functions (concepts or relations). Propositions are not names, neither of truth-values nor of complexes. The propositions of logic are neither descriptions of relations between abstract objects nor descriptions of the most general facts in the universe. The mark of a logical truth is not absolute generality, for logical truths are not generalizations of tautologies, but tautologies *simpliciter*. The mark of a logical truth is necessity, and the necessity of a logical proposition is a consequence of being a degenerate case of a truth-functional combination of propositions. In a logical proposition elementary propositions are so combined by truth-functional operators as to be true no matter what truth-values they possess. The price paid for such guaranteed truth is vacuity. Propositions of logic are senseless, have zero sense, and say nothing at all about the world. But every tautology is a form of a proof. Although all the propositions of logic say the same thing, viz. nothing, different tautologies differ in as much as they reveal different forms of proof. It is a mark of a proposition of logic that in a suitable notation it can be recognized from the symbol alone. This clarifies the nature of the propositions of logic and their categorial difference from empirical propositions. It also makes clear how misleading was the Frege/Russell axiomatization of logic and appeal to self-evidence to underpin their chosen axioms. Those axioms are not privileged by their special self-evidence. They are tautologies no less than the theorems. They are not essentially primitive, nor are the theorems essentially derived propositions, for all the propositions of logic are of equal status, viz. vacuous tautologies. Therefore there is no such thing as logical knowledge as Frege and Russell supposed, for to know the truth of a tautology is to know nothing at all about reality. Neither logic nor mathematics constitutes examples of genuine knowledge a priori. This paved the way for what the Vienna Circle termed 'consistent empiricism'.

Thirdly, 'the *Tractatus* articulated a revolutionary conception of philosophy, which moulded the future of analytic philosophy. Philosophy, on this conception, is categorially distinct from science (TLP 4.111). There are no hypotheses in philosophy. It does not describe the most general truths about the universe as Moore and Russell supposed, nor does it describe relations between abstract entities as Frege thought. It does not describe the workings of the human mind as the

concept, proposition, relation are not material concepts and cannot occur as unbound variables in a well-formed proposition with a sense. Hence Russell's claim, that 'There are dual relations' is a proposition of logic describing an absolutely general fact about the universe, is misconceived.

British empiricists and the psychologicians supposed, or investigate the metaphysical presuppositions of experience and describe them in synthetic a priori propositions as Kant thought. There are no metaphysical truths that can be expressed in propositions, for the only expressible necessities are the vacuous tautologies of logic. Any attempt to express metaphysical truths inevitably results in the violation of the bounds of sense. The *Tractatus* itself is the swansong of metaphysics, for its propositions are nonsense. There are no philosophical propositions, hence no philosophical knowledge. Philosophy is not a cognitive discipline. Its contribution is not to human knowledge, but to human understanding. The task of philosophy is the activity of logical clarification (TLP 4.112). This task is to be executed by the logical analysis of problematic propositions, which will, *inter alia*, expose metaphysical assertions as nonsense (TLP 6.53). This conception of philosophy was to be pivotal for both the Cambridge analysts and the Vienna Circle. It constituted, Schlick was later to write, 'the decisive turning-point' in philosophy.

Fourthly, the *Tractatus* introduced, although it did not complete, the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. This marks a dramatic break with Frege, Moore, and Russell. 'All philosophy', Wittgenstein boldly announced, 'is a "critique of language"' (TLP 4.0031). The turn is manifest in the following claims of the book. (a) The limits of thought are to be set by setting the limits of *language*, i.e. by determining the boundary between sense and nonsense. (b) The positive programme for future philosophy is the logico-linguistic analysis of propositions, i.e. *sentences* with a sense. (c) The negative task for future philosophy is the demonstration that metaphysical assertions endeavour to say something which by the intrinsic nature of *language* cannot be said. (d) The key to Wittgenstein's endeavours lay in the clarification of the essential nature of the *propositional sign* (TLP 4.5). (e) The logical investigation of 'phenomena', i.e. the application of logic (which was programmatically heralded in the book though not undertaken until 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' in 1929), was to be effected by the logical analysis of the *linguistic descriptions* of the phenomena of experience. (f) The elucidation of logical truth, the greatest achievement of the book, was effected by an investigation of *symbolism*. The 'peculiar mark of logical propositions is that one can recognize that they are true from the symbol alone, and this fact contains in itself the whole philosophy of logic' (TLP 6.113). I have stressed that the *Tractatus* introduced the 'turn', but did not complete it. It was only completed when the linguistic orientation of the book was severed from its foundations in an ineffable metaphysics of symbolism (e.g.

