

cal project of various Dalit texts, most of which seek to inhabit a counterhegemonic space from which originates its fiercest critique. In any case, if the particular experience of a Dalit text cannot speak on behalf of its peers, it certainly can speak to its others.

This is to respond at an angle to Shankar's important point, which he inaugurated so eloquently in his well-known discussion of the vernacular in "Midnight's Orphans" (*Cultural Critique* 56 [2004]: 64–95). I appreciate the opportunity to take it up here.

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A Realistic Wittgenstein

TO THE EDITOR:

Andre Furlani's excellent essay "Beckett after Wittgenstein: The Literature of Exhausted Justification" (127.1 [2012]: 38–57) includes an error in its Works Cited section. The title of Cora Diamond's important book on Wittgenstein, *The Realistic Spirit* (1991), is mistakenly given as *The Realist Spirit*. This is a case in which a typographic error can make "all the difference," to quote Frost—in this case, to our understanding of two important words: *realist* and *realistic*.

If Diamond's book had been titled *The Realist Spirit*, it might have had more to do with realism, with the modern argument that material objects exist independent of any perception of them and with the traditional scholastic claims—against nominalism—that universals exist independent of any ideas about them. Diamond's correct title—*The Realistic Spirit*—suggests, in my view, that Wittgenstein's goal was to be realistic, to offer a philosophy that was not philosophy at all, in any traditional sense. Wittgenstein provides a way of doing philosophy that corresponds to what Bertrand Russell called "a robust sense of reality," to words as

they are used by speakers and writers, not as they are confined to meanings we imagine or have learned from some one book or teacher. Diamond is interested in realism in its philosophical senses, but her emphasis is always on a realistic spirit in Wittgenstein, on a spirit that tilts the balance toward everyday uses of words, toward ordinary-language philosophy.

Diamond is an important philosopher in her own right: see, for example, her classic essays "Eating Meat and Eating People" (*Philosophy* 53.206 [1978]: 465–79) and "What Nonsense Might Be" (*Philosophy* 56.215 [1981]: 5–22). She has been arguing for decades about the anti-metaphysical, we might say commonsense, element in Wittgenstein's writing, especially in his cryptic and complicated later works. In recent years she has sought to connect his early *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) more closely with his later *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). She has been associated with a group of thinkers who have put forth a "New Wittgenstein"—that is, Wittgenstein as an anti-analytic philosopher whose work sees philosophy as linguistic therapy, as a realistic approach to the problems traditionally posed by abstract thought and idealized rationality.

This information all stems from a typo, or a misprint, in Furlani's Works Cited list. Furlani applauds Diamond for taking Wittgenstein "at his word" (54n14); such applause seems particularly appropriate in this case.

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Reply:

I am obliged to Ashton Nichols for noting my typographic error and for drawing attention to the stature of Cora Diamond's work, from which my understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy has indeed benefited.

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