

*Wittgenstein*

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# WITTGENSTEIN AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Justus Hartnack



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WITTGENSTEIN

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Justus Hartnack

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# Wittgenstein

## & MODERN PHILOSOPHY

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1 Wittgenstein repudiates the theory that facts have a logical form, and hence the theory that language is a picture of reality. 2 The 'Augustinian' language-game as a naming language-game. The language-game not primary, but points to the possibility of other language-games. The meaning of a word is not what it names. 3 Language has no unique characteristic in terms of which it can be defined. Different languages have 'family resemblances'. Whether an object is simple depends on the context. In itself an object is neither composite nor simple. No states of affairs exist. 4 The task of philosophy no longer seen as finding the correct logical form of particular sentences, for every sentence 'is in order as it is'. The job is to understand what function the sentence performs. Philosophical problems arise from a misunderstanding of language, and are eliminated as understanding is achieved. 5 Misunderstanding of such utterances as 'Now, I understand'. Such expressions are not a description or report; they act like a signal. 6 'E' as a name of a sensation can be used neither correctly nor incorrectly; it is not a name. The statement 'I have a pain' as acquired pain-behaviour. 7 Logical Positivism influenced by the *Tractatus*, but recent analytical philosophy more influenced by the *Philosophical Investigations*.

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1 Ryle's investigation of mental concepts in *The Concept of Mind*. The Cartesian 'category-mistake'. Confusion between affirmative statements and hypothetical or semi-hypothetical statements, and between explanation in terms of laws and causal explanations. 2 Strawson's investigation of meaning and referring in his paper 'On Referring'. Russell's failure to distinguish between a sentence and its use, and his confusion of meaning with denotation. His consequent incorrect analysis of such sentences as 'The king of France is bald'. Existence not asserted but presupposed by such sentences. Geach's analysis. 3 Hart's defence, in his paper

Contemporary Philosophical Investigations *continued*

*'The Ascription of Responsibilities and Rights', of concepts used in the philosophy of law, and in such utterances as 'This is yours' (which is also a performatory utterance) or 'It was X. who did it'. 4 Urmson's argument, in his paper 'On Grading', that the word 'good' is a grading label so that the sentence 'This is good' neither names nor describes the criteria for the use of the word 'good' but presupposes such criteria. 'This is good' is not a subjective, but an objective judgement.*

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## Preface

Twentieth-century philosophy, more than that of any other period, has become deeply and sharply conscious of the connection between philosophical problems and language. No one has contributed more to this new awareness than Ludwig Wittgenstein, who died in 1951. To understand the connection between philosophy and language is to understand Wittgenstein; without understanding that one cannot understand him. And precisely because Wittgenstein holds the key to modern philosophical activity, there is an obvious need for an exposition of his thought.

But however keenly it may be felt, this need is not one that can be easily met; for what Wittgenstein says in his very personal and often aphoristic way cannot simply be restated; it must be interpreted, and interpretations, as often as not, are controversial.

We now seem to have entered what might well be called the Wittgensteinian 'moment' in philosophy. Books about his work are becoming more numerous and interest in his thought is becoming more widespread. The 'moment' dates from the publication in 1922 of his first book, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, followed by the posthumous publication in 1953 of the work of his later years, *Philosophical Investigations*. In the pages which follow, I have tried to give a general survey of Wittgenstein's thought, considering both the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, and also to give some account of the influence which these two very different books have exercised. My essay is thus to some extent an account of what is not altogether correctly known as 'analytical