Alois Pichler, Simo Säätelä (Eds.)
Wittgenstein : The Philosopher and his Works

Alois Pichler / Simo Säätelä (Eds.)

# Wittgenstein :
# The Philosopher and his Works



ontos
verlag

# Contents

# NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION |

This collection of original articles was first published in spring 2005 by the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen in the series *Working Papers from the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen*, no. 17 (see http://wab.aksis.uib.no/wab_workingpapers.page). For this edition, the collection has been expanded with an article by James Conant, and the introduction adjusted accordingly. The contributions by Marie McGinn and Hanjo Glock have been revised, and a very few corrections have been made to the other contributions.

We thank the Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society for the possibility to publish this valuable collection in their *Schriftenreihe*.

Bergen, June 2006
Alois Pichler, Simo Säätelä

# Acknowledgements |

Naturally, we have given considerable thought to the title for this anthology and would like to thank all those who have provided advice and suggestions. Particular thanks go to Hanjo Glock, who came up with the winner.

Our deepest thanks go to our authors, with whom it has been a great pleasure to cooperate.

<div align="center">

Bergen, February 2005 and June 2006
Alois Pichler, Simo Säätelä

</div>

# INTRODUCTION | *Simo Säätelä*
*Alois Pichler*

In December 2001 a conference entitled "Wittgenstein Research Revisited", with the aim of "reflecting upon 50 years of work on Wittgenstein and investigating future perspectives",[1] was arranged in Bergen. The moment seemed appropriate, since 2001, in addition to marking the 50th anniversary of Ludwig Wittgenstein's death, was also the first year of the new millennium. Another reason for arranging this conference was the completion of the publication of the *Bergen Electronic Edition* of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass*.[2] The bulk of the papers in the present collection derive from that conference, but we have also included additional papers by authors representing some of the most important recent work on Wittgenstein.

This collection is thus not a volume of proceedings, although, as the title *Wittgenstein: the Philosopher and his Works* indicates, the themes of the conference are still present, and in particular one aspect of Wittgenstein scholarship that does not always get due attention: the editing of Wittgenstein's writings, with the attendant question of what it means to speak of a "work" by Wittgenstein. This question is simultaneously a question about the relation between the philosopher's *Nachlass* and the works published in printed form. Such questions have become increasingly relevant since the comple-

---

1.   See http://wab.aksis.uib.no/w-konferanse/ (accessed June 1st, 2006).

2.   *Wittgenstein's Nachlass. The Bergen Electronic Edition*, begun in 1998 and completed in 2000, is a joint publication by the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen and Oxford University Press. It consists of six CD-ROMs. See further http://wab.aksis.uib.no/wab_BEE.page (accessed June 1st, 2006).

tion of the *Bergen Electronic Edition*, which finally made Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* available to all interested scholars, thus dispelling many myths and rumours surrounding his manuscripts, but also giving rise to new questions about the status of this material as a source for his philosophical thought.

The immediate occasion for the Bergen conference was, as mentioned, that 50 years had passed since Wittgenstein's death in Cambridge in 1951. This also means that Wittgenstein is, at least in one unproblematic sense, now a part of the history of philosophy (although it can be debated whether or not he can be assigned a clear place in the history of the academic discipline called "philosophy"). It was probably the early (and persistent) misconception of Wittgenstein as a kind of analytic philosopher that gave rise to a very ahistorical view of his philosophical work, a view he himself partly encouraged by displaying an "historical abstinence" or even a kind of "historiophobia" (as Hanjo Glock puts it in his paper on Wittgenstein and history in the present collection). However, during the past decades we have developed a far more nuanced and detailed picture of Wittgenstein and his times and life (e.g. through Toulmin and Janik's study of Wittgenstein's Vienna, and the biographies by McGuinness and Monk).[3] This, combined with increasingly detailed *Nachlass*-related textual scholarship (e.g. Baker and Hacker's analytical commentary and Schulte's critical-genetic edition of the *Investigations*),[4] and the discovery of some previously unknown material (the Koder diaries),[5] has made it easier to see Wittgenstein as firmly anchored in an historical and cultural context. This, of course, in no way diminishes his philosophical achievement or his status as perhaps the single most important philosopher of the last century.

---

3.   Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin: *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1973); Allan Janik: *Wittgenstein's Vienna Revisited* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2001); Brian McGuinness: *Wittgenstein: A Life. Young Ludwig 1889–1921* (London: Duckworth, 1988, re-issue OUP, 2005); Ray Monk: *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1990).

4.   G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker: *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's* Philosophical Investigations, Vol. 1–2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980–1988), P.M.S. Hacker. *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's* Philosophical Investigations, Vol. 3–4 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990–1996); Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophische Untersuchungen. Kritisch-genetische Edition.* Hrsg. von J. Schulte in Zusammenarbeit mit H. Nyman, E. von Savigny und G.H. von Wright (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 2001).

The question remains, what does it mean to see Wittgenstein in the context of history? Glock quips in his paper that "many contemporary analytic philosophers feel that Wittgenstein *is* history, or at least that he should be". Be that as it may, this warrants a short reflection upon what "being part of history" means as regards Wittgenstein and his work.

In his "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben"[6] (a piece of writing most certainly familiar to Wittgenstein), Friedrich Nietzsche says that history belongs to the living person in three respects: as an active and striving person, as a person who admires and preserves, and as a person who suffers and needs emancipation. Correlating to these relationships is a trinity of forms of history (or rather, attitudes to historicity): the *monumental*, the *antiquarian*, and the *critical*. However, Nietzsche also distinguishes a negative aspect of historicity, to the effect that history overburdens a person and functions as a "life-negating" force.[7] Without following Nietzsche further, let us use his typology in order to characterize various attitudes towards Wittgenstein and his work:

1. The monumental attitude sees Wittgenstein as exemplary, and his work as something that can empower the contemporary philosopher. The exegetical understanding of Wittgenstein's texts, and the discussions of how to properly understand his conception of philosophy and his methods can be seen as examples of this attitude.

2. The antiquarian attitude (note that Nietzsche does not use the word in a pejorative sense) seeks to emphasize the conservation of the past; examples in this respect might include the interest in the preservation and

---

5. MS 183. Published as Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Denkbewegungen. Tagebücher 1930–1932, 1936–1937*, hrsg. von I. Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon-Verlag, 1997). Parallel German/English text ("Movements of Thought") in J.C. Klagge and A. Nordmann (eds.): *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003) pp. 3–255.

6. F. Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen II*, in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, hrsg. von G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), Vol. 1, pp. 243–334.

7. This use of Nietzsche's typology to classify attitudes towards a philosopher's work was inspired by a lecture on "Nietzsche's Suprahistorical Gaze" by Hans Ruin, Uppsala 12.03.2004.

correct presentation of Wittgenstein's writings, and the placing of his work in a biographical/historical context.

3. The critical attitude strives to "break a past and dissolve it", and this attitude is, in our case, represented by "Wittgensteinian" philosophy that is not so much interested in exegesis and proper representation of Wittgenstein's own views as in the use of his method in dissolving philosophical problems and destroying the *Luftgebäude* of metaphysics, thus freeing us from pictures, illusions and misleading analogies that hold us captive.

However, we should be aware of the negative modes of such attitudes also in the case of Wittgenstein:

1. The negative monumental attitude sees Wittgenstein as an unsurpassable, unassailable monument that we can only venerate and not really emulate. Such an attitude, Nietzsche warns, tends to result in fanaticism.

2. The negative antiquarian attitude takes everything Wittgenstein ever said, did, touched or wrote as something equally worthy of meticulous preservation, thus turning scholarship into fetishism. A person possessed of this attitude "envelops himself in a mouldy smell", as Nietzsche puts it, and finally sinks so deep, "dass er zuletzt mit jeder Kost zufrieden ist und mit Lust selbst den Staub bibliographischer Quisquilien frisst" (p. 268).

3. The negative critical attitude runs the risk of completely denying the past by judging and destroying it, which amounts to a nihilistic attitude and contempt towards history of philosophy and even philosophy as such, seeing it as nothing more than a parade of worthless nonsense and confusions (an attitude, to be sure, not completely unfamiliar to Wittgenstein himself).

