

# FOREWORD

WITTGENSTEIN'S abiding philosophical concern was with the conditions of an utterance having sense – and so with what it is to mean something, to think, to understand, and to infer.

This concern was constant, unchanging. What changed was not his concern with the conditions of sense, but his view as to what they are. Understanding Wittgenstein means understanding his change of view about the conditions of sense. I shall say something about this to provide a point of reference for my remarks, in the remainder of the Foreword, about the individual lectures that this volume comprises.

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein writes:

- 2.0211 If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true.
- 2.0212 It would then be impossible to form a picture of the world (true or false).

In the *Investigations* and *Zettel*, on the other hand, he argues that a proposition's having sense *does* depend on other propositions being true. They are propositions about a certain sort of 'human agreement'.<sup>1</sup> There must be human agreement of a certain sort for our language-games to work.<sup>2</sup> But it is not agreement in *opinions*, that is, in what enters into the language-game. The things that enter into the language-game are true or false statements like 'The dress she bought is red', 'The shopkeeper gave me five apples', and 'He had toothache'. If someone says, in reply to the last statement, 'Yes, I remember now, he had', that is not the sort of agreement Wittgenstein has in mind.

Probably the least misleading thing to say is that it is agreement in what we *do*. The trouble is that the agreement in what we do which makes the language-game possible cannot be identified

<sup>1</sup> *PI*, I, 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Z*, 430.

without using the language-game in question. Unless people agree in their reactions to colours they will not have the concept of colour they need to have to see certain behaviour as 'agreement in reactions to colours'. Unless they agree in their expressions of, and reactions to, pain, they will not have the concept of pain they need to have to see behaviour as 'pain behaviour'. (Arguments from analogy haven't a leg, even *one* leg, to stand on.) The result is that either we have the concept – or we cannot even imagine what the concept may be that we haven't got. Under these circumstances the concepts we have seem to exist unconditionally, so to speak. And so people who haven't got the concepts we have seem to us not to realise things we realise;<sup>1</sup> and people who have got other concepts strike us as irrational.

There is another reason for it not being obvious that the possibility of a language-game is conditioned by certain facts. This is the attractiveness of competing accounts of the sense of an utterance – in terms of (a) the words in the utterance being correlated with objects for which the words stand, or (b) something in our minds (a conscious act of 'meaning' or 'understanding') which is thought to make the difference between the utterance being mere sounds and having sense.

Wittgenstein holds these accounts to be wrong. To give the first of them is to think of all language (or all 'fact-stating' language) as having sense in the same way. That had been his idea when he wrote the *Tractatus*. In the *Investigations* and *Zettel* he combats the idea that all language has sense in the same way by insisting on 'the multiplicity of language-games'.<sup>2</sup> And he combats the idea that *any* language has sense in the way described in the *Tractatus* by saying that 'our language-game only works . . . when a certain agreement prevails'.<sup>3</sup>

Wittgenstein sometimes calls the agreement an agreement in 'form of life'. I think it would have been better if he had reserved this expression for the sort of agreement that might be held to underlie the sense of, say, religious utterances.<sup>4</sup> But perhaps he wanted to bring out how the fact that words like 'red' have sense is no less dependent on agreement in human behaviour than is the fact that words like 'altar' and 'oracle' have sense.

His discussion of the conditions of mathematical words having sense is central in all this.

<sup>1</sup> *PI*, II, xii.

<sup>2</sup> *PI*, I, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Z*, 430.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), p. 58: 'Why shouldn't one form of life culminate in an utterance of belief in a Last Judgment?'

Kant saw a problem in accounting for the necessity of propositions like ' $7 + 5 = 12$ '. They did not seem to him to be merely analytic. However long he analysed his concept of a possible sum of 7 and 5 he would, he thought, never find the 12 in it. He wrote:

We have to go outside these concepts, and call in the aid of intuition which corresponds to one of them, our five fingers, for instance . . . adding to the concept of 7, unit by unit, the five given in intuition. For starting with the number 7, and for the concept of 5 calling in the aid of the fingers of my hand as intuition, I now add one by one to the number 7 the units which I previously took together to form the number 5, and with the aid of that figure [the hand] see the number 12 come into being.<sup>1</sup>

The trouble with this is that we can go wrong. We can miscount on our fingers, even though as a rule we don't. But it isn't correct to say '*As a rule*,  $7 + 5 = 12$ '.