that only simple names can represent simple objects, that only facts can represent facts, that a proposition is a fact). This was effected only in the 1930s by Wittgenstein's repudiation of the metaphysics of the *Tractatus* which cut logic loose from any metaphysical and (in Wittgenstein's idiosyncratic use of the term) 'metalogical' foundations, and, under his influence, by the Vienna Circle.

In the aftermath of the First World War the stream of analytic philosophy split into two branches, Cambridge analysis and logical positivism. Cambridge analysis had its source in Moore, Russell, and the *Tractatus*. Although Moore published little, his teaching in Cambridge was influential, and his preoccupation with the sense-datum theory of perception, which was shared by Broad, gave Cambridge analysis one of its distinctive themes.[27] So too did his meticulous style of analysis, and his insistence that the business of philosophy is the analysis of meanings. However, as a result of the linguistic turn, what Moore meant by 'meaning' was transformed by the younger generation from an intuitive contemplation of objective concepts into a self-conscious endeavour to analyse the linguistic meaning of expressions. Russell, though no longer at Cambridge, was no less influential. Braithwaite remarked in 1933:

In 1919 and for the next few years philosophic thought in Cambridge was dominated by the work of Bertrand Russell…the books and articles in which he developed his ever-changing philosophy were eagerly devoured and formed the subject of detailed commentary and criticism in the lectures of G. E. Moore and W. E. Johnson.[28]

The *Tractatus*, Keynes wrote in 1924, 'dominates all fundamental discussions at Cambridge since it was written' (RKM 116). It was a major influence upon the young Ramsey, Braithwaite, and Wisdom. Cambridge analysis moved in the direction of a programme of reductionism and logical construction. Some accepted the ontology of facts (though not of simple objects) and sought to analyse the logical forms of facts and to show that certain facts are no more than logical constructions out of others. This programme culminated in Wisdom's articles 'Logical Constructions', published in *Mind* 1931–3. The viability of logicism remained high on the agenda at Cambridge, where

[27] Another characteristic theme was induction and probability. The Cambridge stimulus was Keynes's *Treatise on Probability* (Macmillan, London, 1921). Broad, Johnson, Ramsey, Wrench, Jeffreys, and, at the end of the 1930s, von Wright all contributed to the debate.

[28] R. B. Braithwaite, 'Philosophy', in H. Wright, ed., *Cambridge Studies* (Nicolson and Watson, Cambridge, 1933), p. 1.

Ramsey bent his efforts to remedying its flaws. At the time of his early death in 1930, he had come to agree with Wittgenstein that it was irremediable. The non-cognitive conception of philosophy appalled the older and appealed to the younger generation. Traditional speculative metaphysics, of which, Braithwaite remarked, McTaggart's *The Nature of Existence* (1927) afforded 'an awful example', was repudiated. For Wittgenstein had shown that 'we can be certain beforehand that a system professing to derive by logically necessary implications from logically necessary premises interesting empirical propositions is wrong somewhere'.[29] The revolutionary conception of philosophy introduced by the *Tractatus* inspired the extensive debate in Britain throughout the 1930s concerning the nature of philosophy, the character of analysis, and its relation to logic and language. From 1930 onwards Wittgenstein himself was lecturing in Cambridge and uprooting much of his earlier thought. This turned Cambridge analysis in a different direction, away from classical reductive analysis and logical construction and towards the methods of the *Investigations*, which were to dominate British philosophy after the Second World War.