It is up to the reader to decide which (if any) of the different modes of historicity are represented by the papers in this collection, but we venture to claim that they do demonstrate "life-enhancing" ways of approaching Wittgenstein.

The collection opens with two papers on Wittgenstein's relation to philosophy. First, Knut Erik Tranøy, who became a friend of Wittgenstein's after meeting him in Cambridge in 1949, takes up the question of the relation

between life and philosophy with particular reference to Wittgenstein, who had made a profound impression upon him both as a philosopher and a human being. In Wittgenstein's case in particular, Tranøy notes, it is difficult or even impossible to draw a line between philosophical and non-philosophical life.

Tranøy distinguishes two questions about the relation between human life and philosophy:

Q1: What does or can philosophy do for the philosopher whose philosophy we are talking about?

and

Q2: What can – or cannot – a philosopher's philosophy do for others?

As regards the first question, in a sense (and in his own words) philosophy *was* Wittgenstein's life. However, as Tranøy notes, this makes problematic the fact that Wittgenstein was always seeking a way to finish with philosophical activity. In the *Tractatus*, this finishing has the nature of a "final solution" to philosophical problems. If we take this seriously, as Tranøy insists we should, then it is also clear that Wittgenstein's life would have to change as a result. Following the "logic" of his own philosophy, Tranøy writes, we therefore see that Wittgenstein did at least try to cease being a philosopher, taking up different non-philosophical careers. However, the philosophical problems he thought had been solved for good reappear in his "new philosophical life" from 1929 to 1951, this time as tormenting questions, and the confident mood of the *Tractatus* gives way to resignation and pessimism, as can be seen, for example, in the preface to the *Investigations*.

With regard to Q2, Tranøy distinguishes three possible responses: indifference, usefulness, and harmfulness. There is certainly a sense in which much academic philosophy has been completely indifferent to Wittgenstein. However, many in the profession would also argue that Wittgenstein has in fact been a harmful influence. Indeed, Wittgenstein himself was always in doubt whether his philosophy could be useful to anybody, or whether it in fact did more harm than good to be exposed to his teaching. He was, in Ryle's words, a "philosophical genius and a pedagogical disaster". When Tranøy himself asked Wittgenstein why he had resigned his chair at Cam-

bridge, the reply was: "Because there are only two or three of my students about whom I could say I do not know I have done them any harm." Tranøy himself, however, is an example of a philosopher who, though neither a Wittgenstein scholar nor one of his pupils, has benefited from knowing and reading Wittgenstein. It has, he says, helped him to become clearer about the nature of philosophy, and moral philosophy in particular.

At the end of his paper Tranøy asks what it is to be a philosopher. This question, he notes, has no simple answer, but at least in Wittgenstein's case it is clear that philosophy cannot be considered a profession. It should rather be viewed as a calling or vocation. But what does this imply for the nature of the philosopher's activity? Lars Hertzberg takes up this question by addressing an issue that was absolutely fundamental for Wittgenstein: the question of honesty.

According to Hertzberg, Wittgenstein always regarded honesty as *an issue* in philosophy, and the question of what it means to "try to keep philosophy honest" is unavoidable for anyone working in the Wittgensteinian tradition. Hertzberg is not saying that philosophers in that tradition are more honest than others. His point is rather that for Wittgenstein "a concern with one's intellectual honesty is *internal* to the difficulty of philosophy". The "Wittgensteinian tradition" in philosophy that Hertzberg talks about is, of course, quite heterogeneous (as the papers in our collection show), but it is united by the idea that Wittgenstein's philosophy is radical in the sense that it is conceivable only as a criticism of "more conventional ways of doing philosophy", as Hertzberg puts it. This has also led to the marginalization of the Wittgensteinian tradition, especially within contemporary academic philosophy. However, Hertzberg shows that the troubling aspect of the Wittgensteinian tradition is not its criticism of philosophy as such, but rather its particular form of criticism, which renders it irrelevant, uninteresting, or powerless in the eyes of representatives of the discipline's more conventional forms, be they "German-French" or "Anglo-Saxon".

Hertzberg thinks it would be a bad thing for philosophy, especially that of the analytic tradition, to dissociate itself from Wittgenstein's legacy, not least because it would entail the loss of what we might call an "existential" attitude to philosophy, which Hertzberg considers crucial to Wittgenstein. This attitude is reflected in remarks where Wittgenstein says that "work on phi-

losophy is really rather work on oneself", or that the difficulty of philosophy is "not the intellectual difficulty of the sciences, but the difficulty of a change of attitude (*Einstellung*)". Philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is a constant struggle against our own intellectual temptations, and this aspect of intellectual struggle also underlies the title of Hertzberg's essay. However, it is precisely this kind of attitude that prompts resistance among academic philosophers.

In his paper Hertzberg illuminates this attitude, and the demand for honesty in philosophy, through a consideration of three examples: what he calls the "deafness" of philosophers towards the use of words; Wittgenstein's remark concerning "a one-sided diet of examples"; and finally his remark that "pretensions are a mortgage which burdens a philosopher's capacity to think".

In a famous remark in the *Investigations* (§ 118) Wittgenstein implies that the philosopher should be under an obligation to "bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use". As Hertzberg notes, philosophers tend to be suspicious of this idea, since it seems arbitrarily to assign a normative status to "everyday language" and to deny philosophy the right to use its own specialized terminology. However, Hertzberg thinks the passage should be read more carefully; it speaks about a way to respond when philosophers describe their activities as an attempt to grasp the essence of, for instance, knowledge. Consequently it exhorts us to remember how, for example, knowledge-claims are used in actual situations, and how the sense of this type of utterance depends on what the speaker seeks to do in making it. But what, then, is the philosopher doing who seeks "to grasp the essence" of a thing? Well, his problem is that he claims a right to use the word differently from others (e.g. by raising the demand for a knowledge-claim that is unconditionally valid regardless of context) while at the same time using the word "knowledge" with the same sense as it has in "everyday language", i.e. he claims there can be a standard of correctness that is independent of the actual use of our expressions. What this kind of philosopher fails to see is "the real life" of the expressions he investigates, and thus he could be accused of what Hertzberg calls "use-deafness", which he regards as "an occupational hazard with most analytic philosophers".

This use-deafness is, according to Hertzberg's diagnosis, closely related to what Wittgenstein (in *PI* § 593) calls "a main cause of philosophical dis-

ease", namely "a one-sided diet" of examples. This is not to say that analytic philosophers do not use examples, but rather that they do not let their reflections on their examples become a part of the philosophical clarification itself. The preferable approach would be to let our examples prompt the questions of what it is we are doing in applying a certain concept. When undertaking a philosophical investigation, Hertzberg maintains, we must have the patience to "stop and look for examples". The aim should not be to "nail things down"; on the contrary, the use of examples is the only way to find out what one is actually trying to say. In this sense examples serve not to convey new information, but to make us face "what we already know". The primary function of examples in philosophy, Hertzberg says, should be "to confront us with ourselves wanting to say a certain thing". In his view it is here that the analytic philosopher often goes wrong in his use of examples. For instance Quine's famous rabbit example illustrates the tendency not to pause and let the example speak or "come alive". For Quine, all the example does is illustrate the indeterminacy of translation; however, the very possibility of its illustrating this thesis depends on his failure to consider the example closely enough. In Quine's example, the speaker, his life, and the context and circumstances of the utterance are all ignored; yet it would be a description of precisely these things that could turn the example into an illustration of the use of language, rather than a case of merely "pointless phonic response".

Finally, Hertzberg considers a passage from *On Certainty* (§ 549), where Wittgenstein notes that "pretensions are a mortgage which burdens a philosopher's capacity to think". Hertzberg thinks that if the philosopher sets up a goal for her investigation it will function as a "mortgage", limiting the freedom of the investigation, since in philosophy, "we are looking at the world through the eyes of bewilderment". Indeed, if one knows where one is going, there is no philosophical problem left (cf. *PI* § 123). The main danger in philosophy, as Hertzberg identifies it, is the danger of apriorism, the idea that we can tell how things "must be".