Nevertheless, there is something in what Kant says about having to go outside the concepts. You and I, when we are asked to add on our fingers, as a rule get the same result. Why? Because by 'adding on our fingers' we mean the same thing. We *do* the same thing. For each successive finger we say a numeral in the series '1', '2', '3', '4', and so on, this being a series we have learnt by heart. There is this human agreement in what constitutes counting. It doesn't decide what is true or false in mathematics; but it is what makes the language of mathematics, as something more than a sign game, possible.

The problem can be put like this. In some sense, in knowing the formula for a series, one *knows* what will come at any point in the series. Yet, as Kant saw, one doesn't have to have *thought* of the whole series – it may be infinite – to be in a position to say that one knows, that is, has understood, the formula. How is it that we can talk of 'knowing' here? How is it that we can say that someone has interpreted a rule, a formula, correctly or incorrectly? What underlies there being such a thing as correctness and incorrectness, truth and falsity, in the language of mathematics – or, for that matter, in any language at all?

This is the subject of Wittgenstein's long and subtle discussion in *Investigations*, I, 138–99. In 154 he connects up his discussion of knowing a formula with his rejection of the account of the sense of an utterance in terms of something in our minds which

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1934), B15–16.

makes the difference between the utterance being mere sounds and having sense – (b) above. He writes:

But wait – if ‘Now I understand the principle’ does not mean the same as ‘The formula . . . occurs to me’ – does it follow from this that I employ the sentence ‘Now I understand . . .’ or ‘Now I can go on’ as a description of a process occurring behind or side by side with that of saying the formula?

If there has to be anything ‘behind the utterance of the formula’ it is *particular circumstances*<sup>1</sup> which justify me in saying I can go on – when the formula occurs to me.

Try not to think of understanding as a ‘mental process’ at all. – For *that* is the expression which confuses you.<sup>2</sup>

‘Try not to think of understanding as a mental process’ is grammatically like ‘Try not to think of him as your boss (now that you’ve married him)’. But the grammatical similarity is misleading. One mustn’t read what Wittgenstein says here as a *denial* that understanding is a mental process – as though we had, independently, a clear idea of what it is for something to be a mental process and saw that understanding was not one. If anything is to be called a mental process then surely it is such things as understanding, imagining, and remembering.<sup>3</sup> No; the point is that talk of a mental *process* makes us think of understanding (meaning, imagining, remembering, etc.) in a way which blinds us to our actual use of the words ‘understand’ (‘mean’, etc.). Photosynthesis is the process of carbohydrate formation that occurs in leaves. Similarly, we think, understanding is a process that occurs in another, but more mysterious, medium, the mind. It is not false that understanding is a mental process (how could it be?). But the picture we have of a mental process is an ill-formed one.<sup>4</sup>

It is helpful here to consider the meaning of ‘I meant’ (*BB*, pp. 39, 142; *Z*, 1–53, 231–48).<sup>5</sup> What is the meaning of the word ‘meaning’ in our talk of meaning someone (for example, ‘When I said “Come here” I meant you, not Jones’) or of meaning something

<sup>1</sup> The particular circumstances are ‘that he had learnt algebra, had used such formulae before’ (*PI*, I, 179). Note that having learnt algebra involves having acquired abilities shared with others who have learnt algebra.

<sup>2</sup> *PI*, I, 154.

<sup>3</sup> In *PI*, I, 154 Wittgenstein says that by a ‘mental process’ he means such things as ‘a pain’s growing more and less’, and ‘the hearing of a tune or a sentence’, but I think he was confused as to his own philosophical method at this point.

<sup>4</sup> *PI*, I, 305–9.