The second stream of analytic philosophy in the inter-war years arose in Vienna, whence it spread to Germany, Poland, the Scandinavian lands, and later to Britain and the US. Here Wittgenstein's influence was even greater than in Cambridge prior to 1929, partly no doubt due to his contact with members of the Circle between 1927 and 1936, and partly due to the close attention which the Circle paid to the book.[30] They abandoned logical atomism with its ontology of simple objects and facts, rejected the doctrine of saying and showing together with the attendant ineffable metaphysics, and repudiated the thought that every possible language necessarily has the same logical syntax which is isomorphic with the logical forms of the facts. But they welcomed the claims that the only necessity is logical and that logical truths are vacuous tautologies. They accepted Wittgenstein's account of the logical connectives and the thesis of extensionality. Five major themes characterize logical positivism, all of which were deeply influenced by Wittgenstein, sometimes as a result of misinterpretation.

First, the Circle's conception of philosophy was derived from the *Tractatus*. Philosophy is not a cognitive discipline, and it is wholly

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[29] Braithwaite, 'Philosophy', p. 23.
[30] Their weekly meetings for the two academic years of 1924 and 1926 were dedicated to a line-by-line reading of the book.

distinct from science. Its positive use, according to Carnap, is to clarify meaningful concepts and propositions and to lay the foundations of science and mathematics. Traditional philosophical problems are either pseudo-problems or, after due elucidation, empirical. Philosophy is the elucidation of the logical syntax of the language of science.

Secondly, the Circle advocated the demolition of metaphysics. Here they accepted the *Tractatus* claim that there can be no metaphysical propositions, while rejecting the idea of ineffable metaphysical truths that can only be shown but not said.

Thirdly, they embraced the Principle of Verification, which derived from discussions with Wittgenstein in 1929–30, and held verifiability to be a criterion of empirical meaningfulness.

Fourthly, they aimed to uphold 'consistent empiricism', denying that reason can be a source of knowledge that is both synthetic and a priori. The traditional stumbling blocks for empiricism were truths of logic, arithmetic and geometry, and metaphysics. In their view it was the *Tractatus* account of logical truth that rendered consistent empiricism possible. But their account of logical truth, unlike Wittgenstein's, was conventionalist. Where Wittgenstein thought of the truths of logic as flowing from the essential bipolarity of the proposition, the Circle construed them as consequences of arbitrary conventions of symbolism, i.e. as being true in virtue of the meanings of the logical connectives. They accepted Hilbert's conventionalist account of geometry, and thought (wrongly) that Wittgenstein held propositions of arithmetic to be reducible to vacuous tautologies.

Fifthly, they adopted the thesis of the unity of science and were committed to a reductionist programme of displaying all cognitively significant propositions as deducible from the basic propositions constituting 'the given'. The thesis goes back to Descartes, the programme to Russell, but the thought that all propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions (the thesis of extensionality) was derived from the *Tractatus*. Assuming elementary propositions to be verifiable in immediate experience, this gave support to the programme.

By the mid-1930s opinion in the Circle was polarizing into a Carnap–Neurath wing of orthodox positivism as laid out in the Manifesto and a Schlick–Waismann wing, the latter being deeply influenced by Wittgenstein's later philosophical ideas which were developing in opposition to the *Tractatus*. The intellectual unity of the Circle was starting to crumble under internal criticism. Its physical unity, however, was destroyed by the rise of Nazism. Its primary legacy was in the US after the Second World War, where many of the members of

the Circle had settled and moulded the shape of post-war American philosophy.