This, however, leads to the further question of the very aim of the philosopher's activity. If the Wittgensteinian tradition in philosophy is, as Hertzberg says, dependent upon critical interaction with other, more conventional ways of doing philosophy, this inevitably raises questions about the value and legitimacy of philosophy as such. Uncertainties with regard to

legitimation seem to haunt academic philosophers: what is the value of phi-losophy, is it worth the effort at all? As far as Wittgensteinian philosophy is concerned, one senses a tension in Wittgenstein's remarks on philosophy: is the aim of philosophy ultimately to enable one to give it all up, or can we do something better using the example of Wittgenstein? Hertzberg attempts to strike a balance between these alternatives, or rather, to show that they are not the only ones available. In his view, the very question of "the value of it all" suggests a kind of confusion. Ultimately, this question is of an ethical nature, a question about an attitude towards philosophy and life that cannot be answered in the abstract or once and for all. Philosophy is only "worth the effort", Wittgenstein says, "if it receives a light from above" (*CV* p. 66). The wish to explain "what philosophy is about" is a temptation we should resist, Hertzberg concludes. Indeed, it can be seen as an example of the kind of "mortgage" Wittgenstein was talking about.

Tranøy's and Hertzberg's papers introduce a number of issues that are taken up in other papers in this collection. One of these is the relation that Tranøy considers between Wittgenstein's early and late philosophy. Tranøy asks how we should deal with the fact that Wittgenstein did change his mind about the solution he arrived at in the *Tractatus*. He suggests that Wittgenstein felt in some way morally obliged to change his mind about certain central ideas in the *Tractatus*, despite the fact that philosophy seemed to him a "painfully compulsive" activity (this is, of course, an aspect of what Hertzberg identi-fies as the demand for intellectual honesty). Does this mean, Tranøy asks, that Wittgenstein would have been inconsistent had he not abandoned some of the most central ideas of the *Tractatus*, or that it was consistent of him to change his mind about not doing philosophy any more? Tranøy leaves the answer open, but the question is touched upon in a number of other papers in this volume that deal with Wittgenstein's early work.

The first of these is a piece that we are especially happy to be able to include in this collection, namely a discussion of the *Tractatus* by the late Professor Georg Henrik von Wright, Wittgenstein's student and friend, the successor to his chair in Cambridge, and one of the original heirs to his lit-erary estate. With von Wright's death in 2003 contemporary philosophy in general and Wittgenstein scholarship in particular lost one of its most illus-trious figures. During his last years, von Wright thought intensely about the

*Tractatus*.[8] His feeling was that he himself, as well as most commentators, had previously misunderstood Wittgenstein's book. In this paper he presents some observations on a number of central and controversial terms in the *Tractatus*: "truth", "sense" and "nonsense", and "thought".

Especially Wittgenstein's use of the terms "unsinnig" and "sinnlos" has been at the centre of the recent and sometimes heated debate about how to understand the "nonsensicality" of Tractarian propositions or sentences.[9] Von Wright does not directly refer to or take a stand in this debate, but what he says clearly has a bearing on the issues. The question of truth and falsity is, in von Wright's view, a crucial issue in the *Tractatus*, and he feels that commentators of the book have not clearly observed this. His main point is that, according to the *Tractatus*, meaningful sentences are *contingent*, i.e. both the sentence and its negation are meaningful. He maintains that the *Tractatus* describes three different relations to truth. First, there is the *bipolar* relation truth/falsity, which is the mark of meaningful sentences. Second, there are tautologies, which have a *unipolar* relation to truth, since tautologies are unconditionally true (*TLP* 4.461). Thus a tautology is also senseless (*sinnlos*) but not nonsensical (*unsinnig*). The same applies to contradictions (which are unconditionally false), and von Wright comments that both tautologies and contradictions "are a sort of extreme case in the operation with otherwise meaningful sentences". However, there are also sentences that bear a *zero-polar* relation to truth, i.e. which have no truth-value whatsoever; such sentences include moral, aesthetic, religious and other valuations.

Von Wright's conclusion is that Wittgenstein's tripartite distinction between contradictions, tautologies and meaningful propositions really should *not* be understood vis-à-vis a relation to truth, since he thinks that

---

8. Due to illness, von Wright was unable to attend the Bergen conference. Instead, he prepared a video tape of his lecture, and he was represented at the conference by his assistant Dr. Risto Vilkko. However, the editors of this collection had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing von Wright in Helsinki in February 2002, when he was presented an honorary doctorate from the University of Bergen. During our discussion von Wright told us that he had recently been preoccupied with the question how to read the *Tractatus*. He was especially concerned with the notion of truth and its relation to the distinction between the senseless and the nonsensical.

9. Von Wright translates "Satz" with "sentence" and not "proposition".

"the sense in which necessary sentences are true and contradictory sentences are false is very different from the sense in which contingent sentences are either true or false". In von Wright's view, "true" and "false" should be dropped altogether as attributes of logically necessary or impossible (non-contingent) sentences.

Given these distinctions, how are we to understand the sentences of the *Tractatus* itself? In his preface Wittgenstein says that the truth of the thoughts contained in the book seem to him "unassailable and definitive". This, von Wright claims, makes Wittgenstein guilty of an inconsistency; namely, he defines "thought" (in *TLP* 3.5) as "the applied, thought, propositional sign", i.e. as a meaningful sentence. However, it is essential that sentences be meaningful in virtue of being contingently *true or false*. The sentences of the *Tractatus*, on the other hand, are neither contingent sentences nor logical sentences.

What should we make of this "muddle" or inconsistency? Von Wright suggests that Tractarian sentences, since they do not describe states of affairs, should be treated on a par with other sentences that display a zeropolar truth–relation, e.g. value judgements. Yet norm statements and value judgements *do* have a normative or evaluative meaning, and hence also "a use within our language"; thus they do "say" something and can be understood, even though strictly speaking they are senseless. However, since they can be understood as expressing normative or evaluative meaning, they are *not* non-sensical in the sense that "Socrates is identical" is nonsensical. The sentences of the *Tractatus*, on the other hand, are without sense "in the stronger sense of being nonsensical". Although grammatically well formed and in some sense "intelligible" they are not sentences *in the Tractatus-sense of the term*. This is because they attempt to say something that cannot (within the limits of the picture theory) be said.

What, then, is the function of the Tractarian sentences? Von Wright says that, although they do not *say* anything, they may *show* something of value to the philosopher. But what precisely do the sentences of the *Tractatus* attempt to show? Von Wright thinks their function is fairly clear: "Fighting one's way through them will show us something by taking us to a platform from where we 'see the world of *so-sein*, of contingent fact, rightly'". This, he concludes, is the moral sense of the *Tractatus*. The solution to philoso-

phical problems is to see the futility of the attempt to transgress the boundaries of the "sayable", i.e. the contingently true or false.

Now, where does von Wright's understanding of "nonsense" place him in the debate about the *Tractatus* and its relation to the "late" Wittgenstein?[10] Von Wright thinks we should distinguish carefully between "senseless" sentences that "have a use within our language", and sentences that are "just plain nonsense". But within the realm of the nonsensical von Wright also makes an implicit distinction between sentences that are nonsense through and through ("Socrates is identical") and sentences that are grammatically well formed and *in some sense* "intelligible" even though strictly speaking nonsense (Tractarian sentences); by being nonsensical, they show us how we should view the world of contingent truths, i.e. (in von Wright's words) as "undiluted by the philosopher's nonsense". This begins to look like a distinction between "significant" and "insignificant" nonsense[11], and such an impression is strengthened by von Wright's claim that Wittgenstein is guilty of inconsistency in the preface in talking about the "thoughts" expressed in the book.

But what criterion can we use to distinguish these two types of nonsense? Von Wright seems to think that the sentences of Wittgenstein's preface should also be judged by the Tractarian definition of "thought" and "sense" (even though these definitions are themselves ultimately nonsensical!). Thus von Wright accepts, at least implicitly, that the *Tractatus* attempts to present a theory of language and meaning, and that Wittgenstein is guilty of inconsistency and irresolution in not adhering to his own theory in the preface. He says that Wittgenstein really could have omitted the troublesome sentence about the "unassailable and definitive" nature of the thoughts expressed in the *Tractatus* (Wittgenstein actually begins the preface by talking about the *thoughts* expressed in the book). Another alternative, promoted by the so-called "resolute" reading, is to take Wittgenstein at his word, and try to find a reading of both the main text *and* the preface that will accommodate what

---

10. For an introduction to the issues in this debate, see A. Crary and R. Read (eds.), *The New Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 2000).