<sup>5</sup> I am drawing, here, on things I said in my review of *Zettel*, ‘Wittgenstein on the Myth of Mental Processes’, *Philosophical Review*, lxxvii (1968) pp. 350–5.

(for example, 'When I said "Go to the bank" I meant the river bank')? In saying 'I meant . . .', when one has been misunderstood, is one saying something about something one did at the time of saying 'Come here' or 'Go to the bank'? If the ambiguity, the misinterpretability, of 'Go to the bank' struck one as one said it, then one would be seeing the sentence 'from outside', so to speak (*Z*, 233–5, 287), in which case one's thought and the sentence would be distinguishable. But for one to mean anything at all (and so, to *think*), *some* sentence (picture or the like) must serve as it stands – that is, *not* need an accompanying interpretation.

But is it not remarkable that we should say 'I meant . . .' (i.e. in the past tense) if there was only the sentence 'Go to the bank' and no accompanying interpretation? (*Z*, 39–40). Yes, if you look at it in a certain light, as those philosophers are apt to who go on to say that there *must* (*Z*, 286) have been more than the sentence in my mind for it to be the case that I meant such-and-such. But, remarkable or not, this *is* what we say; there *is* this language-game in which what happens later (*Z*, 7–8, 14, etc., cf. 100) is the criterion (*Z*, 22) of my meaning someone or something: asked whether I wanted Jones to come, I answer almost as I answer a question about my present sensations (*Z*, 7) and yet I say 'I *meant* you, not Jones'. Moreover, even where there was an accompanying interpretation, the use I make of 'I meant' bypasses it (*Z*, 25, 41, 88).

I said that in the *Investigations* and *Zettel* Wittgenstein argues that a proposition's having sense depends on other propositions being true, these other propositions being about a certain sort of human agreement. But Wittgenstein elsewhere acknowledges other kinds of proposition on which the sense of a proposition may depend. They may again be described as propositions about a certain sort of agreement, but it is not the same sort as he is concerned with in the *Investigations* and *Zettel*. For example, in the *Blue Book* he discusses the conditions of the phrase 'the same person' having the sense it has, and writes:

Our actual use of the phrase 'the same person' and of the name of a person is based on the fact that many characteristics which we use as the criteria for identity coincide in the vast majority of cases.<sup>1</sup>

Coincidence, I suppose, is a form of agreement, but it is not agreement in things we do in the way in which agreement in, say, counting is agreement in things we do.

<sup>1</sup> *BB*, p. 61.

Finally, in *On Certainty*, 617, Wittgenstein refers to what he calls the 'sureness' of a language-game, and writes:

Certain events would put me into a position in which I could not go on with the old language-game any further. In which I was torn away from the *sureness* of the game.

Indeed, doesn't it seem obvious that the possibility of a language-game is conditioned by certain facts?

I take him to mean '... is conditioned by our *not calling in question* certain facts'.<sup>1</sup> In 613 he compares doubting that heat makes water boil (instead of freeze) with doubting that some familiar friend is who he is. He writes:

If the water over the gas freezes, of course I shall be as astonished as can be, but I shall assume some factor I don't know of, and perhaps leave the matter to physicists to judge. But what could make me doubt whether this person here is N. N., whom I have known for years? Here a doubt would seem to drag everything with it and plunge it into chaos.

It isn't that I am certain that he is N. N., for the question 'Is he N. N.?' doesn't arise. It is the fact that the question 'Is he N. N.?' doesn't arise, not the fact that he is N. N. (or that I am certain that he is), that conditions the possibility of the language-game – the one in which I may sensibly ask, about a stranger, 'Is he P. P.?' Against the background of *not* raising questions in certain cases (those which supremely satisfy our criteria, those which are, in a sense, our 'paradigms') we *can* raise questions in others. Our employing the criteria we do employ (treating as paradigms the cases we do so treat) might be described, in language reminiscent of the *Tractatus*, as our having a certain picture of the world. But how different such talk of a picture of the world would be from the *Tractatus* talk, may be judged from what Wittgenstein says in *On Certainty*, 94–9. A picture of the world, in the *Tractatus*, is itself what is true or false. In *On Certainty* it is 'the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false'.