The war brought philosophy to a hiatus. Within a few years after 1945, the main centre of analytic philosophy became Oxford. Its leading figures were Ryle and Austin, with a powerful supporting cast in Waismann, Grice, Hart, Hampshire, and Berlin as well as their juniors such as Strawson, Urmson, and later Hare, Pears, Quinton, and Warnock. The dominant influence was the later Wittgenstein, whose ideas, prior to the posthumous publication of the *Investigations*, were conveyed to Oxford by Waismann and Paul, and later by Anscombe. But many notable figures, such as Austin, Kneale, and Grice were impervious to them. Oxford analytic philosophy, unlike the Vienna Circle, was not a 'school'. It published no manifesto, and cleaved to few orthodoxies. Though Wittgenstein's influence was great, his ideas were assimilated rather than cultivated. Oxford analytic philosophy consisted of diverse and sometimes conflicting views, which only ignorance can subsume under the misleading heading of 'ordinary language philosophy'.

Nevertheless, some common agreements can be identified. Metaphysics was repudiated. For a while the very term was on the Index. When it was returned to currency by Strawson in *Individuals* (1959), it had been well laundered. For descriptive metaphysics had no pretensions to attain transcendent knowledge or to describe the logical structure of the world. It confined itself to the description of the most general features of our conceptual scheme, i.e. of our language or any language in which a distinction can be drawn between experience and its objects. Thus conceived, descriptive metaphysics was a connective analytical investigation into the most general structural concepts such as objective particular, person, experience, space, and time.

Analysis, as previously conceived, and hence too the programmes of reduction and logical construction which had prevailed during the inter-war years, were rejected. But the idiom of analysis, now denominated 'linguistic' or 'conceptual' analysis, was retained. What this amounted to was the description, for purposes of philosophical elucidation, of the interconnectedness of related concepts, of their implications, compatibilities, and incompatibilities, of the conditions and circumstances of use of philosophically problematic expressions. Such analysis does not terminate in logically independent elementary propositions, or in simple, unanalysable names or concepts. It terminates in the clarity that is obtained with respect to a given question when the network of concepts has been traced through all its relevant

reticulations. Strawson's term 'connective analysis' felicitously indicates the method.

What was subjected to analysis, in this loose and non-reductive sense, was the use of words in sentences. The Moorean conception of concepts was repudiated, and talk of concepts was held to be justified as an abstraction from the use of words. It was not generally held that all philosophical problems are problems *about* language, or that they are all pseudo-problems arising *out of* language, let alone that they are all to be resolved by devising an 'ideal language'. Few, if any, believed that the apparatus of the predicate calculus provided the key to unlock the puzzles of philosophy, let alone that it constitutes the depth grammar of any possible language. But it would have been generally agreed that a prerequisite for the solution or resolution of any philosophical problem is the patient and systematic description of the use of the relevant terms in natural language where they are at home (which may or may not be the technical vocabulary of a special science).

Although the therapeutic aspect of Wittgenstein's later conception of philosophy was not generally accepted—at least not as the whole tale—his insistence that philosophy is discontinuous with science, that it is *sui generis*, a contribution to human understanding rather than an extension or addition to human knowledge, would, with varying degrees of qualification, have commanded wide consensus. Although his idiosyncratic use of the term 'grammatical' found no following, his claim that 'grammatical statements' are a priori, translated into the Oxford idiom of 'conceptual truths', did. Philosophical problems, Ryle remarked, are problems of a special sort, not problems of an ordinary sort about special entities—such as ideas, Platonic senses or concepts, logical or intentional objects. They are not scientific, empirical problems, and cannot be solved by scientific methods or theories.

It was accepted that philosophy is not hierarchical. The supposition that logic is the foundation of philosophy, or that a subject called 'the philosophy of language' (the term did not even exist at the time) is the foundation of the rest of the subject was not entertained. No part of philosophy was thought to be privileged or foundational. But the linguistic turn had been taken, and by the 1950s was largely taken for granted. Although the different parts of the subject were not conceived to spring from a common trunk, they were manifestly united by the common character of philosophical puzzlement and common methods of resolution. Philosophy's central concern was with the clarification of the meanings of expressions, not for their own sake,

but for the sake of the resolution of philosophical questions. A primary method was the description of the use of words, not the construction of a theory of meaning on the model of the Davidsonian programme that came to dominate Anglo-American philosophy of language in the 1970s and 1980s. By then analytic philosophy was waning.