11. Cf. C. Diamond, "What Nonsense Might Be", in *The Realistic Spirit* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

von Wright sees as an "inconsistency" (for instance, by saying that Wittgenstein gives the *illusion* of presenting a theory in the *Tractatus*). But what von Wright is really suggesting is that we could read the *Tractatus* without caring for the preface at all, thus making an (implicit) distinction between what could be called a "frame" and the book. Von Wright leaves open the question as to *why* Wittgenstein fell into such an inconsistency or muddle. He seems to suggest that Wittgenstein was merely careless, but this will be unacceptable to "resolute" readers of the *Tractatus.* As we will see, Cora Diamond and James Conant address some of these issues in their papers.

Commenting on the relation between "early" and "late" Wittgenstein, von Wright claims that Wittgenstein later thought that we cannot find a final solution to philosophical problems – linguistic confusion can only be solved temporarily, and must be addressed again and again. Thus von Wright characterizes the difference between early and late Wittgenstein as the difference between an "absolutist" and a "relativistic" view. But this difference, he argues, is hardly fundamental. His claim is corroborated by the fact that Wittgenstein wrote as early as 1913 that philosophy is "purely descriptive" (*NL* p. 93). However, we can ask ourselves what the purpose of such description is, and how such a task should be approached. We can also ask why Wittgenstein's early philosophy looks so different from his later philosophy, if they share the same starting point. These questions are addressed in Marie McGinn's contribution to this volume. She wants to show how Wittgenstein's early philosophy of language must be understood as pursuing a descriptive and clarificatory aim, although the nature of this clarification is determined by a preconceived idea of what such a clarification should achieve. Wittgenstein's early philosophy is determined by a set of problems concerning logic and language, and all these problems are, McGinn claims, aspects of what Wittgenstein in his *Notebooks* calls the "single great problem", viz. the problem of the nature of the proposition (*NB* p. 23).

Thus the early Wittgenstein seems to think that, once the nature of the proposition has been clarified in its entirety, all the other problems that preoccupy him will also become clear: the nature and status of the propositions of logic, the nature of negation, of inference, and so on. McGinn shows how Wittgenstein arrives at this "absolutist" idea of "the single great problem", and how it governs his way of undertaking the descriptive and clarifi-

catory task of philosophy in the *Tractatus*. Incidentally, as McGinn herself notes, this also means that according to her the *Tractatus is* concerned with a substantial task, which is the elucidation of the nature of the proposition, rather than merely presenting the illusion that this is so (as claimed by "resolute" readers).

According to McGinn, Wittgenstein shares both the problems that preoccupy him in his early work, and (at least to some extent) the preconceptions or commitments that frame that early philosophy, with Frege and Russell. The basic shared assumption here is what McGinn calls the "framework intuition" that logic is universal and a priori: logic is the essential framework for all thought, as it aims at the truth. Logic is thus concerned with universal principles of reasoning, i.e. the principles of judgement as such, and consequently with the *a priori* form of thought. Wittgenstein shares with Frege and Russell a general commitment to this framework. However, McGinn also shows that Wittgenstein came to think of some aspects of Frege's and Russell's views, especially their universalist conception of logic, as fundamentally flawed, and indeed as being in conflict with the "framework intuition".

The problem of clarifying the nature and status of the propositions and laws of logic constitutes the core of Wittgenstein's attempt to clarify the nature of the proposition. His criticism of Frege's and Russell's universalist conception of logic focuses on the question of whether the laws of logic are maximally general truths and whether logic can be seen as "a science of completely generalized propositions" (*NB* p. 11). This is something Wittgenstein could not accept, since it conflicts with the "framework intuition" that logic is the essence of thought and has a unique status. Something that depends for its truth solely on its own logical properties cannot properly speaking be called a proposition, since it cannot represent how things are in the world (compare this to what von Wright says about the problems of talking about sentences that have a unipolar relation to truth). Logic, for Wittgenstein, cannot be something for which the question of truth arises, since "logic must take care of itself" – it must already be in place in order for us to express judgements that are true or false, i.e. it is given *with* the language in which we express thoughts that are true or false. It is this logical form of possible states of affairs that language itself manifests that must be made perspicuous, and this is something Frege and Russell failed to realize.

Thus, McGinn claims, Wittgenstein's recognition that the question of truth or evidence does not arise for the propositions of logic also implies a rejection of the universalist conception of Frege and Russell. The main problem of this conception is that, while it tries to account for logic in terms of its objective truth, it fails to make perspicuous the *a priori* status of logic, a status which entails that "the logic of the world is prior to all truth and falsehood" (*NB* p. 14). Wittgenstein accepts that there are completely general propositions, but these are not propositions of logic; they are rather "accidentally general" propositions (*NB* p. 17). Logic, on the other hand, is not concerned with what is true, but with what is essential before any proposition can be compared with reality for truth or falsity.

McGinn further points out that Wittgenstein's criticism of Frege and Russell also concerns their conception of the nature of logical inference, which again is an aspect of the "single great problem". Frege and Russell see inference as justified by the laws of logic which are seen on a par with the laws of physics. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, thinks that once the relation between propositions is made perspicuous, inference, too, will be grounded in the propositions themselves, not in any general laws of logic. A proposition expresses its sense, and the relations between propositions with sense justify our inference from one proposition to another.

Thus both of the problems Wittgenstein found within the universalist view (the nature and status of propositions of logic, and the nature of inference) bring him back to his "fundamental problem". Wittgenstein's clarificatory work in the *Tractatus*, McGinn claims, emerged from what he regarded as deficiences in the work of Frege and Russell, and which pose the problem of the nature of the proposition. Both Frege's conception of truth and Russell's theory of judgement, Wittgenstein thought, rest on the mistake of treating propositions on the model of names, i.e. the logical constants as predicates and relations, and propositions as relata. This fails to make clear how a proposition expresses its sense, which, according to Wittgenstein, is something it achieves in virtue of its essential bipolarity (a point that von Wright also stresses in his paper).

McGinn's conclusion is that Wittgenstein's early philosophy of language, although proceeding from certain preconceptions about logic and language that he shares with Frege and Russell, should be understood as having a clarificatory aim. This also led him to identify and criticize certain essential

shortcomings in the views of Frege and Russell. What is important, McGinn argues, is that Wittgenstein's criticism of Frege and Russell is not motivated by *theoretical* commitments; instead it proceeds in a manner with which we are now familiar from his later philosophy – it took the form of "assembling reminders" of aspects of our use of language that clash with Frege's and Russell's philosophical conception of how language works, with the aim of achieving a perspicuous representation of the problems at issue. However, McGinn contends that, ultimately, the clarificatory achievement of Wittgenstein's early work remains limited, since it is completely determined by his own restrictive preconceptions concerning logic and the nature of the proposition, namely, that there must be a final answer to the question about the "general form of the proposition".

Although both von Wright and McGinn deal with Wittgenstein's early views, both address the question of the relation between "early" and "late" Wittgenstein. We should recall that von Wright considers the difference to be big but "hardly fundamental". In a similar vein, McGinn's conclusion is that Wittgenstein's whole work proceeds from the idea that philosophy is "purely descriptive" and clarificatory, and that there is a fundamental difference between philosophy and scientific theorizing. But in his early work this clarificatory task is hampered by his preconceptions about language and logic. Both von Wright's and McGinn's papers, though dealing with Wittgenstein's "early" thought, thus place it in the context of his later work, since both authors point out features of his early thinking that from a comprehensive perspective on his philosophy appear as mistaken.