The picture of the world Wittgenstein means in *On Certainty* may alter. The role of propositions describing it 'is like that of rules of a game', and the rules may change. Does it follow, then, that Wittgenstein has to revise his earlier view about logic not being an empirical science? No. That rules may change does not mean

<sup>1</sup> On this and related points I am grateful to Rush Rhees for his comments on an early draft of this foreword. Whether the use I have made of them is one of which he would approve is another matter.

that there are no rules. 'If someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science" he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing.' Seeing this is seeing the mistake in thinking 'that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones'.<sup>1</sup> The insight that this is a mistake is not possible for someone who holds the 'picture theory of meaning' of the *Tractatus*. This illustrates the change in Wittgenstein's view about the conditions of sense.

Anthony Kenny, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, claims that Wittgenstein's 'own later statements about the *Tractatus* sometimes misrepresent it and mask the considerable continuity between his later views and his earlier views'. An example of continuity he mentions relates to the picture theory of meaning. Kenny argues that elements crucial to the picture theory are retained in the *Investigations*. One such is the bipolarity of the proposition: any proposition which can be true can be false. Another is the isomorphism between the world and language. This, Kenny says, survives 'though with its poles reversed'. On this Kenny quotes Peter Hacker approvingly. Instead of language mirroring the logical form of the universe, 'the apparent "structure of reality" is merely the shadow of grammar'. In either case the structure of reality can only be shown, not described; and the structure of language cannot be justified.

Kenny says that 'it is commonly said that Wittgenstein after the *Tractatus* abandoned the picture theory'. For my part I would agree with what he says is commonly said. In spite of the 'considerable continuity' to which Kenny draws attention, there is more to *X* being a picture of *Y* than that they are isomorphic. For Wittgenstein, reversing the poles of the isomorphism went with regarding a proposition's having sense as being dependent on the truth of other propositions (e.g. about a certain sort of human agreement). And Wittgenstein himself says that if a proposition's having sense depended on another proposition being true 'it would then be impossible to form a picture of the world (true or false)'.<sup>2</sup>

Why should Wittgenstein have held the picture theory of meaning in the first place? And how did holding it lead him to the so-called 'logical atomism' of the *Tractatus*? Roger White, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Leeds, suggests that Wittgenstein misconstrued an innocuous connection between a proposition's making sense and its having true/false polarity in terms of a nocuous

<sup>1</sup> *PI*, II, xii.

<sup>2</sup> *TLP*, 2.0212.

theory (the picture theory) of a link between a proposition's making sense and its dividing possible states of affairs into two groups – those that make it true and those that make it false. This theory is put in jeopardy if one proposition's making sense is dependent on another being true, as is the case if (a) the proposition is about the bearer of a proper name, (b) a proper name is a sign which contributes to the sense of a proposition by standing for that bearer, and (c) the bearer of the proper name is, for example, a person, that is, an entity that may, after a time, no longer exist. To safeguard the picture theory, names of persons must be shown not to be *real* proper names, but disguised descriptions, or something of the sort. The real proper names must be of objects of which it makes no sense to suppose that they don't exist. And if you can't have language without real proper names then there must be such objects – the 'simple objects' of Wittgenstein's logical atomism, the 'substance' of the world referred to in *TLP*, 2.0211.

The reply to the *Tractatus* implicit in the *Investigations*, White says, involves a total change of perspective on the phenomena of language. Central to it is the idea that 'we rely on certain contingent features of our world in order to give our signs a sense, and in imagining those features not to have obtained, we are imagining a world in which propositions containing such signs would be incapable of formulation, not one in which they would be false'. With this change in perspective we can still talk of a proposition and its negation exhausting the possibilities, but they will now be 'the possibilities allowed for by the language, not the possibilities taken in some abstract sense, and these possibilities are conditioned by the form of life of the speakers of that language and by the features of the world within which they live that life'.