## 4. WHITHER?

The unity of analytic philosophy in the twentieth century is historical. It is a unity in diversity, for there are no defining features that characterize the analytic movement in all its phases. But each phase shares some features with the preceding or concurrent ones. Some of these features have an ancient ancestry, e.g. analysis—on some interpretations of the term, the 'way of words', the repudiation of metaphysics. But they were explored in fresh ways or with greater thoroughness and precision than hitherto, and defended with novel arguments. Others were new, e.g. the employment of the new logic as an analytic tool and the non-cognitive conception of philosophy. It is, I suggest, most illuminating and least misleading to employ the term 'analytic philosophy' as the name of this intermingling stream of ideas distinctive of the twentieth century. Accordingly, like the concepts of romanticism or baroque, it is a family resemblance concept with a firm historical anchor. And since so many of the ideas do have venerable ancestry, the precursors of analytic philosophy can be relatively uncontroversially identified by the affinity of their philosophies and philosophical methods to one phase or another of this twentieth-century movement. The movement itself is best identified by description rather than by analysis.

I claimed that analytic philosophy waned after the 1970s. I should like to conclude by clarifying this. Each phase of the analytic movement was motivated by a revolutionary fervour. The protagonists passionately believed that they were ridding philosophy of intellectual pretensions, clearing the Augean stables of accumulated refuse, and putting the subject on a fresh footing. By the 1970s the revolutionary days were over. The spirit of scientific rationality needed no defending. It was triumphant in the technology and in the great theoretical discoveries of twentieth-century science. Complacency set in. The methodological self-consciousness characteristic of the analytic movement in all its phases diminished, for philosophy no longer seemed to be in need of justification. It is a striking feature of late twentieth-century philosophy that there is no vigorous debate on

what philosophy is, and what can be hoped for from it, on what, if anything, are philosophical propositions and how they are related to the propositions of science. The hallmark of much contemporary philosophy, especially philosophy of psychology and philosophy of language (particularly where influenced by theoretical linguistics), is scientism. The *critical* function of the analytic tradition has been abandoned. Philosophy once more is widely thought to be an extension of the sciences, distinguished not so much by its generality (as Russell had conceived it to be) as by its speculative character. Metaphysics, anathematic to analytic philosophy, has been revived with a vengeance amidst clouds of unclarity.

The forces that effected these changes were manifold, many extraneous to philosophy. Within philosophy, the major contributor was Quine. His repudiation of the analytic/synthetic distinction does not by itself constitute a decisive break with the analytic tradition, but only with Carnap and logical positivism. For the later Wittgenstein similarly eschewed this terminology, and it played no prominent role among Oxford philosophers.[31] But Quine's wholesale repudiation of *any* distinction between analytic/synthetic, contingent/necessary, and a priori/a posteriori or any *related* distinction does, I think, constitute a decisive break. For with the repudiation of these three distinctions *and any kindred*, the conception of philosophy as *sui generis*, as a critical discipline *toto caelo* distinct from science, as an a priori investigation, as a tribunal of sense as opposed to a plaintiff confronting nature collapses. But it is precisely this meta-philosophical conception that characterizes analytic philosophy—albeit in somewhat different ways and with a few exceptions—from the post-First World War years onwards, i.e. from the publication of the *Tractatus*, through the Vienna Circle and Cambridge analysis, to the *Investigations*, and Oxford analytic philosophers. Analytic philosophy can happily abandon the analytic/synthetic distinctions as drawn by Kant, Frege, and Carnap. It not only can, but should, view the necessary/contingent distinction as a meet subject for investigation and elucidation rather than as an analytic tool to be relied upon. But if it must also relinquish *any* distinction between a priori questions of meaning and empirical, a posteriori questions of fact (*one* form of which is Wittgenstein's distinction between grammatical and empirical propositions—a distinction between uses of sentences, not between type-sentences) then the status