Consequently one can say that both von Wright and McGinn implicitly challenge the "received view" of there being an early Wittgenstein (metaphysical thinker and logicist author of the *Tractatus*) and a late Wittgenstein ("ordinary language philosopher" of the *Investigations*), whose views on both philosophy and language are incommensurate. Generally speaking, this view has been the object of much criticism. Some scholars have wanted to challenge it by adding either a "middle" Wittgenstein (roughly 1929–1936), or, more recently, a "third", post-*Investigations* Wittgenstein (1945–1951).[12] Another subject of controversy has been exactly when the turn from "early" to "late" philosophy is supposed to have happened. The most radical challenge to the traditional view has been one lately advocated especially by

Cora Diamond: that there really is no once and for all "turn" from the early to the late philosophy – Wittgenstein's philosophy is characterized by continuity, even though his way of formulating philosophical thoughts underwent radical changes. These disagreements have, as already mentioned in connection with the papers by von Wright and McGinn, focused in particular on the status of the *Tractatus*, and the nature of the "nonsensicality" of Tractarian sentences.

In her own paper, Cora Diamond explicitly addresses the question of how to read the *Tractatus* and how to understand the relations between the Tractarian and the post-Tractarian philosophy by taking a look at one of the first defenders of a "one-Wittgenstein" view, viz. Peter Winch, who argued for the unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy, beginning with his 1969 essay that took that phrase for its title. Winch's essay was prompted by the feeling (shared by Diamond) that the two-Wittgensteins view was not only wrong, but positively harmful to a true understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophical achievement.

Winch pioneered a new way of looking at Wittgenstein's work, and was, according to Diamond, also among the first to realize the radical nature of Wittgenstein's thought, *both* early and late. The "metaphysical" reading of the *Tractatus* in particular impedes such an understanding, Diamond claims. In her paper she traces the evolution of Winch's thinking upon these themes from the 1969 essay to his last work, and especially the change that occurs in his understanding of the aims of the *Tractatus*.

Winch developed his view of the unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy in a critical dialogue with Norman Malcolm's influential "two-Wittgensteins" view and his metaphysical/mentalistic reading of the *Tractatus*.[13] Another important influence on Winch was Rush Rhees, who according to Diamond actually laid the groundwork for an understanding of Wittgenstein as *one* philosopher. Following Rhees, Winch located the continuity of Wittgenstein's philosophy in his concern with the *nature of logic*, and understood

---

12. Cf. D. Moyal-Sharrock (ed.): *The Third Wittgenstein: The Post-Investigations Work* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

13. See N. Malcolm: *Memory and Mind* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1977); *Nothing is Hidden* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

his later philosophy not so much as a turning away from this interest as a new approach to the subject. Of course, neither Diamond nor Winch deny that we can talk about a shift between Wittgenstein's early Tractarian and his post-Tractarian philosophy, a shift both in methods and in the subjects discussed. However, both Diamond and Winch think we should not let this shift obscure the essential unity of his philosophy. Winch locates what is central to the post-*Tractatus* thought in the totally new significance of particular cases in philosophy, which involves a new understanding of generality. The gist of Winch's critique of Malcolm is that, while Malcolm recognizes what is central to the new approach, he fails to see how questions of logic are still centrally involved in Wittgenstein's later treatment of various topics.

The debate between Malcolm and Winch in the 1980s involved a dispute about Malcolm's mentalistic reading of the *Tractatus*, according to which the *Tractatus* essentially contains a philosophy of language resting upon a metaphysics, these being mediated by a philosophy of mind. A somewhat different kind of mentalistic reading has been put forward more recently by Peter Hacker in his criticism of Winch.[14] This debate turns upon how to understand the purported "mentalism" of the *Tractatus*, and in particular on a reading of *TLP* 3.11, especially its second sentence:

> Wir benützen das sinnlich wahrnehmbare Zeichen (…) des Satzes als Projektion der möglichen Sachlage. Die Projektionsmethode is das Denken des Satz-Sinnes.

> We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (…) as a projection of a possible situation. The projection method is the thinking of the propositional sense. [Diamond's translation]

The mentalistic reading, as Rhees noted, is lent false support by the Pears–McGuinness translation, which reads "the method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition". Instead, the correct reading (according to Rhees, and his reading is endorsed by Winch) takes the method of projection to be what actually explains *what it is to think* the proposition's sense.

---

14. P.M.S. Hacker: "Naming, Thinking, and Meaning in the *Tractatus*", *Philosophical Investigations* 22 (1999), pp. 119–135.

What is at stake here, as Diamond puts it, is really the overall understanding of the aim of the *Tractatus*, i.e. what Wittgenstein might think he has accomplished in clarifying the logic of language. This was, of course, also the question addressed by McGinn in her paper, and McGinn's understanding of Wittgenstein's aims and her identification of the "framework intuition" clearly supports a non-mentalistic reading (although she does not comment directly on *TLP* 3.11). As Diamond notes, the various mentalistic readings of the *Tractatus* are committed to a link between the logic of language and a structure of possibilities external to it (i.e. a link involving mental connections with the objects and their structure of possibilities), and Winch's point was that this totally obscured Wittgenstein's aim in the *Tractatus*, since it would mean looking for a kind of basis for logic. This kind of interpretation of 3.11 fails to account for how radical the notion of "logic taking care of itself" is, and what is involved in the idea that we cannot make mistakes in logic.

However, Diamond thinks that both Rhees and Winch get into difficulties when they try to link two issues in their reading of 3.11: the issue of whether the thinking of the proposition's sense is supposed to explain or be explained by the method of projection, and the issue whether 3.11 supports the idea that a perceptible sentence is used to mean something in virtue of a mental process. Diamond herself wants to give what she thinks is a more natural reading of the passage (reflected in her suggestion for a better translation, see above). Instead of saying that the thinking of the sense of a proposition is explained by the idea of a method of projection, Diamond reads the passage as saying that thinking a sense is explained in terms of a thought's thinking a situation *in that it is* a picture in logical space: "We make pictures, using methods of depiction in a space; these pictures, these representations, in that they are in logical space, are thoughts." Diamond also points to passages in the *Prototractatus* that support her reading.

She then goes on to discuss another problem in Winch's reading of the *Tractatus*, which concerns the meaning of names. Winch ascribed a use account of names to Wittgenstein; simple names in the *Tractatus* do genuinely refer, but this is dependent only on their functioning in a certain way within a symbolism, i.e. on their having a certain logico-syntactical role. The same thing, Winch claimed, applies to ordinary names; reference is given entirely in terms of how the sign in question is used (i.e. *what* is meant

by a name is entirely settled by *how* you use it). However, as Hacker has pointed out in his criticism of Winch, this is certainly wrong when it comes to ordinary names; their reference cannot be determined by their use alone. Hacker further claims that neither does Winch's account fit the simple names of the *Tractatus*, since Wittgenstein allows there to be more than one object of the same logical form (e.g. *TLP* 2.0233). Diamond agrees that this is a flaw in Winch's reading, but does not think it is fatal, since the alternatives Winch and Hacker operate with (either the meaning is completely dependent on use, or there has to be a mind-forged connection) are not the only ones. Instead Diamond says we should realize that making sense of the possibility of different objects of the same logical form can only be achieved internally, through language – the philosophical picture of the possible ambiguity in our names is confused and builds upon a kind of external perspective (here Diamond endorses a reading by Warren Goldfarb). Thus Diamond concludes that this is not a fatal flaw in Winch's reading. However, it is connected to an overall problem she sees in Winch's understanding of the *Tractatus*, and which she calls his formalism.

This formalism, she claims, is clearly visible in the way Winch understands the distinction between sense and nonsense in the *Tractatus*. In her view, Winch follows Rhees in understanding Wittgenstein's aim in the *Tractatus* as the philosophical task of straightening out once and for all the distinction between sense and nonsense. Diamond, of course, disagrees with this view, which she claims is at the heart of the formalist reading. The formalist reading says that the formal characteristics of the sign fully determine (in accordance with a general rule) both whether the sign has sense and what the sense is (this view is, Diamond points out, already in play in Winch's idea about how 'names' function). Diamond thinks that such a formalist reading is completely inconsistent with the text itself, and in fact *even more* misleading than the mentalistic reading.