In talking about the truth ' $7 + 5 = 12$ ', above, I said that the trouble with Kant's account ('calling in the aid of the fingers of my hand as intuition') is that we can go wrong. I then said that human agreement in what constitutes counting doesn't decide what is true or false in mathematics, but is what makes the language of mathematics, as something more than a sign game, possible. Wittgenstein could be said to have been concerned with the question 'What is logical inference if it is not merely the transformation of one configuration of signs into another, and if logical propositions are not merely very general empirical propositions?' This is the question Rush Rhees takes up on page 35 of his paper (the paragraph beginning 'The transition from one proposition to another in a logical proof . . .'). I cannot hope to summarise his treatment of this question in the remainder of his paper. He himself says that



no single or formal answer can be given to the question what makes a transition from one proposition to another a logical inference; we can answer only by giving examples. But it is evident that he attaches considerable importance to the notion of a 'practice'. He writes:

Describing what language is, describing what saying something ('a proposition') is, describing what drawing a conclusion is – means describing a practice. . . . It does not mean 'describing a routine'. A practice refers to a way of living in which many people are engaged. We could observe a habit in an individual man but not a 'practice'. Much of what Wittgenstein says about 'rules' is connected with this.

(Elsewhere Rhees says that rules were not made by the devil, but the word 'rule' was.)

Brian McGuinness, Tutor and Praelector in Philosophy at Queen's College, Oxford, in a paper that relates interestingly to that by Rush Rhees, discusses the history behind *TLP*, 4.0321, 'My fundamental idea is that the "logical constants" are not representatives; that there can be no representatives of the logic of facts.' It was Russell who had held that to understand 'logical' words – like 'or', 'not', 'all', and 'some' – we must be acquainted with 'logical objects', for which they stand. In *The Problems of Philosophy* he had similarly held that to understand a statement containing the word 'I' a person must be acquainted with his self, a view he renounced in *The Analysis of Mind*.

Russell's view about the self, known if not by acquaintance then by description as a Humean series of mental events, recur in his theory of judgment, according to which the relation between a proposition and a fact is explained in terms of a judging relation involving a subject, on the one hand, and particular and universal entities on the other. Wittgenstein, as Guy Stock, Lecturer in Logic at the University of Aberdeen, points out, rejected this psychologistic explanation of the relation of language to the world, in favour of, in the *Tractatus*, the picture theory of meaning. Stock quotes Ramsey, who said Wittgenstein 'explicitly reduces the question as to the analysis of judgment . . . to the question "What is it for a proposition token to have a certain sense?"', and comments that Wittgenstein's answer to this question left no room in the world represented in thought for a subject that thinks, and, in conjunction with the polarity thesis, 'required that there be the possibility of indefinable names standing for objects which are "Roughly speaking, colourless"'.

Wittgenstein denied the self in which Russell believed when he wrote *The Problems of Philosophy*. But did he not believe in another self? In the *Tractatus*, 5.641, he wrote:

There is therefore really a sense in which in philosophy we can talk of a non-psychological I.

The I occurs in philosophy through the fact that the 'world is my world'.

The philosophical I is not the man, not the human body or the human soul of which psychology treats, but the metaphysical subject, the limit – not a part of the world.

Bernard Williams, Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, finds in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* discussion of the self and solipsism three ideas which, he says, Wittgenstein may seem to have abandoned in his later work. One of them is the idea that 'we cannot conceive of it as a matter of empirical investigation to determine why my world is this way rather than that, why my language has some features rather than others, etc.'

Did Wittgenstein abandon this idea? In the *Investigations*, II, xii, he writes: 'If anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones . . . 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.' I can understand this if by 'facts of nature' Wittgenstein means, for example, the coincidence of the characteristics we use as the criteria for personal identity. I can imagine the facts being different from what we are used to. For instance, I can imagine brains being transplanted, and our concept of personal identity changing as a consequence. But if he means such facts of nature as I earlier called 'agreement in what we *do*', such as agreement in reactions to colours, or agreement in what constitutes counting, then I think there is a problem – unless I was mistaken in saying that the agreement in what we do which makes the language-game possible cannot be identified without using the language-game in question. Perhaps what Wittgenstein means is that we can come to realise that our 'picture of the world' is not the only possible one (though not what other ones are possible). If so, and *if* saying this means being a transcendental idealist, then Wittgenstein is a transcendental idealist.