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[31] Indeed the sharpness of the traditional distinction was challenged in Oxford by Waismann's six 'Analytic–Synthetic' articles in *Analysis* (1949–53), prior to Quine's 'Two Dogmas' of 1951 (*Philosophical Review* 60, 20–43).

of philosophy as an independent discipline is undermined. And that spells the end of analytic philosophy. It opens the gate to speculative science in the guise of philosophy, without the constraints of observation, experiment, and confirmation.

It might well be argued that Quine harks back to the early, Russellian phase of analytic philosophy antecedent to the *Tractatus*. For his conception of philosophy has affinities with Russell's. If so, why should it not be considered a further development of the movement, which marries early Russell with pragmatism? One cannot swim back in the stream of history. Had a young Quine, rather than the young Wittgenstein, encountered Russell in Cambridge in 1911, the history of analytic philosophy might have been altogether different. But the river bed of analytic philosophy was decisively shifted by the *Tractatus*—and shifted in a direction inimical to Russell's conception of philosophy, which had no further influence upon the movement. By the time Quine's major work was published in 1960, it was not continuous with the mainstream of analytic philosophy as it had flowed for the previous forty years. It constitutes a decisive break. And although it harks back to Russell in certain respects, Quine does not even accept the Russellian conception of analysis—manifest first in his logicism, then in his reductionism in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and later in *The Analysis of Mind* and *The Analysis of Matter*.

The widespread acceptance in the US of Quine's attack on the three above-mentioned distinctions was not the only feature of his work to encourage scientism in philosophy. Four others seem to me to merit mention: Quine's ontological turn, his physicalism, his advocacy of naturalized epistemology, and his behaviourism and consequent exclusion of questions of normativity from the philosophy of language. The first diverted attention from the analytic questions of what attributions of existence in various domains of discourse mean—i.e. what it means to claim that there are colours, or that there are mental states, or that legal systems exist, or that there are fictional characters—to putative ontological enquiries as to whether certain 'entities' exist, or need to be 'posited' for the purposes of science or for the best 'theory' about what there really is. Quine holds that the only genuine knowledge is scientific knowledge. Physics, he claims, studies the 'essential nature of the world', and the fundamental laws governing the behaviour of all that exists are the laws of physics. 'If we are limning the true and ultimate structure of reality', we should avoid the intentional idiom since there is no need to posit mental states, and employ only the austere scheme which refers only to the 'physical constitution and

behavior of organisms' (WO 221). Hence too, the ultimate explanations of everything that happens are the explanations offered by physics. Quine's physicalism was a primary inspiration for the scientism of eliminative materialism that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. His naturalized epistemology 'falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science' (EN 82–3). Hence the analytic investigation of patterns of justification and of the conceptual articulations involved in knowledge claims is displaced by the investigation of how the input of patterns of irradiation results in the output of linguistic and other behaviour. Naturalized epistemology in effect reinstates a form of geneticism which analytic philosophy's anti-psychologism had laboured to extirpate. His behaviourism and the elimination of normativity from his account of language exclude the investigation of the boundary between sense and nonsense which lay at the heart of analytic philosophy from the 1920s onwards.

Quine's conception fostered the belief that philosophy is continuous with science, concerned no less than science with theory construction. Like science, its goal is to add to human knowledge about reality. Since every conceptual scheme is, if Quine is right, theoretical, involving ontological commitments, ordinary language, it seems to many contemporaries, is merely the pre-scientific conceptual scheme of a culture, useful for the mundane purposes for which it evolved, but committed to a host of misconceived pre-scientific theories. Embedded in ordinary language there allegedly is a pre-scientific physics and psychology. Philosophical theorizing need therefore pay no more attention to the ordinary use of expressions than does physics or psychology. Its aim is neither to disentangle confusions resulting from subtle violations of the bounds of sense nor to describe the articulations of our conceptual scheme, but rather to contribute to our theories about the world.