A crucial element in the formalist reading that Diamond picks out is the (mis)understanding of the nature of the distinction between sense and nonsense. Both Rhees and Winch claim that the *Tractatus* aims to provide a general rule or principle for making that distinction. Diamond, instead, claims that the aim of the distinction "is to lead us to recognize that in doing philosophy our ordinary capacity to descry nonsense has been suspended". That is, the meaninglessness of a combination of signs is not a feature of the

expressions themselves, nor is it a result of not representing a possible combination of metaphysically given objects; instead, it occurs because we have failed to give meaning to some sign or signs.

Another problem that follows from the Rhees-Winch reading is reflected in their view that the aim of the *Tractatus* is a kind of grammatical clarification. Diamond thinks this is right, but the formalistic approach leads to the view that the apparently metaphysical propositions of the *Tractatus* should be understood as grammatical propositions, for instance, that the *Tractatus* tries to establish features of the logical syntax of words like "world", "fact", "object", etc. This, she thinks, cannot be right. She insists that the *Tractatus* sentences containing words like "object" cannot be replaced by ordinary-language sentences where "object" functions as a variable, and thus Tractarian sentences cannot be deemed to exhibit features of the grammar or use of such words. Again, the formalist reading says that the combination of signs *itself* determines whether it is nonsense, and this Diamond thinks is clearly in conflict with what Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus*. Diamond's own view could be summed up by saying that we should take seriously the idea that Wittgenstein is using remarks that have a certain built-in unclarity (resulting precisely from the use of formal terms *as if* they were proper concept words) that readers do not at first recognize, but which Wittgenstein intends should be recognized by them, and that a formalist reading does not allow us to see this. Thus it also prevents us from seeing clearly how Wittgenstein's clarificatory work in the *Tractatus* is connected to the kind of clarification he aims at in his later philosophy.

Despite these criticisms Diamond emphasizes the importance of Winch as someone who pioneered a true understanding of the unity of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Diamond thinks that Winch also applied the conception of how Wittgenstein's work hangs together in the exploration of the notion of logical generality that he undertakes in his own work. As Diamond sees it, this understanding is apparent not so much in the form of an argument, as in Winch's way of exploring issues such as the role of generality and particularity in our concept of a human being, or suffering and our responses to it.

Cora Diamond is, as we noted, one of the most influential representatives of the so-called "resolute reading" of the *Tractatus*. In the next paper, James Conant, also a prominent "resolute reader", gives a presentation of this read-

ing and outlines its far-reaching exegetical consequences concerning Wittgenstein's whole philosophy. This kind of reading has been criticized particularly because of its alleged commitment to a problematic and counter-intuitive "one-Wittgenstein" view, which is said to follow from the "resolute reading's" claim that the *Tractatus* contains no substantial philosophical theories or theses. According to resolute readers, Wittgenstein was, already in his "early" philosophy, committed to the idea of philosophy being an elucidatory activity rather than a body of doctrines.

Resolute readings thus challenge many "received truths" about Wittgenstein, given by "standard readings" of the *Tractatus*: e.g. that he attempted, in the *Tractatus*, to formulate a substantive theory of the relation between thought, language, and reality, which he later criticized and rejected; that the nonsensical sentences of the *Tractatus* are actually an (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to formulate philosophical theses about the conditions of meaningfulness; that the nonsensical sentences of the *Tractatus* show something that cannot be said; etc. The easiest way to define a standard reading would be to say that in the *Tractatus* the standard reader finds a number of substantive philosophical theses formulated and defended which we must understand together in order to understand the work as a whole. The resolute reading, alternatively, says that in order to understand the author of the *Tractatus* we must take him at his word: we should not willy-nilly ascribe theses and doctrines to him, but rather recognize them as nonsense through and through in order to be able to complete the task the author has set us.

Conant himself notes that it is somewhat misleading to speak about *the* resolute reading, since there are many varieties of approaches that could be labeled "resolute", and since "a resolute reading" is a programme for both reading and interpreting the *Tractatus* rather than merely representing a reading (in any strong sense). The dispute between "resolute" and "standard" readings, as Conant understands it, hinges on the understanding of *TLP* 6.54. In this famous passage Wittgenstein writes that his sentences serve as elucidations, and that anyone who understands him will eventually recognize them as nonsensical, to be used as rungs or steps on the ladder that is eventually to be thrown away. The primary characteristic of a resolute reading is the rejection of the central tenet of standard readings: the idea that the author of the *Tractatus* would first demand that his reader accept a substantive theory of the conditions of sense (involving for instance the so-called

picture theory of meaning), and then apply this theory to the work itself. This would enable the reader to recognize the elucidatory sentences as non-sensical. However, this reading contains a moment of "irresoluteness" since such a reader is committed to saying that the Tractarian sentences must be understandable in some substantial sense *in spite of* (or at the same time as) being recognized as nonsense thus committing himself to a view of "sub-stantial nonsense".

In other words, the irresoluteness in the "standard readings" derives from ascribing to the *Tractatus* a theory which its author endorses and must rely upon to be able to proceed with his philosophical critique (drawing up the boundaries of sense), yet which he must also simultaneously regard as non-sense. Instead, says Conant, the resolute reading does not take the presence of this paradox in the text to be a symptom of a kind of wavering or irreso-lution on part of the author (like von Wright implies in his paper), but rather as a part of the ladder that we (the readers) have to throw away.

Thus, according to Conant, the "rungs of the ladder" are moments of understanding *the author*, and each such moment shows that the reader's ear-lier putative "state of understanding" was illusory. Every such moment of understanding also involves a change in the reader (which also is one way to understand Wittgenstein's dictum about work on philosophy being work on oneself – see *CV* p. 24). Thus the sentences are *überwunden*, being under-stood (by the reader) to be nonsense through and through, i.e. as failing to make genuine determinations of meaning, despite initially having presented the illusion of doing so. What the reader has to achieve, then, is clarity – he has to be able to see trough the illusion. This understanding can, however, only happen piecemeal: as Conant sees it, every reader of the *Tractatus* must begin as a "standard" reader and work her way through the book sentence by sentence, reaching the "moments of recognition" one by one.

Now, given the far-reaching consequences this kind of reading has upon the understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy, many "standard readers" have criticized the "resolute reading" for being nothing but a programme or manifesto telling us how *not* to read the book, and have challenged "resolute readers" to give (if this paradoxical formulation can be excused) some sub-stance to this allegedly non-substantial account. We must remember that Wittgenstein never says that *all* sentences in the *Tractatus* are to be recog-nized as nonsensical. Thus, say standard readers, in order to be capable of

assessing a "resolute" reading, we need to be told more than just that *some* of the sentences are nonsense; we need to be told how to recognize precisely which sentences serve as the elucidations to be "thrown away" (which obviously is no easy task). In this paper, Conant accepts this criticism and takes up the challenge, and indeed lists examples of sentences that could form the "rungs of the ladder".

Conant proposes that we can arrive at a tentative preliminary list of candidate sentences through the following procedure:

1.  A given standard reader compiles a list of sentences that can be associated with alleged philosophical theses he would ascribe to the work.
2.  A given resolute reader compiles a set of sentences taken to be examples of Tractarian elucidatory nonsense.
3.  The intersection of these lists will constitute the list of sentences about which the standard and the resolute reader disagree most, and will constitute (for the purpose of the debate between that standard reader and that resolute reader) the central examples of "rungs of the ladder".

On a "resolute" understanding, items found on this list, e.g. "thought and language are able to represent reality because they mirror the logical form of reality", consequently do not represent insights into the nature of thought that should be worked out as philosophical positions or doctrines to be ascribed to the author of the *Tractatus* (e.g. idealism, realism, or solipsism). Instead, they are to be unmasked as philosophical temptations that the author intends the reader to overcome. Properly understood, the "insights" vanish when we come to understand that what we are after is not any metaphysical answer to these questions, but a proper understanding of their non-sensicality.