For Wittgenstein, writes A. Phillips Griffiths, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick, the willing subject is no more a part of the world than is the thinking subject. 'It is an illusion that I can bring anything about. The world is the totality of elementary

facts, and there is nothing in any one fact to explain another (which could do for the will)'. What, then, of ethics? Most of us take it to be about how we should act. If it is not, what is it about? What does Wittgenstein mean when he says, for instance (*TLP*, 6.43), that 'good or bad willing . . . can only change the limits of the world, not the facts'? Griffiths asks 'But how on earth could I, by a particular act, alter the limits of the world?' He tries to understand Wittgenstein by making what he calls 'some very radical assumptions'.

I remarked, earlier, on the possible misleadingness of Wittgenstein's prescription 'Try not to think of understanding as a "mental process" at all' (*PI*, I, 154). Renford Bambrough, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in Philosophy, refers to 'the strains to which language is subjected if it is used in an attempt to express Wittgenstein's meaning in general and theoretical terms' and says that 'every remark made in the course of such an attempt is misleading and needs immediate qualification'. Such reservations as I have about this relate to 'immediate qualification'. The point of a philosophical utterance like 'Thoughts are not mental processes' will be lost if one *immediately* counters it with the thought 'But, of course, in the common usage of the phrase "mental process" thoughts *are* mental processes'. In the philosophical utterance it is the misleading picture that goes with the word 'process' that is important – it is like saying 'The picture we have of thoughts when we refer to them as "processes" doesn't accord with our use of expressions like "I thought, or meant, such-and-such"' – and one mustn't be cut off in pursuing that thought by an immediate reminder that 'literally' thoughts *are* mental processes.

Jenny Teichman, College Fellow of New Hall, Cambridge, is struck by the fact that there are about a page and a half of remarks in the *Blue Book* about the concept of a person, and the criteria of personal identity; but in the *Investigations* practically nothing about persons, but quite a lot about human beings. She speculates as to why there should be this change, and thinks that it may be because of the dualistic backdrop to the philosophical notion of a person. For some reason the notion of a human being is less likely to lead us into problems such as the Other Minds problem, than that of a person. Why? Because we think of human beings as having a natural history as members of a community; and of thinking, language and consciousness as part of that history. The overall conclusion she is tempted to draw is that 'language, and therefore the higher forms of consciousness, depend, logically, for their existence on the possibility of common "forms of life"' and

that 'if this conclusion, which is about the essence of language and thought, is a true conclusion, then it means that solipsistic doubt, and the Other Minds problem, have disappeared'.

I suppose my own contribution to this volume, entitled 'Other Minds', could be described as an attempt to show that Mrs Teichman's conclusion is a true one, and means what she thinks it means.

In the first section of his paper, 'Wittgenstein on the Soul', Ilham Dilman, Reader in Philosophy at the University College of Swansea, also is concerned with the conditions of the possibility of higher forms of consciousness. Wittgenstein, he says, opposes the picture of the soul as a substance and says that the reality of the soul – i.e., the possibility of joy and sorrow, love, etc. – depends on the life of those capable of these things. Part of this life is our natural reaction to someone who has hurt himself. So the idea that 'we tend someone else because by analogy with our own case we believe he is experiencing pain too' is 'putting the cart before the horse' (Z, 542). In the last section of his paper Dilman discusses what Wittgenstein says in the *Notebooks* about the will, and draws conclusions about Wittgenstein's views on ethics which may be compared with those of A. Phillips Griffiths.