The trends that were stimulated by Quine received further support from extra-philosophical sources: Chomsky's theoretical linguistics, the growth of computer sciences and artificial intelligence, and the achievements of neuro-physiological psychology—especially in the domain of the theory of vision. Post-behaviourist cognitive science (anathematic to Quine) was born, and analytic philosophy of mind declined. Philosophy of psychology allied itself with the speculations of cognitive science, and the boundary lines between analytic investigations into the articulations of psychological concepts and hypotheses concerning the workings of the brain blurred. Similarly, the boundaries between analytic philosophy of language and theoretical linguistics were eroded.

It is possible to take an apocalyptic view of the decline of analytic philosophy. One might be tempted to think that while Kantian critical philosophy spelt the end of the pretensions of philosophy to attain transcendent truths inaccessible to the sciences, analytic philosophy completed the demolition of the subject by putting an end to the philosophical aim of disclosing synthetic a priori truths, as well as curbing the pretensions of pure reason to attain such truths in the domain of mathematics. By depriving philosophy of any subject matter of its own, has analytic philosophy not brought the subject to an end? It is noteworthy that Schlick's 'Turning Point in Philosophy' concludes with a vision of the future in which 'it will no longer be necessary to speak of "philosophical problems" for one will speak philosophically concerning all problems, that is: clearly and meaningfully'.[32] Carnap queried what remains for philosophy if all statements that assert something are of an empirical nature and belong to science. 'What remains', he replied, 'is not statements nor a theory, nor a system, but only a *method*: the method of logical analysis.' The positive task of logical analysis, he argued, 'is to clarify meaningful concepts and propositions, to lay logical foundations for factual science and for mathematics'. This, and only this, will be the 'scientific philosophy' of the future.[33] But, it might be thought, if Carnap's proper domain for philosophy depended wholly upon his insistence upon the analytic/synthetic distinction, and if Quine successfully demolished that distinction, then 'scientific philosophy' merges with science. The turning point in philosophy has led to the terminus of philosophy.

This reaction would, I believe, be misconceived. Whether the waning of analytic philosophy is merely a temporary phase or not, I do not know. But this much seems evident. The analytic tradition left philosophy with two general tasks, which future generations are free to take up. The first is critical. It is the task of resolving conceptual puzzlement and dissolving conceptual confusions, both within philosophy and in other domains of human thought and reflective experience. The clearest articulation of this role of philosophy was given by the later Wittgenstein. Duly elaborated, it gives at least a partial characterization of many major problems of

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[32] M. Schlick, 'Turning Point in Philosophy', in A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (Free Press, New York, 1959), p. 59.

[33] R. Carnap, 'The Elimination of Metaphysics' [1932], in Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism*, p. 77.