Now, as we already mentioned, a common criticism of this kind of reading is that it obliterates the difference between "early" and "late" Wittgenstein by (mis)reading the *Tractatus* with the benefit of hindsight, ascribing to the author of the *Tractatus* the non-dogmatic and non-metaphysical attitude of the late Wittgenstein, thus constructing him as a "therapeutic" philosopher *avant la lettre*. How should we in that case deal with Wittgenstein's own scathing criticism of his earlier work and its metaphysical presuppositions (e.g. in *PI* § 97)? Conant does not deny Wittgenstein's later self-criticism, but he maintains that its target is *not* the items of the first list; instead, he

provides a second list representing unwitting commitments that figure in Wittgenstein's early work and which are the actual target of his later criticism. The list represents what could be called the early Wittgenstein's "blind spots": i.e, as Conant puts it, "philosophical conceptions from which the author of the *Tractatus* failed to wean himself". These items have mainly to do with Wittgenstein's understanding of logic and logical notation and its role in philosophical elucidation (e.g. "there is such a thing as *the* logical order of our language"). According to Conant, this kind of list can make us see how much dogmatism there actually is in the *Tractatus*, and thus how big the difference is between "early" and "late" Wittgenstein.

But how are we to draw the line between the first list (representing philosophical temptations Wittgenstein wanted to wean the reader from) and the second list (representing unwitting metaphysical commitments on Wittgenstein's own part)? Conant admits that the question is very delicate and that the line cannot be drawn once and for all. One solution would be to say that all these items belong to the first list; however, Conant thinks that the only way of making sense of either Wittgenstein's early work or his own later criticism of it is to acknowledge that the author of the *Tractatus* was blind to his own dogmatic presuppositions. So the irony is that Wittgenstein's aim in the *Tractatus* was to bring metaphysics to an end, but that his own method rested on problematic and dogmatic metaphysical presuppositions. This allows us to see both the continuity and the discontinuity in his thought, concludes Conant. (It would also explain why the *Tractatus* is so difficult to understand and why it is so difficult even to agree upon Wittgenstein's aims in the book.)

This brings us to Conant's third list. This list represents moments in Wittgenstein's work that can alternately mark either continuity or discontinuity, depending upon the attitude one takes towards these items. This also means that the candidate items are sentences that correspond closely to formulations both in the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. The sentences on this list can either be understood as showing a particular unwitting preconception about how things *must* be (and thus also belonging on list two, representing a moment of discontinuity), or as something that may be ascribed both to the author of the *Tractatus* and the author of the *Investigations* (thus representing a moment of continuity). The possibility of alterative understandings of these sentences is also important for an understanding of the

dialectical and dialogic character of Wittgenstein's writings. To take one example: "Every sentence in our everyday language is in order as it is."

Reflection upon candidate items for this third list, Conant says, also brings out the complexity of the relation between early and later Wittgenstein, and should allow us to see that there is a plausible middle course between "zealous mono-Wittgensteinianism" (saying that early and later Wittgenstein simply agreed about the items on the third list) and "intractable poly-Wittgensteinianism" (saying that the early and later Wittgenstein agreed on nothing of importance).

Both Diamond's and Conant's papers explicitly address the vexed question that David Stern takes as the title for his paper: "How many Wittgensteins?" It is often thought that the "resolute" reading must, with emphasis, answer "one" to this question, though as we have seen from Contant's paper, the question is a very intricate one, and the answer to it depends much on whether we want to emphasize aspects of continuity or discontinuity in Wittgenstein's thought. Stern, too, thinks that the answer to this question is far from clear. In his *Übersicht* of the debates concerning the nature of Wittgenstein's philosophy, Stern identifies three main areas of disagreement:

1. The debate between a "two-Wittgensteins" and a "one-Wittgenstein" interpretation.
2. Among the adherents of "two-Wittgensteins", the questions of when the late philosophy begins and the nature of the main differences between the early and late philosophy.
3. A disagreement between those who hold that Wittgenstein ends traditional philosophy in order to do philosophy better, and those who claim he wanted to end philosophy and teach us to get by without a replacement.

Stern argues that the whole debate about one or two Wittgensteins rests on the problematic supposition either that in its essentials Wittgenstein's philosophy never changed, or that there is a fundamental, once-and-for-all change between the early and the late philosophy. Stern thinks it odd that the debate is carried on in such a polarized way. Of course, depending on their use, such labels as the "early", "late", "middle", "third" Wittgenstein, and so on, can be fairly innocuous. But in Stern's view the problem is that

such labels and manners of speech imply questionable commitments that the participants in the debate tend not to see. Moreover, such distinctions do not draw attention to particularities but talk instead about some kind of metaphysical "essence" of Wittgenstein's philosophy. But as soon as one looks at the particular cases, any neat distinctions crumble. Stern summarizes nine different positions on the doxographical question about the point (if any) at which Wittgenstein's purported "late" philosophy began, ranging from Diamond's and Feyerabend's views that there really is no turn, to von Savigny's implicit claim that it did not happen until the late 1940s. Each view can, of course, be supported by different kinds of evidence.

A connected and no less vexed question concerns the nature of the "late" philosophy. It is clear that in some sense it is a criticism of philosophical errors or mistakes. But where does or should this criticism lead us? Stern distinguishes here two main readings, which give different answers to the question of how to understand Wittgenstein's attempt to end philosophy: the "Pyrrhonian" and the "non-Pyrrhonian" reading. Pyrrhonian scepticism is (at least in the form attributable to Sextus Empiricus) sceptical of any and all philosophical doctrines and theories (including itself). According to the Pyrrhonian reading, then, Wittgenstein aims at a therapeutic critique of *all* philosophy, including his own, and this should allow us to stop doing philosophy altogether. According to non-Pyrrhonians, on the other hand, he wanted to end *traditional* philosophy so as to be able to do philosophy *better*. Stern notes that in practice, most Wittgenstein scholars oscillate between these different views even when ostensibly subscribing to one of them.

Stern argues that both sides can in fact find ample support for their different positions in unresolved tensions within Wittgenstein's own writings. He also claims that this struggle between conflicting impulses gives Wittgenstein's thought a peculiar vitality and importance. However, Stern also thinks that Wittgenstein only fully succeeded in giving expression to this struggle in his most carefully revised writings, in particular, in the first part of the *Investigations*, the dialogical structure of which allows this struggle to find its proper expression. Both sides of the debate, Stern concludes, have been overly dogmatic, mainly because they have misread or missed the essentially dialogical character of the *Investigations*.

The problem with Wittgenstein scholarship, as Stern sees it, is the lack of contact between scholars interested in the style of the *Investigations*, and

*Nachlass* scholars. Stern thinks that critical study of the *Nachlass* is vital for our understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy and its aims, but such a study should pay close attention to the stylistic features of his writings. A problem with using the *Nachlass* is the temptation to read it with the benefit of hindsight, finding the distinctive features of Wittgenstein's later thought and style prefigured in the earlier writings. But this means that not enough attention is given to the use and context of these passages. Stern is consequently critical of the "passage hunting" approach to the *Nachlass*, i.e. attempts to settle when and where certain arguments first occurred in his writings. Such an approach makes it too easy to regard Wittgenstein's more doctrinaire and systematic assertions (for instance in the Big Typescript) as expressions of philosophical convictions that underlie the *Investigations*. What Wittgenstein did with the early material, Stern claims, was not so much a sharpening and refinement of arguments as making it "more dialectical and less didactic". In this way he achieved a balance between Pyrrhonian scepticism and non-Pyrrhonian dogmatism, thereby inviting the reader to engage in a dialogue that is ultimately about the possibility of philosophy. Thus in the first part of *Investigations* (at least §§ 1–310), Wittgenstein is very careful not to make doctrinaire or substantial assertions about for example "grammar", or the primacy of practice. Stern does in fact think that the change that occurs between the period 1933–1935 and the *Investigations* amounts to a fundamental change in philosophical outlook; but he also thinks that that balance between the dogmatic and the "therapeutic" or critical attitude is not maintained throughout the *Investigations*, and that it is absent from much of the post-*Investigations* work. All this is missed if we do not look at the peculiar stylistic achievement of the *Investigations*, Stern claims.