Les Holborow, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Dundee, is puzzled by some of Wittgenstein's remarks about remembering, in *Zettel*. Such insights as I have do not seem to extend to them. I mean, for instance, the insight that in the language-game of 'I meant . . .', what happens *now* (what I say) is the criterion of my having meant (*then*) so-and-so. This helps me to understand why Wittgenstein refers to 'primitive interpretations of our concepts'. Calling meaning someone (as in 'I meant you, not Jones') a 'mental process' makes one think that there *must* have been more than the sentence 'Come here' in my mind at the time I said it. It makes us want to talk of 'an experience of meaning someone'. If there was no such 'experience' then there was nothing to parallel any supposed physical process in my brain. Along these lines I can understand Wittgenstein calling psychophysical parallelism a prejudice. But it doesn't help me to see why, for instance, he questions the necessity for memory traces (Z, 610).

Renford Bambrough discusses Wittgenstein's philosophical remark:

I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking. It is correct to say 'I know what you are thinking', and wrong to say 'I know what I am thinking'. (*PI*, II, xi, p. 222)

He says that Wittgenstein is making a mistake, but with a point. 'Wittgenstein is protesting at the imposition of a *requirement* for the application of the word "knowledge". He is insisting that there can be knowledge where there can also be doubt.' Roger Squires, Lecturer in Logic and Metaphysics at the University of St Andrews, understands Wittgenstein's point differently. It is an attack on the 'internal eavesdropper' notion, that someone engaged in silent soliloquy knows something which 'can only be known in the first instance' to himself (Lewis) 'in a way that is not available to anybody else' (Ayer). The significance of the attack is that if it does not make sense to say a person knows what he thinks there could be 'no need to postulate inner processes and states to which a person has privileged access. The stream of consciousness would be an illusion.'

Sir Alfred J. Ayer, Wykeham Professor of Logic at the University of Oxford, says that Wittgenstein, in *On Certainty*, holds that our belief in the physical world 'is not an ordinary factual belief, but rather part of the frame of reference within which the truth or falsehood of our factual beliefs is assessed', and also that Wittgenstein maintains that the physical object language-game 'has its roots in action'. Ayer asks:

But our actions are conditioned by our beliefs, . . . and our beliefs . . . are evinced by sentences which are intended to express what is true. When they fulfil this intention, it is . . . because things are as they describe them. So is not our use of language dependent not only on the rules of the game, but also, and indeed primarily, on the nature of things?

But how can we talk of 'the nature of things' except in some language? I think that when Wittgenstein says 'it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game' (*OC*, 204) he cannot mean the sort of acting that is conditioned by beliefs. He would not say that the acting which lies at the bottom of the language-game we play with 'pain' is conditioned by beliefs. It is not, when the acting is our own natural expression of pain. And it is not, he would say (*Z*, 540-2), when the acting is our 'primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain'. I think the acting which lies at the bottom of the physical object language-game must be at this 'pre-rational' level.

The paper by Christopher Coope, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Leeds, also, deals with Wittgenstein's views on knowledge. His discussion of two, related, points has a bearing on

some of the things Ayer says. The first is that, *pace* Malcolm, Wittgenstein says (*OC*, 519):

But since a language-game is something that consists in the recurrent procedures of the game in time, it seems impossible to say in any *individual* case that such-and-such must be beyond doubt if there is to be a language-game – though it is right enough to say that *as a rule* some empirical judgment or other must be beyond doubt.

The second relates to the distinction Wittgenstein makes between *being mistaken* and other cases of false belief. Even if my belief that I have never been to the moon was false, it would not necessarily count as a mistake (*OC*, 661–3). It is necessarily true, Coope suggests, that a mistake, to *be* a mistake, could have been *avoided*. And, with the advent of space travel, there are mistakes to be avoided in 1973 which there were not in 1952.

This is the seventh successive volume of Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures I have edited. To give readers of volumes in the series a change from my choice of themes, and to give me a break from the editorial work involved, I have asked my friend Richard Peters, Professor of Philosophy of Education in the University of London, to arrange the 1973–4 lecture programme and to edit the subsequent volume. The lectures are to be on ‘Nature and Conduct’.

GODFREY VESEY

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