philosophy throughout its history and of one way (or class of ways) of handling them. This is too familiar to require elaboration. It has sometimes been accused of being 'negative' and 'quietist'. It is negative only in the sense that medicine is negative—'merely' restoring a patient to health. And as with medicine, many of the diseases of the intellect which philosophy combats are perennial, recurring generation after generation in different mutations. That this conception of the task of philosophy is anything but quietist is evident in a further feature. For the first time, philosophy has been given a licence to intrude itself upon the sciences. For conceptual puzzlement and confusion are not unique to philosophy. The great foes of analytic philosophy in its years of revolutionary fervour—the myth-making of speculative metaphysics, the pretensions of religion to pronounce upon scientific matters, *ipse dixitism* (to use Bentham's felicitous phrase) in matters ethical and political—may have been vanquished, at least *pro tempore*. Rational scientific enquiry and rational social and political thought, within their proper domains, are now largely free of such encumbrances in our culture. But this should not induce complacency. For the enemy is now within the gates. If science is triumphant, it is also a source of mythology and mystification. For every source of truth must perforce also be a possible source of error of two kinds. Against empirical error, the sciences are well armed, difficult though their struggle may be. Against myth-making, conceptual mystification, and confusion they are not. For the difficulties one is up against are not theoretical; the fault is not falsehood or defective theory, but lack of sense. To combat this, analytic philosophy is well suited. It is part of the critical task of philosophy to question not the truth, but the *intelligibility* of, for example, theoretical linguists' talk of an innate language of thought, of a 'language gene', or of speakers of a language unconsciously 'cognizing' a universal theory of grammar or a theory of interpretation necessary for mutual understanding. It is part of its task to investigate not whether it is true, but whether it makes *sense* to claim, as many experimental psychologists do, that in order for a person to see, the brain has to construct hypotheses, employ inductive logic, infer, construct maps of the visual field, and assign colours to surfaces of objects on the basis of the information available to it. And similar questions for investigation are common in branches of physics and biology, as in economics and the social sciences. Critical analytic philosophy is no extension of science, but a tribunal of sense before which scientists should be arraigned when they slide into myth-making and sink into conceptual confusion.

The second task is complementary. It is, in Wittgenstein's idiom, to provide a perspicuous representation of the use of our words or of the grammar of our language (in his idiosyncratic use of the term 'grammar') within a given domain of discourse. Or, to use Strawson's language, to give a description of the structure of our conceptual scheme or some fragment thereof. Or, in Ryle's metaphor, to plot, and rectify, the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess. (There are differences of conception here, but they may be disregarded for present purposes.) The map drawn may be very general, representing, as it were, the view from a satellite—if one's purpose is appropriately general, as Strawson's was in *Individuals*. Or it may represent an eagle's-eye view—more detailed, but only of a selected range of terrain, as was von Wright's in *The Varieties of Goodness*. Or it may focus upon a very specific locality, as Alan White did in *Attention*. But whether one aims to depict the globe, a continent, a country, or a county, the task may be undertaken for its independent fascination or for specific purposes related to specific philosophical questions, which, although conceptual (non-empirical), are not necessarily expressions of confusion and conceptual entanglement. Either way, its execution cannot but contribute to eradicating conceptual confusions.

This positive task of philosophy can be completed only in a relative sense. There can be no single map of the conceptual terrain. It depends upon the perspective and purpose of the cartographer. Different maps are called for in response to the different intellectual needs of the times. And although many features of the landscape are stable, in as much as there are reasonably permanent structural features of our language and its use, other features change, eroded by rain and wind and subject to occasional volcanic upheavals as our conception of ourselves and of the world around us undergoes periodic cataclysmic change.

The critical task of philosophy is indeed Sisyphean. For there is no limit to the confusions into which we may fall. Moreover, as new discoveries occur (e.g. contemporary advances in neuro-physiological psychology), as new theories are propounded (e.g. relativity theory), and new inventions made—whether a priori ones (e.g. the invention of the modern logical calculus) or practical ones (e.g. the invention of the computer)—fresh sources of conceptual confusion and intellectual myth-making arise, novel paradigms of explanation become available and are characteristically applied beyond their legitimate limits, and new questions are brought upon the carpet which are not amenable to the experimental methods and theory construction of

the sciences. Those who struggle to reach the mountain top must realize that their achievement may be only for their generation, and relative to the problems that beset their times. Each generation must labour afresh. Those who reach the summit may be consoled with the sharpness of the light and the clarity of the view which they can communicate to their contemporaries, even though they know that clouds may be massing beyond the horizon.[34]

[34] I am grateful to Hanjo Glock, Ossie Hanfling, and John Hyman for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Authorial note, 2013: Were I writing this paper today, I should add a critical section tracing the lamentable revival of metaphysics over the last couple of decades or so. This, too, has been inimical to the main trends in analytic philosophy from the 1920s until the 1980s.

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