Stern finally recommends that we should "give up our reliance on simple stories of misery and glory", together with such potentially misleading labels as "the early", "the late" Wittgenstein and the like. This still leaves us with all the hard questions, he concludes. Stern's point could be summarized by saying that the debates about radical changes in Wittgenstein's philosophical views presuppose the very un-Wittgensteinian assumption of polarized alternatives. Turning to Wittgenstein's views on family resemblances, Stern claims that his writings are related in different ways, and that we should not

be looking for "the general form of Wittgenstein's philosophy", but should expect instead to find a "complicated network of criss-crossing similarities".

Stern has described our next contributor, Eike von Savigny, as someone who maintains that questions about the genesis and composition of Wittgenstein's texts are irrelevant to our understanding of his writings; thus von Savigny, in his commentary on the *Investigations*,[15] approaches the whole of Part I of that work as a unified text, containing a single argument. In keeping with this approach, his paper displays a "text-immanent" and *Nachlass*-independent approach to Wittgenstein's philosophy. Here, von Savigny uses Wittgenstein to sketch a "use theory of meaning", which he then applies to first-person psychological utterances, understood as avowals. The result is that the commonly accepted understanding of such avowals determines the speaker's mental state. He then goes on to generalize this conclusion to the expression of mental states in non-verbal behaviour, and claims that here, too, commonly accepted reactions to this behaviour determine the nature of the speaker's mental state, in the same way as with verbal expressive behaviour. Thus von Savigny extracts a coherent view or even an "anti-individualistic theory" of the mental from Wittgenstein's remarks on avowals and meaning as use; von Savigny himself notes that this is controversial, but he considers such an attempt valid since Wittgenstein's ideas are sufficiently interesting and coherent to make this possible. Furthermore he thinks that "if one reads Wittgenstein as an author who endeavors not to utter any contradictory rubbish", such an interpretation is warranted.

Von Savigny begins by sketching out the following idea, which he derives from the *Investigations*: elements of language owe their meaning to their role in language-games, which in turn are complex behavioural regularities. The linguistic elements of language-games have meaning only in so far as those language-games are substantial enough for such meaning to emerge (i.e. for the behavioural regularities to constitute rule-following behaviour). He thinks this view is established by Wittgenstein's thought experiment in *PI* §§ 206–207 about the explorer who tries to make sense of

---

15. E. von Savigny: *Wittgensteins "Philosophische Untersuchungen". Ein Kommentar für Leser*, 2 Bände, (Frankfurt/M.: Klostermann, 1994–1996, 2nd edition).

a foreign language. He admits, however, that it is difficult to fill out this idea so as to get a substantial theory, since Wittgenstein supplies very few examples of such behavioural regularities. One clue is given in § 268, where Wittgenstein addresses the question of what it takes for something to be a meaningful instance of giving a gift. In this case, we can isolate certain "preconditions" or circumstances, an utterance, and certain practical consequences of the utterance. These consequences constitute the generally accepted understanding of the utterance and thereby, von Savigny claims, determine its meaning. Thus von Savigny finds at least the rudiments of a kind of speech-act theory in the *Investigations*.

He goes on to ask how this insight can be applied to utterances that a speaker uses to express his mental state. Here the speaker has a particular authority vis-à-vis his state, and von Savigny (following Wittgenstein) wants to call such utterances "avowals" (*Äusserungen*). According to von Savigny, Wittgenstein considers two possibilities for how such utterances achieve a role in a language-game. The first is his well-known idea that they can *replace* non-verbal behaviour (for instance in the process of language learning). Thus the utterance "I am in pain" can play the same role as a non-verbal expression of pain: getting hurt is recognized as a precondition whereby crying out (or uttering "I'm in pain") has a claim to be answered by comforting.

The second possibility concerns cases where there is no antecedent non-verbal expressive behaviour. In this case, the expressive behaviour *begins* with verbal behaviour. Von Savigny's example is from § 270: if a person has learnt to announce correctly a rise in his blood pressure without the help of any device, his avowal "My blood pressure is rising" will be sufficient to allow the use of this utterance to some practical end. Here again we find the same scheme: preconditions, avowal, and practical consequences. The precondition is of course that the speaker has a history of correct announcements of his blood pressure. In that case, the meaning of the utterance is determined by the scheme which constitutes the generally accepted understanding of the utterance.

This, von Savigny claims, has stunning consequences: anyone who expresses a mental state under the right circumstances feels the way he says. Thus if someone says "I am imagining the colour red", his imagining of the colour red is *determined by the generally accepted understanding* of the utterance.

This sounds stunning indeed, but von Savigny argues for the view by noting that it is not enough for the speaker actually to imagine the colour red, since statements about imagination are not reports, but avowals. Therefore the right circumstances of the utterance contain above all mastery of "the language-game of utterances of imagination". Thus what determines that one imagines the colour red is one's having learnt to operate with such utterances, not the activity of "looking inside oneself".

Von Savigny goes on to say that a mental state does not of course have to be expressed linguistically; however, it is still determined (as regards its content) by the generally accepted understanding of an avowal by means of which it *could* be expressed. For instance, "expecting someone to come" can be expressed extra-linguistically (by walking up and down the room, looking at the clock, etc.), but the content of this state is determined by the generally accepted understanding of an utterance that can be used to express that state, e.g. "I expect he'll come in" (§ 444). Thus we should see the extra-linguistic expressive behaviour as performing the same role as the linguistic behaviour, von Savigny says; what it expresses depends, once again, on the generally accepted way in which it is reacted to.

These remarks, von Savigny claims, are Wittgenstein's way of explaining how awovals can come to carry linguistic meaning. This picture can then be extended to the meaning of extra-linguistic behaviour, expressing something mental that could (but does not have to) be expressed verbally. Von Savigny admits that we do not have to read the relevant remarks in the *Investigation* in this way, but thinks this a plausible interpretation.

Thus the mental, von Savigny says, is public for Wittgenstein in a much more radical sense than is usually assumed. The mental is not just publicly accessible; it is as directly perceivable as behaviour, and is moreover *determined* by this public character. To take an example: the physiological condition of a sick person is by no means determined by a social (or public) definition; however, for a person to *be sick* it is necessary to have a "social definition of illness" that *constitutes* this physiological state as sufficient justification for the person to be cared for. Von Savigny says that these "socially established reactions" to non-verbal expressive behaviour may largely be innate (he also talks about reactions depending *causally* on expressive behaviour). He does not, however, take up Wittgenstein's problematic notion of

"primitive reactions", nor does he address the question of how to understand that appeal to "primitivity".

Instead he calls attention to the fact that his interpretation of "Wittgenstein's picture of mental facts" was prefigured in Noel Fleming's "Seeing the Soul" (1978). In this paper Fleming discusses Wittgenstein's famous remark "The human body is the best picture of the human soul" (*PI* II, p. 178). Fleming asks what it is for a picture to be a picture, and concludes that something is a picture if the culture treats it as such: "We can see the storm in el Greco's 'Storm over Toledo' because it is a norm of our culture to see the picture as one of a storm". Thus whichever content a culture sees determines the content of the picture. However, "seeing as is the same as treating as", von Savigny says, and the treating "determines the content of the expressive behaviour, and with it the mental fact itself" and thereby "behaviour expresses a mental fact when the members of the culture in question normally treat the person in the way that is appropriate if the mental fact is the case." Thus, von Savigny writes, "whoever comforts someone who has hurt himself and is crying, treats his crying as an expression of pain and the crying person as someone who is in pain". It seems clear, he says, that a person who does this in "precisely the circumstances required by the norms of her culture" sees the other person as someone in pain. The question of how to establish criteria for "normality" or "the norms of a culture" and thereby escape circularity is an intricate one, and is not addressed further by von Savigny here.

Some of the questions von Savigny takes up, especially the relation between third-person and first-person psychological utterances, are further addressed in the next paper, in which Peter Hacker deals with the problem of first-person utterances and their relation to cognitive claims. Hacker wants to show that Wittgenstein's remarks about pain and the impossibility of doubting that one is in pain constitute an alternative to the "received epistemic explanation", which entails that the speaker's authority with regard to utterances of the type "I am in pain" is constituted by his having direct and privileged access to the contents of his consciousness and such that he can be said to *know* that things are thus-and-so with him. Hacker argues that Wittgenstein proposed a grammatical elucidation to replace this view, which means that he sought to describe the grammar of first-person utterances, i.e.